The Three Worlds
CULTURE AND WORLD DEVELOPMENT

Peter Worsley
First Priest: Great Sarastro, dost thou think that Tamino will withstand the stern trials that await him? Consider well: he is a prince.

Sarastro: More than that! He is a man!

Emanuel Schikaneder, The Magic Flute, Act II

And at last he realized that man never knows who it is he suffers for and who it is he waits and toils for. He suffers and waits and toils for people he will never know, who in their turn will suffer and wait and toil for others who will not find happiness either, because man always yearns for more happiness than the little granted him. But the greatness of man consists precisely in wanting to improve on what exists. In setting himself Tasks. In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no greatness to be conquered, for there all is fixed and hierarchical; nothing is unknown, all is revealed; since there is no limit to existence, sacrifice, rest and pleasure are impossibilities. So, weighed down by suffering and by Tasks, splendid in the midst of his misery, capable of love in the midst of affliction, man can only reach greatness, his highest stature, in the Kingdom of this World.

Alejo Carpentier, The Kingdom of this World

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me to come to some conclusions. Without her optimism and drive, too, I would never have hunted for the accumulated notes of ten years which were stolen from my car a few hours before I was due to fly to the USA, and which we found scattered in the garden of an abandoned house – with not a sheet missing! I owe my wife, Sheila, special thanks and apologies: for responding to the love she has given me by dragging her to so many places – some terrible, some marvellous, some both – that she never wanted to go to in the first place (though she enjoyed most of them in the end); for her healthy disbelief that academia and intellectuals are the centre of the universe (which includes never reading anything I write); and for keeping me living a normal life when I would otherwise probably have worked until I made myself ill. I thank, too, Linda Ollerenshaw, Jeanne Ashton, Florene Daniel, Hilary Thomber and Julie Gorton, as well as the unknown typist at Typing Etc., New York, who sent me encouraging comments, for deciphering the jigsaw-puzzles of successive drafts. All the translations are by me.

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Peter Worsley
Stockport

I Prolegomena

The Creation of the Third World

Poverty on a world scale is commonly thought of as a fact of Nature. Thus a recent popular overview of the condition of the majority of humankind—the peoples of the Third World—by a writer passionately committed to the eradication of their poverty, begins by discussing the ‘cruel sun’, ‘droughts and downpours’ and the ‘disastrous environment’—though he goes on to observe that ‘colonial powers laid the foundation of the present division of the world into industrial nations on the one hand and hewers of wood and drawers of water on the other’ and concludes that ‘the international economic order adds injustice to natural handicap’.1 The notion that ‘the tropics’ lie under some kind of primordial curse makes it difficult to explain, however, why the great civilizations of the ancient world—Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley—or the later Mayan and Chinese Empires, all flourished in mainly tropical regions which are now the most underdeveloped parts of the globe. ‘Geography’, as Christopher Hill has remarked, ‘provides conditions “without which”: it does not offer a causal explanation of why’.2

Though ‘development’ is a post-Second World War concept, the whole of human history is the history of development. But during those long millennia during which the life of one generation was very like that not only of their parents, but even of their remote ancestors, change was commonly conceived of either as repetition or as very slow cumulation. Knowledge consisted of learning what was already known, even if the world was never as static or as coherent as ideology represented it to be: technical change might be gradual to the point of invisibility, but new religious cults could sweep whole societies and across societal boundaries.

The Great Transformation, as Karl Polanyi has called the rise of modern capitalism, involved a total re-making of the entire institutional order of society: not only the Industrial Revolution of applying science to industry and replacing manufacture by machinfacture, but the concomitant transformation of social and political institutions, a tidal wave that soon spread outside its original centres and within a century had engulfed the globe.

The overthrow not only of ancient structures of Church and State and
their replacement by new ones involved a transformation not just of institutions, but of modes of thought, culminating in the discovery that the very order of Nature was itself not immutable, but had evolved and would continue to evolve in the future. Change, it seemed, was the only constant. Yet change must always be change of something: in the social sphere, of social structures and cultural values. It now became important, therefore, to work out a theory of society which would also be a theory of social change.

The dynamic of industrial capitalism in Europe had been intellectually codified in the shape of the ‘laws’ of laissez-faire economics and positivist sociology, which, it was assumed, were of universal validity, true irrespective of time and place. Knowledge of those laws gave mankind, for the first time in history, the ‘positive’ capacity to overcome scarcity and therefore to do away with conflict, even to change Nature: the possibility of a rationally ordered world summed up in the phrase savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour pouvoir. To conservatives, we had already entered this new realm of freedom. For radicals, that freedom was contradicted because it was confined to a few; for the majority, it was only potential. In the richest countries on earth, millions lived in hunger and sickness.

The spread of Western capitalism wrought a parallel transformation of social life across the globe at the cost of the immiserization of far more millions. By the 1880s, the world had been divided up among a few Western industrial Powers. But within only a generation, capitalism was overthrown in one of the largest countries on earth. The USSR was thenceforward to be the model for those who wanted to overthrow capitalism in their countries also. For all its size, however, the Soviet Union did not become the leader of a Second World of other socialist states until after the Second World War. And there were far more who wanted to overthrow not capitalism, but foreign capitalism; nationalists who were neither social revolutionaries nor desirous of restoring the past, to whom the West was a far more acceptable and more impressive model of modernization. All that was needed, it seemed, was control of one’s own political institutions. The support of the masses for that project was won by telling them that independence was the precondition for economic expansion which would benefit everyone.

The rapid growth of even the capitalist ‘late-comers’, in Europe, Germany, and Italy; in Asia, Japan, was so impressive that it blinded many people to the failure of the countries of Latin America, politically independent since the early nineteenth century, either to industrialize themselves or to emancipate themselves from the economic domination of the West. It was these countries, inevitably, though unconcerned with the ‘nation-building’ that preoccupied those recent ex-colonies that came together as the Third World after the Second World War, that were the first to develop the modern theories of dependency and underdevelopment which were rapidly taken up by the newly-independent countries.

‘Underdevelopment’, of course, is a relative concept. It does not mean undeveloped, for all societies are the end-products of thousands of years of development. They are underdeveloped in relation to the ‘advanced’, industrialized countries. But when Europeans first arrived in Africa and the Americas, they often found themselves dealing with societies whose levels of economic development and cultural sophistication were superior or equal to anything Europe could show. Their underdevelopment, today, is not a natural condition, but an unnatural one, a social state which is the product of history; not a passive condition, but the consequence of conscious action; not something that just happened, governed by the logic of an impersonal system, but something that was done to people by other people. Underdevelopment did not mean ossification—the absence of change. Nor was it just an economic process. It meant the transformation of every dimension of life for the majority of the people of the world who lived in those countries that underwent underdevelopment. That is why a Caribbean historian entitled his study of African history, ‘How Europe Underdeveloped Africa’ (my italics). 3

The continent most resistant to European conquest was Asia, not just because of its size, or the distances involved, but because until the eighteenth century, Europe possessed neither the military superiority nor the capacity to offer in trade anything much that Asia needed. Rather, the Asian commodities of spices, silks and fine textiles were eagerly sought after. They were paid for, not in the products of Europe, but with the wealth: gold and silver bullion plundered from America.

The conquest and settlement of the New World—‘by far the most important thing in the history of the Old’—was the first phase in a process that was to end in the creation, for the first time in human history, of a world system of society. 5 But it was a system with two major components, divided by a ‘global rift’ between the imperialist countries and their victims: politically, in the domination of new constructs called colonies by the metropolitan countries; economically, in the conversion of the colonies into producers of raw materials supplied to consumers and manufacturers in the West; and culturally, in the reduction of the extraordinary variety of institutions and ways of thought developed in innumerable societies to a simple dichotomy: in Sartre’s words, a world divided into ‘five hundred million men and one thousand five hundred million natives’. 7

The societies the Europeans encountered were as diverse in their political structures—acephalous bands and chiefdoms; loose federal states in which the kingship rotated round a number of royal houses; highly centralized despotisms, and ‘bureaucratic’ empires—as in the bewildering variety of their exotic cultures. The logic of conquest was to stamp all of the new colonies with certain common features: political control from Europe; unbridled economic exploitation; and the construction of a racist social
order. But the colonial relationship was a relationship between societies, each of which had its own distinctive social institutions and its own internal social differences, its own culture and subcultures. Despite the political power of the conqueror, each colony was the product of a dialectic, a synthesis, not just a simple imposition, in which the social institutions and cultural values of the conquered was one of the terms of the dialectic. Histories of colonialism written by imperialists ignore one of these terms: history is the story of what the White man did. Nationalist historiography has developed a contrary myth: a legend of 'national' resistance which omits the uncomfortable fact of collaboration.

How it was possible for Cortés to set out to defeat the might of the Aztecs with a force of only 600 Spaniards, and succeed, or for Pizarro to conquer Peru with only 180, has to be explained. In later centuries, the British in India and in Africa similarly defeated armies many times larger than their own. In the nineteenth century, technological—especially military—superiority seemed an adequate enough explanation: we had the Gatling gun and they did not. The horses and muskets of the Spaniards, and the ships of the Portuguese had also been superior to the equipment of their opponents. But by no means decisively so. Brutality is a second explanation, from the Spanish massacres at Cholula and Cajamarca to Leopold's Congo, where 10 million were killed in thirteen years and those who failed to bring in their ivory or rubber quota had their hands chopped off. It was enough to demoralize even the bravest. When his chief minister and old friend, Ras Engada, was blown to pieces before his eyes by a British shell in 1868, Theodoros, the Emperor of Abyssinia, 'showed no outward sign of emotion'. All he said was, "How can one fight with people who use such terrible missiles?" But he refused to surrender, saying, "Let us not fall into men's hands; they have no pity. Let us fall into God's". Soon afterwards, he... put his pistol into his mouth and pulled the trigger. 8

But the Abyssinians did continue to resist European invasion, and in 1896 defeated the Italian army at Adowa. Smaller societies would usually give in without a fight once they had seen the fate of those who did resist.

Yet Aztec wars for sacrificial victims, or African kingdoms which raided their neighbours for slaves to sell to the White man, had been just as brutal. And other highly-organized societies besides the Abyssinians were able to defeat European forces even in the nineteenth century: the Afghans, the Zulus and the Ashanti all defeated British armies.

The victories of earlier conquerors, less well-equipped, had depended, more than anything else, on their understanding of the social systems and cultures of their opponents. Cortés' victory was only possible because he was able to exploit the enmity between Tenochtitlán and Texcoco and Tlaxcala, which provided him with tens of thousands of men. Pizarro's arrival was welcomed by the Cañari and other peoples and factions who had paid the penalty for choosing the wrong side in the succession war between Atahualpa, ruler of the northern part of the Empire based on Quito, and Huascar, ruler of Cuzco, that had only just finished. Plassey, which won India for Britain, was 'hardly a battle at all'. Clive, with a motley force of only 950 European infantry and 150 gunners, half of them 'topasses' and French turncoats, and 2,000 sepoys, against Nawab Suraj-ud-Daulah's 50,000 foot and 18,000 horsemen plus superior artillery, triumphed, in the end, because one of the Nawab's generals, Mir Jafar, defected with his troops. 9 Cortés and Pizarro also exploited the cultural vulnerability of peoples to whom their kings were gods. Following a tactic they had learned among simpler peoples in the Caribbean, Moctezuma and Atahualpa were seized as hostages and killed. Cortés, a bearded White man, had been addressed by Moctezuma as 'Quetzalcóatl', the god who had returned and whom he welcomed back to his throne. He had appeared at the end of one of the fifty-two-year cycles, when, it was believed, the continuity, not just of society, but of the whole cosmic order was uncertain. Without elaborate rituals, the sun itself, the source of life, might never rise again.

The Spaniards, for their part, had been massively ignorant about what they would find: searching for the Indies, they found America. The Governor of Havana had particularly charged Cortés to keep an eye out for those 'strange beings with big flat ears and others with dogs' faces who live in the lands of the Aztecs'. What they actually found, in present-day Mexico and in the Andes, were two gigantic empires. Their initial hopes had been dashed. In the islands of the Caribbean there had been little gold, and barbarous tribes. They themselves came from a country in which capitalism was little developed. Spain, a 'dry, barren, impoverished land', a country of only eight million people, had acquired an empire more populous than any country in Europe.

After Conquest, there were only handfuls of men available to administer the tens of millions of their new subjects. 'Indirect rule' – the co-option of indigenous rulers, chiefs, nobles, and the use of existing structures of administration, especially at lower levels – was the nineteenth-century invention of Lord Lugard. It was an unavoidable necessity from the beginnings of colonization, and one which had the merit of providing a patina of legitimacy. In the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, in the absence of European women, the conquerors took native wives and concubines, a physical miscegenation that was to eventuate in social miscegenation: in American, mestizo cultures instead of Spanish, metropolitan culture. By the time the last colonies were established in the late nineteenth century, such cultural miscegenation was no longer possible, not just because the colonial period was too short to permit ancient religions to be wiped out, or because the colonized were numbered in hundreds of millions – the Spaniards had faced similar odds – nor because the British were Protestants and the
extirpation of heresy and conversion to Catholicism a primary rationale of conquest for Spain, but because in the four hundred years in between, human relations between the West and the colonial world had been poisoned by the central fact of the slave trade. Economic and political domination was now buttressed by racist barriers to social intercourse of every kind. The British in India married only their own women back home or those who came out on the annual 'fishing fleet', looking for husbands.

The force that had driven the Spaniards to undertake the lunatic project of defeating empires of many millions with powerful armies was not religion. Cortés tells us what it was: 'We Spaniards', he wrote, 'suffer from an affliction of the heart which can only be cured by gold...I came in search of gold and not to work the land like a labourer.' He was to end up a marquis; his followers, mainly men of humble origins from the poorer regions of Spain, a new settler class endowed with estates and the Indians to work them. Yet there could have been no conquest without fanatical faith and bottomless arrogance. The faith of the Spaniards was no other-worldly philosophy: it was an historical product, part and parcel of a fierce nationalism born of eight centuries of rule by Muslim conquerors whose yoke had finally been thrown off only seven months before Columbus sailed. Under Indian attack in Central America, half a century later, Coronado, the captain-general, invoked that tradition: 'You are Spaniards, sons of noble parentage. Now is the time to show your qualities. Be not afraid, for it is natural that the Spanish nation should accomplish feats that outshine in their greatness all others.'

An elaborate apparatus of political control was now brought into being to keep these bold spirits firmly under metropolitan control. The Indies, in true Absolutist style, were annexed, not to Spain, but to the Crown of Castile. All trade with America was the monopoly of the port of Seville. And under Philip II, Spain 'passed out of the age of the conquistador into the age of the civil servant'. Though all colonies are 'administrative societies', no states, Elliott has written, 'were more governed in the sixteenth century than those of the King of Spain'.

At the apex of the overall bureaucratic machine stood the Council of the Indies. Within the colonies, political, administrative, and judicial power was carefully distributed between the Viceroy and the audiencias. Lest they become too powerful or develop local attachments, officials were rotated, and their actions subjected to continuous monitoring and periodic inspections.

The contradictions inherent in this system were not simply technical - that, for instance, it took eight months to get letters back and forth. They were also social. But they were only to mature with the emergence of a propertied class whose prosperity was frustrated by the prohibition on trade with other colonies, and who were the descendants of generations of criollos born in America; with the defection of similarly local-born civil servants who resented superiors, usually Spaniards, appointed from Spain; and with political leadership from specialists in ideology in close contact with the ordinary people: the lower-level clergy of a Church unique even in Europe for its degree of subjection to royal control and subject to even more stringent and detailed interference in the New World, which included a ban on direct contacts with Rome.

The Spanish economy was dominated by a wool industry strongly controlled by the Crown; its agriculture was 'distinctly unhealthy'. Manorial tenants had only been released from servile tenure and allowed to sell their own property and to move in 1480, twelve years before Columbus' voyage. Colonial 'adventurers' were especially uninterested in agriculture or any other form of manual toil. Their voyages, like those of their counterparts in other countries, were financed by wealthy backers, including the Crown, who hoped for profits which could amount to fifty times the original investment. What they were engaged in, however, was not production in the sense of industry: the transformation of raw materials through the application of human labour. Even less was it founded upon capitalist relations of production: the relationship of wage-labour to capital. It was not even trade very often, but what Weber termed 'booty capitalism' and ordinary people called piracy or pillage: the use of force either to seize goods produced by others in quite non-capitalist ways or to compel them to collect what nature provided, not so much mercantile activity as a kind of indirect hunting-and-collecting under duress. Based on the use of means of violence and often backed by the power of the State, these were supremely political forms of economic activity, a phase Marx called 'primitive' accumulation, which other areas were only to experience in the nineteenth century, with the ransacking of the islands of Melanesia for sandalwood, of New Guinea for bird-of-Paradise feathers, and of the Amazon for wild rubber.

Production proper began with the introduction of farming on a limited scale by White settlers who produced a variety of crops, mainly for local consumption. But they were soon driven out by a revolutionary form of agriculture first developed by the Portuguese in the islands off the west coast of Africa, especially Madeira: sugar plantations worked by slave labour, which at first included Whites, but of which Africa soon became the main supplier. Columbus' idea of compensating for the limited supply of gold and other natural resources in the Indies by exporting its human resources was now reversed as Africa became the main arena for the hunting and gathering of human beings.

The new, centralized organization of the plantation, which involved a new work-discipline as well as a new division of labour, was to provide a model or prototype for the later organization, in Europe and in the colonial obrasjes, of new kinds of non-agricultural productive enterprises: the manufacturing
units, named ‘factories’, like the trading-posts of early colonial times, which employed wage-labourers under conditions of such intensive labour and such loss of control over their work that the workers called it ‘wage-slavery’, analogous to the true slavery of the West Indies.

Sugar was so immensely profitable a crop – a ‘licence to print money’, as we now say of television – that in some colonies the cultivation of anything else was actually forbidden. But even these figurative gold-mines in the tropical lowlands were to remain of secondary importance for over a century and a half once the Spaniards had discovered what they had really come for: real gold and silver, not in handfuls of alluvial dust as in Hispaniola, but in huge quantities in the mines of Mexico and Peru. To a priest who complained that the Indians were being exploited, not converted, Pizarro retorted: ‘I have not come for any such reason. I have come to take away from them their gold.’ The payment of tribute in kind had been heavy enough:

The Indians of Parinacocha have to carry their tribute over two hundred miles to Cuzco: wheat, maize, cloth, bars of silver, etc. Indian men are loaded with it, and so are the women, the pregnant ones with their heads on their swollen bellies and those who have given birth with their babies on top of the loads. [They] climb with their loads up slopes that a horse could not climb.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, it was their labour they were supplying to the mines of Potosí, from one province alone

... with their wives and children... more than seven thousand souls. Every Indian... takes with him eight or ten sheep and a few alpacas to eat... Indian corn and potato flour, their covers for sleeping, masts to guard against the cold, which is sharp, for they sleep in the open. All this cattle generally exceeds thirty thousand head... [The journey] takes two months, since the cattle cannot travel quicker, nor their children of five and six years whom they take with them... No more than two thousand souls ever return... at the end of six months, four in the mines, working twelve hours a day, going down at times seven hundred feet, down to where night is perpetual... making quite four to five hours, step by step, and if they make the slightest false step, they may fall... and when they arrive... a mineowner scolds them because they did not come quickly enough or because they did not bring enough load, and for the slightest reason makes them go down again.

To the churchmen who sailed with the expeditions, however, conquest was merely a divine instrument, a means to the higher end of saving the souls of the unbaptized from perdition. For most of them, the barbarities of conquest and the harshness of colonial rule could therefore be justified. But there were others, some inspired by the millenarian beliefs of Joachim of Flores newly published in the year Cortés landed, others by the new humanism, who reminded laymen that the Church was not a mere arm of the State, but superior to it: the City of God on earth. Ancient beliefs and garbled versions of the new marvels discovered by explorers were jumbled together in fantastic amalgam: wondrous animals and plants; bestial men with only one eye: hermaphrodites; people who lived on the perfume of fruits like the tropical birds which lived off flowers; women who removed one breast to fire their arrows – images projected onto the peoples and places they found and today preserved in the name of the world's largest river. Others sought not only the gold of El Dorado, but the land of Eternal Youth, where sickness was unknown. Inspired by reports that Christians converted by Saint Thomas centuries ago had been found in India, they shifted the myth to the new Indies. The Garden of Eden, they believed, had not been in the Middle East, but in America; the fruit which gave knowledge of Good and Evil had not been the apple, but the maracuyá, the passion-fruit. By the time these myths were being abandoned by Europeans, they were being taken up with fervour by those they had christianized. The worship of the black Virgin of Guadalupe, who had miraculously appeared to an Indian, became the main expression of the counter-culture of the oppressed Indians of colonial Mexico. By the time of Independence, it had become the symbol of Mexican nationhood.  

The economic exploitation of the Indian thus bore no resemblance to the theoretical categories developed in laissez-faire economic theory to describe a later phase of capitalism. The bonds between encomendero and Indian were not those of the cash-nexus or of a market in labour: they were extra-economic, political ties of bondage. They also involved the construction not merely of an economic system, but of a whole new social order based on racial categories. The mass of the people, we shall see, were assigned to the hitherto unknown category of 'Indian'.

These new Indians turned in their suffering to those whose authority derived from their specialized role as interpreters of the Christian religion: the friars who lived close to them and who supplied cultural images of the world and interpretations of the meaning of life in this vale of tears. Religion was not just, as functionalist accounts would have it, solely an arm of the State. It was also the 'heart of a heartless world'. The Word of the God of the conquerors was susceptible of different interpretations by different priests—and by the Indians themselves. Indian Christianity was no more solely a
religion of protest than was resistance the only political response to conquest. More often, it expressed identification with the bleeding Christ. Just as political opportunists and economic entrepreneurs seized the new openings available to them, often exploiting their fellows in the process, so many jumped at the chance to learn new skills and acquire Spanish education through the Church.

Nor was the Church the only source of images and explanations, or the only vehicle for expressing ideas and feelings. In village versions of Spanish folk-plays celebrating the victory of the Christians over the Moors, the Indians identified with the Moors. Brilliant intellectuals like the mestizo Garcilaso de la Vega, and the Indian Guzmán Poma, tried, in the aftermath of the Conquest, to make sense of it all, producing sophisticated cosmological histories which drew upon both indigenous and European world-views. Garcilaso's evolutionist historiography, which idealized the Inca past and denigrated Spanish dominion, embraced everything from the differences in the fauna and flora of the Old and the New Worlds to the existence of monotheism in traditional religion. Guzmán, despite his professed Christianity, developed an even more elaborate cosmology, in over one thousand pages, in which, however, it was Indian categories which supplied the framework of time and space: Adam and Eve and Christ, David and Abraham, the mummies of the Emperors and the Day of the Dead, were fitted together within a new, proto-nationalist synthesis. The world had passed through five ages (which were given precise dates) before the Spaniards arrived, the Inca Empire being the fifth of these. Today, he wrote, the kingdom of Castile was paramount in a world divided between the kingdom of the Indies in the West; the kingdom of Rome in the East; the kingdom of Guinea in the North; and the kingdom of Turkey in the South. But clearly Cuzco was destined to be the future 'new Rome', owing to its location at the centre of the world, the intersection of these four divisions, which clearly correspond to the four Inca divisions: Chinchasuyo (the West), Antisuyo (the North), Collasuyo (the East) and Cutisuyo (the South). Guzmán actually proposed the establishment of a world council presided over by the king of Spain, who had clearly taken over the role of the Inca emperor as monarch of the Universe.

But the Indies were the top of the world, the zone of light, under heaven; Castile lay in the lower half, above the infernal region. Socially, what the schema meant was that the rights of the traditional Inca aristocracy had been pre-empted by jumped-up Spaniards; the future would see the displacement of Spain and the ushering-in of a messianic epoch of 'good Christianity'.

We have paid particular attention to Spanish colonialism because Spain succeeded first in establishing a world empire. That colonial relationship was fateful both for the colonized and the colonizer. For the colonies, it meant ruthless exploitation, the loss of political autonomy, and savage cultural colonization. For Spain, it meant the distortion of her economy, ultimately economic paralysis; imperial delusions of grandeur and social and cultural stagnation.

But Spanish colonialism was not the prototype of colonialism generally. Each colony, and each empire, was to develop its own special character. All of them were stamped with the branding-iron of colonialism, which marked them as property. But it also marked them as the private property of particular masters. Each colony was the product of a particular colonial equation in which the two sets of terms were never identical with those in any other colonial equation: differences not only of economic and political structure, but also social and cultural. The outcomes were necessarily vastly dissimilar: the encounter between a newly-forged Spanish Absolutist state and a feudal society and powerful indigenous states was to result in a doubly Absolutist colonial system; that between Britain, undergoing political revolution against the monarchy and recalcitrant Nonconformist settlers in New England, produced a new kind of democracy in America. By the time of the East India Company's conquest of India, Britain was a changed country; the outcome was a vastly different society, India. Before long, Christianity began to be displaced as the dominant mode of thought of the rulers. The colonized now fastened upon new ideologies, of positivistic science, of liberalism, nationalism, and, eventually, of socialism, in order to express their own aspirations.

These changes were not simply points along a linear continuum of the development of capitalism. They were discontinuities. By the time of the conquest of India, capitalism had entered a new phase, one of radical disjuncture from the mercantile capitalism of the past, as capitalism became the dominant mode of production at home and, eventually, abroad. It also involved the construction of a new international division of labour, in which a subordinate role was allocated to the colonies.

The crucial commodity supplied to Europe by the colonies during the first phase of colonialism was not raw materials for European industry, or even consumer goods, but capital. Nationalist historiography in the Third World often attributes the development of Europe to colonial primitive accumulation: Africans subside it to the slave trade, Latin Americans to the silver and gold of the Americas, Indians to the introduction of capitalism in agriculture and the destruction of Indian industry, Caribbean writers to the triangular trade in sugar and rum, Chinese to the profits from opium and tea. Those contributions, however, should not be exaggerated, and they could become significant to Europe only because modernization was already the order of the day. Even in Spain, less than a quarter of the king's revenues came from American silver. And while the capital accumulated by the nabobs of the East India Company gave Britain an invaluable edge over other competitors and imperial rivals, most of the capital that went to
modernize agriculture and industry in those countries which were to emerge in the nineteenth century as the first industrial countries and eventually as the major imperialist Powers came mainly from profits generated at home. Once invested, in any case, the origins of the different capitals became a matter of historical interest only. But the colonies became an increasingly important market for British goods. By 1700, colonial trade amounted to 15 per cent of British commerce and by 1775 to as much as a fifth. By the middle of the nineteenth century, between £200 million and £300 million of British capital investment - a quarter in the USA, almost a fifth in Latin America - brought back dividends and orders from all parts of the world.  

The British industrial economy grew out of commerce and especially commerce with the underdeveloped world. Even then, European production was to remain inferior to Asian, both in quantity and quality, and was only able to eventually outstrip the latter, not through its ability to compete on the free market, but through the use of political force to destroy the Indian textile and shipping industries. 

The new industrializing countries, notably Britain, were able to displace Spain because that country, instead of using the wealth of the Indies to modernize its metropolitan economy, dissipated it in consumption and imperial adventure in Europe. The decline of the supply of gold and silver in the eighteenth century, then, was not the cause of the decline of Spain; rather that decline had begun precisely because those commodities had been superabundant for two centuries. From the first decades of the arrival of the treasure-ships, bankruptcy became a chronic condition for Spain: in 1557, 1575, 1596, 1607, 1627, 1647, 1653 and 1680, by which year 'two-thirds of the silver in the treasure-fleet went straight to foreigners without even entering Spain', 30 to pay for goods and services provided by more advanced countries. There was no need for pirates like Drake. By 1703 Portugal had become a client state of Britain, where a half to three-quarters of the gold of Brazil ended up.

Stavrianos has divided the history of the Third World into three stages. In the first, between 1400 and 1770, commercial capitalism became the dominant framework within which, firstly Eastern Europe, then Latin America, was underdeveloped, transformed into appendages of the economies of Western Europe. The second phase, from 1770 to 1870, marked the transition to the epoch of industrial capitalism and its spread across the globe. The third, from 1870 to 1914, its consolidation, with the rise of monopoly capitalism and a world system of imperialism. No sooner was it established than backwards-looking primary resistance was to give way to movements for national independence, many of which, after the Russian Revolution of 1917, had strong socialist and communist components.

Underdevelopment thus began, not in the Americas, in Africa or in Asia, but in Europe, with the transformation of Eastern Europe into a region supplying wheat and other primary materials to the more dynamic economies of Western Europe. The contemporary division into East and West thus long antedates the rise of communism.

These economic developments could not have occurred without concomitant wholesale political transformations: in Eastern Europe, the 'second servdom'; outside Europe, the establishment of colonies and trading-posts and their eventual consolidation into empires. In the Americas, initial piratical primitive accumulation and mercantilist trade gave way to the setting-up of productive enterprises - plantations and mines - worked by unfree, including slave, labour, relations which were totally different from the capitalist organization of production based on wage-labour. The arrival of capitalism in Asia at first involved no such disjunctural invention of new kinds of production-unit, simply the subordination of the major traditional unit of production, the household, to the new controls of the market and to new capitalist work-disciplines.

In the first, mercantilist phase, the colonial economy had been based on the ownership of land and other resources conferred or confirmed as private property, or converted into it, by the State. Much of the crop would end up in the hands of the State, which could market that part of the tribute that it did not use directly. Landowners, as the legal owners of the product of other people's labour on their land, also marketed grain, as did landlords, who acquired it as rent, and as those peasants able to market the product of their own labour surplus to subsistence needs. By the second, industrial phase, capitalist companies were becoming directly involved in the productive process itself, especially in manufacture. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the output of the Indian weaver was controlled by one of the East India Company's servants, a 'man with a cane who would watch over the weaver and beat him to "quicken his deliveries"'.  

A great deal of what arrived on the market, however, both agricultural commodities as well as manufactures, was not produced by wage-labour at all, but by unfree producers of all kinds - slaves, serfs, and into this century, those in debt-peonage. Capitalist market relations, then, have been perfectly compatible with non-capitalist ways of producing, all of which are commonly lumped together, sloppily, as the 'capitalist mode of production'. In the Third World today, production by landless proletarians, working land and machines owned by others and paid wages for the hours they put in - the pure form of the capitalist labour process - though fast becoming the dominant mode of production, still co-exists with agricultural and even manufacturing still based on the use of family labour.

The linking together of all these forms of economic activity across the globe into a single, interconnected economic system was necessarily a protracted and uneven process. By the nineteenth century, whole societies...
had already been converted into zones of monocultural agriculture, 'factories without chimneys', as Furnivall called Burma. Some, like Egypt, were to become vast cotton plantations; others banana plantations; yet others dependent, literally, on peanuts, or in extreme cases, on such specialized commodities as cloves. Scientific imperialism was an integral part of the process. The tropics were ransacked for the seeds of rubber, quinine, tea, coffee, and other plants, which were brought back to Kew, subjected to careful selection, and then disseminated to Imperial Botanic Gardens in Ceylon, Malaya, the West Indies and elsewhere. By the twentieth century, whole regions were specializing in the production of coca in and heroin for the US market.

Europe's irruption into the Asian scene had begun in 1498, when Vasco da Gama, led by the Arab pilot, Ahmad ibn-Majid, discovered the Cape route to the East. From then on, the historic trade-routes between Asia and the West, centred upon the Middle East, were to be bypassed, and cities like Cairo were to sink into decay. Only a century after Columbus, Asian spices were reaching the Middle East from North-west Europe, via the new route round the Cape. The Portuguese, first in the field, tried to keep the new wealth of the East under their control by making maps of the sea-route top secret. Their initial success provoked even more boundless ambition: the Spaniards, inspired by their conquests in America, dreamed of displacing the Portuguese in Asia. Some believed that 5,000 Spaniards could take China as easily as they had conquered the Aztecs and the Incas, or that they might break Muslim resistance by diverting the Nile to the Red Sea or raiding Mecca and seizing the Prophet's body.

Portuguese naval artillery and gunnery, and the manoeuvrability of their ships, proved superior enough to that of their opponents to give them the edge in the somewhat inconclusive battle of Diu, against the Egyptian fleet, in 1509. After that engagement, there was little to stop them at sea. Albuquerque, the Portuguese admiral and governor, could soon boast that 'at the rumour of our coming, the native ships all vanished, and even the birds ceased to skim over the water'. By 1513, they were in Canton.

This maritime superiority, however, was by no means so effective when it came to tackling the empires of the Asian land-mass. The inferiority of the Europeans — cultural as well as economic — seemed self-evident to Asian potentates when they first encountered them. The Ottoman Empire had 50 million subjects when England had 5 million. In 1666, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire addressed the French ambassador as a 'Giaour' [unbeliever], 'a hogge, a dogge, a turde eater'. A century later, news of the alliance between France and Austria was treated as of no more consequence than 'the union of one hog with another'. When John Russell, Cromwell's grandson, arrived in Mogul India in 1712, he had to make obeisance to the Emperor, requesting 'the smallest particle of sand... with his forehead at command rub'd on the Ground, and reverence due from a Slave'.

But Europe was fast outstripping the East. Only thirty-two years after that last insult, the French ambassador could describe the Ottoman Empire as 'one of the richest colonies of France'.

Spanish and Portuguese expansion in the East fizzled out, leaving behind a few decaying forts in stagnant coastal enclaves. In much of East Africa, they were expelled by superior Arab forces. But even at their height, the Portuguese in Asia had functioned merely as carriers and middlemen in a purely intra-Asian trade. Before the nineteenth century, Asian handicrafts had 'never left any important place for European goods, and European factory products found no admittance in Asia before the advent of mass production of consumer goods in Western Europe'. For two and a half centuries after da Gama, Europeans were effectively excluded from the Indian subcontinent.

The same initial conceit and hauteur were displayed by Ch'ien Lung, Emperor of China, when he received George III's emissary, Lord Macartney, in 1793. China, the Emperor declared, had no need of any of Europe's products and even less of her bizarre religious doctrines. But the Europeans would be graciously allowed to establish hongs — small trading posts on the coast, similar to those to which the Japanese had confined European traders and missionaries, in order to give them access to the Chinese goods they needed. Yet within half a century the gateway to the trade of China was to be blasted open in the Opium Wars.

The Industrial Revolution in Western Europe was based on a revolution in production: on the application of science to machinofacture and on new methods of organizing work:

For the first time in human history, the shackles were taken off the productive power of human society, which henceforth became capable of the constant, rapid and up to the present limitless multiplication of men, goods and services.

The new industries depended increasingly for many crucial raw materials upon colonial imports: rubber, oil and minerals. Growing prosperity also meant a revolution in consumption. Spices, silks and fine textiles, the historic luxury imports from the East, were now displaced by a new mass demand for sugar, tea, coffee, and other tropical commodities. Between 1850 and the first World War, real wages in England and France doubled. To meet this demand, political power was used to introduce new, capitalist forms of production in the colonies:

It was a silent but far-reaching revolution that the plantation system introduced... Previously, the Dutch had only been merchants buying the spices and rice... and selling them at a profit. True, they used their
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powers to establish a monopoly, but beyond this the trading activities did not interfere with the life of the people. But the change over into a plantation economy involved the actual exploitation of labour, a control of the economic activity of the population and an effective supervision in fact ‘estate management’ over a whole country. The island of Java became a plantation of the Dutch United East India Company. The relations between the sovereign [the Company, P.W.] and its subjects were in substance those of planter and coolie, in which the former was not merely the employer of labour, but also the authority vested with the rights of life and death. A whole people was converted by the exercise of sovereignty into a nation of estate coolies, with their own natural aristocracy reduced to the position of foremen and superintendents.41

Attempts to introduce Western technology – and not only guns – had begun as far back as 1520 in Ethiopia and in the eighteenth century in Western Africa. They had all been frustrated. In the nineteenth century, Turkey’s attempt to establish a ‘Turkish Manchester and Leeds’ was blocked by Western interests. Mohammed Ali’s efforts to modernize Egypt were brought to an end with the brutal invasion mounted by Palmerston to restore the nominal authority of the Sultan. Foreign debts, including the costs of military occupation, now became the first charge on treasuries and customs services often directly run by foreigners.42

Existing industry (notably textiles and ship-building in India) was now dismantled in order to eliminate competition with Lancashire and the Clyde. The colonies were agriculturalized: in 1891, 61 per cent of the population of India were working in agriculture; by 1921, 73 per cent.

THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

To nineteenth-century Europeans, the superiority of their culture was self-evident: it was a total superiority of ‘civilization’ over barbarism and superstition, not just an economic superiority. To Christians, it was attributable to their possession of the True Faith; the wretchedness of those they evangelized to their ignorance of the Word of God. But a more modern explanation was available: the doctrine of evolutionary progress through natural selection, which was soon transformed into Social Darwinism: the doctrine of ‘the survival of the fittest’. For some, this meant the permanent inferiority of the ‘unfit’ races; for others, it was compatible with the notion that unlike animals or plants, human beings could acquire the prerequisites of social development, not just via religious conversion, but through learning European ways. Simple techniques (like how to work) might be acquired quickly; others (like how to govern themselves) might take generations. Either way, what was to be learned was what had already been learned in Europe.

These ideas have persisted through to our day, albeit formulated in more sophisticated ways. They still inform the aid policies of the industrialized countries and of international agencies, as well as academic theories of development.

‘Development’ only became a distinct field of study after 1945, with the emergence of an ever-increasing number of ‘new nations’ which soon came to constitute a ‘Third World’ alongside the First and Second. The achievement of political independence, it was widely assumed, would now make possible rapid economic development. For most, this meant capitalist development. Hence the theory which best captured this mood of optimism and which drew, too, upon deep-seated evolutionist modes of thought: W. W. Rostow’s The Stages of Economic Growth (1960) struck responsive chords outside academia. Though an economist, his was not an economic theory. ‘Economic forces and motives’, he wrote, ‘are not a unique and, overriding determinant of the course of history.’ Economic development required not only appropriate economic, technological and demographic conditions, but also appropriate social institutions and value systems. Development was a unilinear process. Though Rostow was one of the architects of the US policy of bombing Vietnam ‘back into the Stone Age’, even communism was a step on the road to development. But it was a ‘disease of transition’, since though State command over the economy might lead to economic expansion, it could never be as effective as a free-market, private-property economy, and would entail the sacrifice of political freedom. The model for underdeveloped countries, therefore, was the ‘open’ society of the West. Such was the arrogance of the USA, the greatest Power in human history, at this time, that even a distinguished liberal, David Riesman, could remark that ‘it is not only Westerners who find it hard not to assume that the non-Western nations must either fail or follow one of the courses already marked out by the West’.43

And eventually, ‘convergence’ theorists argued, capitalism and communism as we now know them would both give way to a new, ‘post-industrial’ society: in the USA, the State was already playing an ever more important interventionist role, not only in the economy, but in all spheres of life, while the growing prosperity of the USSR meant that it would no longer be necessary for the State to control access to scarce goods. Both production incentives and the allocation of goods could be left more and more to the market. The cultural counterpart of this liberalization would be the relaxation of ideological controls.

Post-industrial society would necessitate the recruitment of vast numbers
of skilled personnel, especially in the tertiary sector, who would be recruited on the basis of competence, via ‘meritocratic’ open competition, for entry into mass higher education. From their ranks, a new managerial élite controlling the economy, the State and civil society would be selected, replacing the older ruling classes whose power had been based on their monopoly of private property or on their political skills. The pyramid of social structure of the past, with few at the top, the vast majority at the bottom, and a small middle class, would be replaced by a diamond-shaped class structure in which most people would be in the middle, with only a small managerial élite and the unqualified at each extreme. All this, indeed, was already happening. Democracy, US-style, Lipset claimed, was ‘the good society... in operation’. Older sectional class interests, expressed in the ideologies of Big Business and of Labour, were becoming irrelevant; we were witnessing the ‘end of ideology’ and its replacement by rational technocracy.

To many, this optimistic evolutionism was not convincing. The most dominant theoretical school in the West, from the 1950s into the early 1960s, was that which became subsequently known as ‘modernization theory’. All theories of development – or of any other field of social life – are necessarily particular applications of more general theories. In the case of modernization theory, it was the sociological functionalism of Talcott Parsons, in which roles, the atomic elements of institutions which together made up the social system, were imbued with cultural value-orientations, cognitive, expressive, and integrative, which he then grouped according to a set of binary oppositions: between universalistic and particularistic value-orientations; between roles characterized by functional specificity as against functional diffuseness; between roles based on ascription, as against achievement, and roles charged with affectivity rather than affectively neutral; and with further systematic, not random, relations between these sets. These categories were then used by Hoselitz and others to develop a model in which roles in developed countries were seen as typically universalistic, based on achievement, and functionally specific; those in underdeveloped countries as particularistic, based on ascription, and functionally diffuse.

The solution to underdevelopment was diffusion: a simple idea shared by a rapidly-growing army of indigenous technocrats and by foreign technical experts and advisers specializing in development:

You subtract the ideal typical features or indices of underdevelopment from those of development, and the remainder is your development program.Obviously what was needed had to be diffused from the ‘centre’ (particularly the USA) to the ‘periphery’. For materialists, it was technology that was needed, or capital; the only kind of ideas that were relevant were scientific knowledge and technical know-how. For idealists, it was modern values and modernizing attitudes.

The idea that social change might be more important than any of these scarcely appealed to ruling élites or their First World patrons, since it would entail the erosion of their political and economic dominance. Most of the advice about social matters came overwhelmingly from economists. There had, in fact, been plenty of diffusion, during the imperialist era: the introduction of new colonial economic, political and social institutions. But it had always been selective: economic development which threatened the industries of the ‘motherland’ had been stifled, representative democracy refused. To the new intelligentsia, however, it was precisely these institutions and ideas, and later nationalism, socialism and communism, that seemed to offer solutions to the underdevelopment of their countries.

Functionalism is not, as its critics often assume, a theory which ignores the existence of conflict. True, it does not place much emphasis upon conflicts between interest-groups, and its adherents often seem to assume a degree of harmony between the component groups of society which is at variance with the facts. But it does recognize, in principle, that relations between the sub-systems of society is made up are always problematic and can even break down, unless there is a shared belief that it is important to rise above these divisions in the wider interest of keeping society going. Unless such beliefs are effectively communicated and constantly, publicly reaffirmed as a coherent value-system, they will, as Durkheim argued, become ineffective. Those whose job it is to formulate and communicate values, especially intellectuals, are therefore of special importance. Conservatives like Shils argued that if they were poor communicators, or Westernized modernizers out of tune with the mass of society, who still cleaved to traditional beliefs and ways, or if suitable institutions where people could learn those values (schools, churches, etc.) were not available, they would not be adequately disseminated. Those more concerned with development than with stability, such as McClelland, argued that what was needed were modern forms of achievement-orientation equivalent to the Protestant ethic which had supplied a dynamic of individual effort and reward during the formative period of capitalism in the West.

The central assumption was the notion of ‘dualism’, that both economy and society were divided into two sectors: the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’. In Africa, Arthur Lewis argued that the way to achieve economic growth was to shift resources – capital and labour – out of the traditional sector and into the modern, which would then make it possible to modernize agriculture. In Latin America, there was even a left-wing version, in which communists argued that national industrial capital had a ‘patriotic’ role to play, internally, in breaking the power of the traditional landed oligarchies
interested only in agro-export; externally, in preventing the take-over of the economy by foreign multinational corporations.

The dualism of North American modernization theorists, however, was of a different kind. To them, underdevelopment was the consequence of deficiencies internal to the underdeveloped countries themselves, the heritage, not only of their colonial, but of their pre-colonial past: feudal rulers interested only in maintaining their stake in archaic agrarian systems; cultural deficiencies, such as other-worldly religions or the irrational particularisms of tribal loyalties. It was not just a cognitive theory. Implicit in it was what Gouldner has called a 'metaphysical pathos'43: the blame for underdevelopment was laid upon the Third World itself.

It was not difficult for their critics to expose the inadequacy both of the categories and of their capacity to explain the world. In a classic essay, Frank pointed out that the model took insufficient account of power, since some social roles are more decisive for society as a whole than others. Empirically, too, oligarchies in underdeveloped countries controlled all areas of public life in a very 'diffuse' way, while mass movements of a thoroughly 'universalistic' kind were spreading everywhere. Conversely, particularism, in the form of interpersonal networks of legitimate and illegitimate influence, was a quite normal aspect of organizational life in large corporations.

As for the stages of economic growth, those countries longest subject to colonial control were still suppliers of primary goods to the developed world: they were no further along the road to 'take-off' than more recently colonized countries. All of them, too, had been so turned upside down that they had long ceased to be traditional, a term, in any case, which lumped together an immense variety of societies and cultures.

In the 1960s, C. Wright Mills, criticizing sociologists for their lack of a societal vision (most of them, he wrote, had only a 'middle level' consciousness), argued that the relevant unit of analysis, for modern society, was the nation-state. In the Third World, theorists had long been arguing a much more radical position, that the relevant unit of analysis was not the 'country' at all, but the colonial world, or, to some, the entire world. To Alavi, the Third World was shaped by a 'colonial mode of production'. To later 'globologists', the world as a whole was the 'primordial unit of analysis': a 'world mode of production'.44 These were concepts with a special appeal to people in countries that had once been colonies, had long been politically independent, but which had experienced the limits of that independence. The reality was 'neo-colonial', economic dependence. 'Dependency theory' therefore developed first in Latin America. It did not necessarily imply a radical political position. Most of its proponents were mostly quite unrevolutionary technocrats, aiming to promote capitalist, national development. Much of their conceptual equipment, however, was borrowed from Marxists like Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy who had begun the task of assessing the changes in world capitalism since the last major Marxist critique, Lenin's Imperialism, written in 1916.

Lenin's model, Warren has argued, was seriously flawed: imperialism was not a consequence of the rush to export capital from the developed world, nor was there any special up-turn in the volume of capital exported in the second half of the nineteenth century, the high-water period of political imperialism. Capital, rather, actually flowed in. It was trade that grew, far more rapidly, over most of this period:

Lenin's Imperialism was obsolete even before it was translated into English, indeed as soon as it appeared. The great age of capital export was over by 1914. . . . Imperialism, far from being the product of a senile, decaying capitalism compelled to invest abroad the capital it no longer had the 'vigour' to absorb at home, was on the contrary the product of young and vigorous capitalist economies newly emerging onto the international arena to challenge their rivals in trade. The expansion of trade, rather than of foreign investment, was the logical conclusion of the accelerated industrialization of the nineteenth century. . . .45

Other Marxists began by rephrasing the notion of a world system, and of the division of that world into imperialist and exploited countries, as a division into centre and periphery. To even non-Marxist economists, the conception of economic relations as of primary importance, and of other institutions as epiphenomena and of ideologies as mere 'false consciousness', was perfectly acceptable. Using these ideas, a new strategy was devised: of mobilizing national resources so as to replace dependence on agro-exports by industry, which, in the first place, would meet the rising demand for consumer goods in a more readily-controlled internal market: the policy of 'import substitution'.

During the Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War, when foreign competition was weak, the policy met with considerable success. It was a phase of populist mobilization of the masses as well as of encouragement to national capital. But it still left them dependent for more basic goods on foreign imports. By the 1950s, the only way to avoid renewed head-on competition with the foreign multinational corporations, and to acquire the vast amounts of capital needed for the next stage of industrialization, was to invite foreign investments. Ruthless authoritarian repression of organized labour and of political opposition were the political prerequisites; the results, industrialization at the cost of the loss of democracy at home and a new dependency on foreign capital and foreign military support.46

Marxist theorists of dependency rejected both the populist-nationalist solution to this situation and the policies of economic and political collaboration with foreign capitalism of authoritarian governments. The
problem, they asserted, was not one of poverty; these countries were not poor. But the wealth produced in the periphery ended up in the centre. ‘Aid’ was a gigantic deception, designed to deceive humanitarians in the developed countries, but in reality a drop in the bucket compared to the outflow of capital. International capitalism was the problem, not traditionalism.

Marxists now embarked upon major historical studies of how the entire world had been integrated into a single world system, beginning in Eastern Europe and with the voyages of discovery outside Europe, and ending with the triumph of imperialism in the nineteenth century. The emergence of the Third World as a self-conscious political grouping after 1945 was only the end-product of a process that had begun half a millennium earlier. The Third World, as Frank showed for Latin America and Samir Amin for Muslim Africa, had a history. Together with Wallerstein and Stavrianos, they blocked out the general history within which that regional underdevelopment had taken place.54

The limits of this model were precisely those which gave it its strength: it was a model of a total system in which the parts, whether countries or types of countries,55 were analysed solely in terms of political economy. Politically, to be told that ‘for the underdeveloped parts of the world to develop, the structure of the world social system must change’,56 seemed a profoundly demobilizing counsel of despair not only to reformers striving to improve education or health — and sometimes succeeding — but even to revolutionaries for whom the only practical possibility was not to change the entire world, but their own society. The very different kinds of dependence — from that of Bolivia or Chile to countries with very high living-standards for the masses but which were still producers of primary commodities, such as Australia, New Zealand or Canada, ‘the world’s richest underdeveloped country’ — did not seem to be illuminated by a theory in which the term ‘underdevelopment’ was equally applied to the poverty-stricken seridio of Brazil’s North-east and to oil-rich Venezuela.57 More seriously, it was objected, industrial development really was happening in many countries. The vast differences of social structure and of culture in all these countries, moreover, called for a very different kind of theory from that which world-system theory provided. Some of the elements could be found in other varieties of Marxism; most had been developed outside Marxism altogether.

The Myth of Base and Superstructure: Dialectics versus Materialism

The problems of Marxist development theory derive from its wider theoretical underpinnings. Marxism, Engels insisted, was itself the product of the historical confluence of three pre-existing intellectual traditions: German philosophical idealism; French social theory; and British political economy. He and Marx, he over-modestly said, had contributed little that was distinctively new.58

A century later, Marxism can obviously no longer be thought of as a unitary thing. There are three main kinds of institutionalized Marxism: Soviet Marxism, Chinese Marxism, and Euro-communism; and fifty-seven varieties of neo-Trotskyism. The two largest are fiercely opposed to each other. As a body of theory, the variety is bewildering. To historians, Marxism is historical materialism; for some philosophers, historical materialism. To yet others, it is a dialectical method, which would still be valid even if all the specific predictions of Marxism proved wrong. For Gramsci, that was too intellectualist an approach. It was also too deterministic. The future was not something that unfolded itself in such a way that what was going to happen could be worked out theoretically in advance. Marxists were, therefore, not in the business of foreseeing the future at all, nor was Marxism merely ‘theoretical praxis’. It was a philosophy of political praxis which enabled people to work out not what would happen, but what needed to be done in order to create the kind of future we wanted for humanity:

Really one ‘foressees’ to the extent to which one acts, to which one makes a voluntary effort and so contributes to creating the ‘foreseen’ result. Foresight reveals itself therefore not as a scientific act of knowledge, but as the abstract expression of the effort one makes, the practical method of creating a collective will . . . To believe that one particular conception of the world, and of life generally, in itself possesses a superior predictive capacity is a cruelly fatuous and superficial error.59

One intellectual tradition Engels did not mention was the newest one of all, one which affected the thinking of everyone in the nineteenth century from churchmen to revolutionaries like himself: positivist evolutionism, whose triumphs in studying and ‘mastering’ Nature, intellectually in the form of the ‘laws of mechanics and biology’ and in the material form of the achievements of modern industry, were taken as the paradigm for ‘scientific’ socialism too. Marxism also dealt in ‘laws’, both the general ‘laws of motion’ of political economy, and particular laws such as the law of the falling rate of profit. Today, even the labour theory of value has its Marxist critics. By the 1970s, a Marxist economist was urging not only that this ‘last iron law of Marxism’ be ‘buried’, but that the nineteenth-century conception of ‘law’ itself be abandoned.60

The limitations of these first attempts to formulate the central postulates of Marxism were apparent even to those who were the custodians of Marx's
archives and the official legatees of his ideas. Not long after the death of Marx and Engels, Eduard Bernstein was arguing that ‘peasants do not sink; middle classes do not disappear; crises do not grow; misery and servitude do not increase.’ His name was to become a synonym, among Marxists, for theoretical heresy and political betrayal. Yet eighty years later it had become possible for a distinguished Marxist historian to go much further: to argue that it was no longer obligatory to always look for an ‘economic’ interpretation of history; that the model of ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ did not explain all ‘dominance and dependence’; that class interests and class struggles were not the only causal factors in history; and that belief in historical laws and historical inevitability, or imputing the ideas of the opponents of Marxism to class interest or bad faith were all merely ‘vulgar’ Marxism – Marxism infected with nineteenth-century evolutionism and positivism. The trouble with that explanation is that Marx and Engels, being creatures of their times, had themselves also absorbed these ways of thinking, not merely their mistaken followers.

Some blamed the Second International inheritors of the Marxist legacy for these misconceptions, not only Eduard Bernstein, Marx’s literary executor, but even Karl Kautsky, the major Marxist political authority after Marx’s death, and were able to invoke Lenin’s authority for so doing. By the 1970s, it had even become possible to blame Engels for much of it. Though Thompson loyally leapt to the defence of the ‘poor old duffer’, the problems the critics had seized upon were not peculiar to Engels’ thought at all. That ‘scientific’ socialism should give rise to predictions which were no better and no worse than most other people’s is not particularly damaging to Marxism except for positivists, for whom the essence of science is its predictive capacity. But the lacunae, inconsistencies, and mistakes are not just particular, accidental misjudgements. Nor can they simply be converted into assets: testimony to Marx’s undoubted open-mindedness: his criticality towards his own ideas: his readiness to change them in the light of fresh evidence; his reluctance to jump to conclusions in the absence of adequate data. All these are certainly aspects of Marx’s genius, of his intellectual honesty and craftsmanship. But even if he had finished more than one of the four volumes that were to make up only one of the six-part study of political economy he had embarked upon, he would still not have constructed a sociology, a science of society. Further, though Marxists hardly ever recognize it, these particular lacunae, inconsistencies and errors derive from deep contradictions in the thoughts of Marx as well as Engels.

In the past, two main kinds of model of society have been used by Marxists: the one-dimensional kind known in the 1930s as the ‘economic theory of history’; and the two-dimensional kind called ‘political economy’. Their limitations should not blind us to their achievements. The former was an understandable and creative reaction to a bourgeois scholarship which saw history either in terms of battles, kings and cabinets, or as a mere succession of events, without pattern or meaning, which could only be chronicled in narrative form, ‘one damned thing after another’. In contrast to that kind of obtuseness, Marxism reinstated a holistic, Renaissance vision, akin to the thrill Keats experienced ‘on first looking into Chapman’s Homer’: a blinding flash of revelation to those never before exposed to the idea that there were connections between Beethoven’s symphonies, Romantic love, and the factory chimneys of Manchester. A similar sense of intellectual illumination and of the opening of new horizons was experienced by a whole generation of natural scientists when Hessen used ‘historical materialism’ to study ‘the social and economic roots of Newton’s Principia’.

The second major contribution of the Marxism of the 1930s was that ordinary people, the classes hitherto ignored or confined to the intellectual ghettos of ‘social’ and ‘labour’ historiography, were thrust onto the centre-stage of history. The more sophisticated, two-dimensional Marxism which emerged after the Second World War went beyond economistic reductionism by exploring the interrelations between the economy, the State and civil society, including studies of culture. But however often materialism was shown to be an inadequate framework for tracing out these interconnections, Marxists clung with religious devotion to the central dogma: the model of society as divided into an economic base, with the rest as superstructure. In its crudest forms, the complexities of relationship between economic and other social institutions, and between these and ideologies, were reduced to a set of simple, one-to-one correspondences; social structure was simply a synonym for class structure; and political parties, even when they patentily cut across classes, were still held to represent the sectional interests of particular classes.

Political economy was also an advance. In a country like South Africa, for instance, it challenged deeply-entrenched assumptions that racial conflict was merely the expression, at the social level, of innate prejudices, or the inevitable consequence of contact between different cultures. Both prejudice and racism, Marxists showed, were constructs: instruments of a deliberate exercise in social engineering: the project of preventing the emergence of class-based solidarity by splitting the working class into sealed-off communities.

But neither kind of Marxism meets the requirements of a Marxist sociology, which necessarily has to be three-dimensional, and in sound and colour. The most notable attempt to formulate what was wrong with one- and two-dimensional Marxism, by Sahlin, focuses on several major ‘antinomies’ in Marx’s thinking: the conception of thought as a Kantian prefiguring v. thought as reflection; the treatment of wants, sometimes as culturally and historically specific (and therefore relative), and at other
times their reduction to system needs; the replacement of the cultural logics which shape economic categories by an asocial calculus of practical reason; the converse treatment of the production and reproduction of culture as a mere epiphenomenal by-product of economic production; the expression of all this in the form of the model of base and superstructure, rather than one of a dialectical interplay between sub-systems and subcultures, not levels; a positivistic stress upon laws, as against a historicist and culturalist conception of the emergence and disappearance of institutions and ideas as society changes its general character; and the opposition between the conception of prediction and the notion of the imposition of human values on the natural world as the quintessential attributes of humanity. Taken together, each of these sets of oppositions, Sahlin argues, constitute different ‘moments’ within Marxism: the one, a naturalistic, utilitarian theory; the other, a cultural version of historical materialism. 55

To this considered critique, the Marxist response has been a resounding silence. The replies it did evoke scarcely damaged Sahlin at all, and were mainly effective only as criticisms of the weakness of his own structuralism.

A system of any kind involves relationships between component elements such that change in one part necessarily leads to changes in the rest. Systems of ideas are no different. But the degree to which all elements necessarily change together and to the same degree varies considerably. Some propositions, moreover, are central building-blocks, essential to the entire structure; others subsidiary. Empiricists are reluctant to impose order which they believe is not found in reality. Others, whose thinking is conditioned by what Pareto called ‘residues of combination’, are given to over-systematizing. The central defect of Parsons’ functionalist sociology, Gouldner has argued, is that it fails to allow for the relative autonomy of the institutional sub-systems of which society is composed. 56 The same is true of functionalist Marxism.

In addition to the three main kinds of institutionalized (political) Marxism, today, there are many other ways in which Marxists can be classified, each of these taxonomies illustrating different facets of these varieties of Marxism. Each, too, contains within it a different set of prescriptions for action, explicit or implicit, and a different conception of historical agency. For some, capitalism is bound to collapse by virtue of its internal contradictions; for others, its demise is not inevitable, it has to be destroyed by collective human action. The problem then becomes one of determining which class is to assume this world-historic role. For Marx and Engels it was the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries. For later revolutionaries, it was the peasantry in the underdeveloped world. To theorists like Marcuse, a century after Marx, it seemed that the working class in the USA was no longer even potentially revolutionary: the forces of change were not classes defined by their relationship to the means of production at all, but such categories of the underprivileged as women and Blacks, in combination with a radicalized youth. This pessimism about the working class in the centres of world capitalism converged, paradoxically, with the optimistic Chinese view that the Third World was ripe for revolution and the Cuban ‘spontanist’ belief that all that was needed was a nucleus of dedicated militants, a foco, which would spark off and detonate mass revolution. Such models are therefore more than cognitive maps; they contain programmes of action.

Marxism, then, like any other system of ideas, is not a thing. It is constantly changing. Any system of ideas, too, deals in general propositions that have to be glossed before they can be applied to concrete situations. Thus, the criteria to be used in allocating people to categories such as ‘proletarian’ or ‘bourgeois’ are matters of considerable debate, and very fateful for the way people will be treated. Normative categories are equally problematic: ‘from each according to his ability to each according to his means’ might look like an unequivocal guide to action, but it leaves open how we are to determine ‘ability’ and ‘need’, and how we are to weight – if at all – different kinds of labour, mental and manual, skilled and unskilled. These are no mere intellectual exercises. They determine who gets what; sometimes, even the difference between life and death.

The variety of Marxisms, however, derives from a further set of social considerations: that like all theories, though they exist in people’s minds, they are intersubjective modes of thought, shared by people who have common attributes and purposes. To understand the theories, we have to situate them socially: to understand the kinds of people, in different kinds of society and cultural situations who use them for distinct purposes. Thus, after Marx’s death, despite its revolutionary content, Marxism became the official creed of the German Social Democratic Party, a party committed to an oppositional role not just in the Reichstag, where it had dozens of MPs, but outside it; and there not only politically – in the shape of a large membership and the support of millions of trade unionists affiliated to the Party – but in the form of a whole institutional subculture of women’s organizations, youth organizations, even holiday organizations, articulated to the Party and opposed to official bourgeois culture at every point: a degree of ‘Gleichschaltung’ that has been called ‘a state within a state’. 57 So profoundly national a party was fated to betray the ideals of ‘proletarian internationalism’, as it did in 1914. All Marxisms, however, necessarily bear the distinctive marks of the society and culture within which they flourish: in the Bolshevik case, the stigma of an underground, highly disciplined and centralized machine. The elements in Marx’s original synthesis were themselves national traditions which did not disappear with the emergence of Marxism, but continue to influence its national varieties to this day. Thus the Marxism of Germany is still stamped with the Hegelianism of the
Frankfurt School, that of French structuralism by Cartesian dualism and systematics.

These intellectual Marxisms can be reduced to two types, which Sahlin synthesizes to two different 'moments' in Marx's own thought: to a cultural strand and a materialist materialism respectively. The crucial distillation of these into different kinds of Marxism was the result of the social transformation of Marxism from a philosophy of revolution to its institutionalization as the official ideology of a state dedicated to economic growth. Soviet Marxism, Gouldner argued in 1970, was becoming a functionalist Marxism. A decade later, that transformation had been completed.

The crisis came in 1953, when the orthodoxy imposed on world communism by the USSR collapsed with the death of its controller. Since that date, intellectual critiques and political heterodoxy have abounded. They can be grouped into two sets: systems Marxism, in which development is something determined independently of human agency (history, Althusser tells us, is a 'process without a subject'); and Prometheus Marxism, in which history does indeed have a subject: 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles', in which people 'make their own history', though not under 'circumstances chosen by themselves' but 'given and transmitted from the past', or, as Childe put it in a pithy, if sexist phrase, 'Man Makes Himself'.

The post-Stalin crisis of Marxism let loose such a barrage of criticism that some felt the need to make a stand in defence of what they took to be the quintessential propositions which had to be asserted at all costs if anything recognizable as Marxism was to remain at all. To Hobsbawm, the concept of contradiction was one. Most, however, joined him at another, singularly unfortunate, barricade: that of base and superstructure as distinct levels of social structure, a notion which Hall later declared to constitute a 'conceptual threshold and boundary-limit' without which a distinctive materialism could not exist.

The image of base and superstructure is an image, a metaphor which uses extra-social analogies to describe social arrangements. All such images, whatever their value in illuminating the subject, are profoundly distorting as well. Society is not a machine; it is not an organism, nor does it follow sequences of gestation and birth (Marx's favourite, obstetric imagery) or of decay and death. Society is different in kind from any machine, rock or tree. The crucial difference, anthropologists have long insisted, is that human beings possess a developed consciousness and, collectively, a shared, cumulative culture.

The model repose on the assumption that the economic base is material. It is not. We cannot even understand what material objects are unless we know the social uses to which they are put: archaeologists debate as to whether they have found a tool or a ritual object; whether a painting is a magical or purely aesthetic expression; even whether a building is a temple or a brothel. And for people to use tools, they literally need 'know-how': skills, cognitive knowledge. The organization of production, moreover, involves internalizing or at least complying with norms of behaviour, such as the notion of a 'fair' day's work. The class struggle that is fought, in Beynon's words, 'every day of the year', is a battle between workers and management over norms: norms of output and working conditions. But the system as a whole repose upon even more fundamental concepts: of the right of some people to own the means of production and to appropriate the product and the profits made from the labour of others. The labour process itself is therefore saturated with what Godelier has called the ideol: not just ideals, in the normative or utopian sense (though these, too), but ideas – knowledge and beliefs – acquired and sustained outside work. The pursuit of naked self-interest, relationships of production based on the soulless cash nexus, and relationships of exchange governed by market supply and demand are cultural values and institutions peculiar to capitalism. In other cultures and societies, production and exchange are conducted according to quite different norms, such as those of reciprocity or conceptions of a just price.

The most crass materialism, it is only fair to point out, is not that of Marxists at all, but of those who treat social relations as if they were determined by technology or biology. Thus, Marvin Harris' cultural materialism (which has nothing to do with the approach of the same name developed by Raymond Williams, discussed below) is a nineteenth-century search for laws of history and 'the explanation of ideology and social organization' in terms of 'adaptive responses to techno-economic conditions'; its end-product the analysis of cannibalism or the veneration of cows by Hindus in terms of calorie and protein requirements and their economic utility. Even this one-dimensional materialism, however, is a healthy corrective to one-sided idealist anthropology, as Gamst's critique of Leach's structuralist analysis of traffic-light systems and Ross's refutation of Sahlin's culturalist analysis of meat-eating in US society demonstrate.

Marx never intended, he said, that his 'historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism' was to be taken as 'an historical-philosophical theory of the general path which every people is fated to tread'. Yet many of his followers have done precisely that: they have 'installed one . . . cultural logic [that of capitalism, P.W.] as the definition of everyone's material necessity'.

Structuralist Marxists have codified this culturally-specific logic of capitalism and turned it into a universalistic, invariant schema of base and superstructure, the base being the mode (or modes) of production. Having abstracted production from all other relationships, they then invest it with determinative significance. Neither step is usually explicitly justified; it is simply performed.
Production, Marxists argue, requires that people work with tools or instruments, from hoes to computers, upon objects (the soil, uranium ore, etc.). Together, tools and objects constitute the means of production. The means, together with the knowledge and technical skills needed to grow crops or make iron, are together designated the forces of production. (Though the latter are forms of knowledge, and have to be acquired and passed on through socialization, they are still designated part of the material base.) The complex social relationships entailed in this process are designated the relations of production: the co-ordination of the social division of labour that Marx called ‘organisation’ – involving both cooperation and conflict, the internalization of work-disciplines, and the exercise of authority – and the further clash of interest between those who produce and those who direct and appropriate.

This is a useful schema, but for all its apparent clarity, it obscures the way in which extra-economic relations, vital if any production at all is to take place, are simply treated as economic, while even within the sphere of direct production, ideal elements, notably rights of ownership and inheritance, are labelled ‘material’ – which they are not.

Forces and relations of production, taken together, are said to constitute the mode of production, thus:

\[
\text{Objects} \quad \begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\hline
\text{Means} & \text{Technical division of labour} & \text{Exploitation/appropriation} \\
\hline
\text{Tools} & \text{Forces + Relations} & \text{MODE} \\
\hline
\text{Skills} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

The model, which was developed for capitalism, is, however, inappropriate to societies and cultures where quite different conceptions and practices of work, production, exchange and property obtain. Further, it is problematic even for capitalism, which no more operates according to the logic of this reductionist model than conforms to the postulates of laissez-faire theory.

The concept of a mode of production, then, is by no means as straightforward as this schema would imply, as the sheer variety of ways in which it has been used indicates. At one polar extreme are those who restrict its use to the labour process; at the other, those who use it to designate whole systems of social and even cultural organization, which they take to be determined by economic relationships: feudalism, capitalism, etc. For some, the mode of production is an element in a theoretical kit, to be used in studying the variety of economic organization. For others, a mode of production is a concrete form of organization itself. The latter usage has inevitably spawned a growing number of modes of production, from wide usages: the ‘colonial’ or even ‘world’ modes of production: through the ‘Asiatic’ mode authorized by Marx and Engels, to the newer ‘Arab’, ‘Andean’ modes, to the ‘peasant’, ‘lineage’ and ‘domestic’ modes. Such is the diversity of ways in which productive activities and exchange are organized that there is virtually no limit to the number of modes of production that may yet be invented: ‘each Andean valley’, Foster-Carter has written, ‘has its own mode of production, and individuals may change them two or three times a week like underwear’. Even in societies with a limited technology, different kinds of work are organized in very different ways. The crisis inevitably came with the attempt to apply these categories, developed in the study of capitalism, to the very different societies studied by anthropologists. Thus Terray, re-analysing Meillasoux’s study of the Guro of the Ivory Coast, distinguishes no less than five main branches of productive activity: agriculture, pastoralism, hunting, food-gathering, and handicrafts.

It could be argued that each of these is a distinct mode of production, since it involves different sets of people in distinctively different patterns of cooperation. But to Terray, they are only ‘branches’ of economic activity, which he then classifies into two categories: ‘simple’ co-operation at the level of the lineage, and ‘complex’ co-operation at the village level. Yet these production relationships do not determine what gets what. Decisive authority in social life lies with the male elders. This does not derive from their monopoly of land or of instruments of production, or even of technical knowledge, for they have no such monopoly. Rather, their power derives from their ‘privileged position’ as elders. This, in turn, gives them certain kinds of economic power as well, but these economic prerogatives are culturally defined and limited. Though young people produce ‘commonplace’ goods, they do not own them, and only certain kinds of goods can be exchanged against certain other kinds, and may be used only for specific purposes. Thus, the iron ingots and guns imported from abroad are ‘matrimonial goods’ which the elders monopolize but use as bride-wealth in contracting marriages on behalf of junior males. The elders’ use of lineage herds is likewise confined to ritual purposes alone. These customs, moreover, are culturally specific: they are not typical of other pastoralists. Economic exchanges of this kind are quite different in kind from those involved in the internal production and exchange of ‘commonplace’ commodities. Nor is there a one-to-one relationship between the units involved in production and consumption respectively: hunting-units sometimes do and sometimes do not consume what they catch. At the level of social organization as a whole, hunting-groups are, to use Terray’s language, ‘unrepresented’ politically, while Guro ritual focuses not upon agriculture, which is their most important economic activity, but upon hunting and war – probably because the latter are culturally defined as the quintessentially male activities. Clearly, production relationships do not determine other social institutions. Rejecting the idealist view that the economy is simply...
contained within kinship, Terray recognizes, however, that it would be equally absurd to derive kinship relations from the economic base alone: that there is an "unexplained residual element in kinship". Relations between producers were not exclusively economic; there were non-economic bonds involved.

The attempt to preserve the model of base and superstructure, and to force it onto all cultures, inevitably involved resorting to Jesuitical casuistries and intellectual and verbal contortions of the kind pioneered by Engels. The base, it was admitted, was not necessarily dominant at all: in non-capitalist societies, political-juridical, religious, or kinship-based institutions might be. But the sacred central belief was preserved, by arguing that the base was still 'determinant' or even 'over-determinant' – a latter-day version of Engels' famous qualifications 'in the long run' and 'ultimately'. Kinship, Godelier argued, was 'both infrastructure and superstructure' (in other words, it was neither). Finally, Godelier reformulated the relationship as one of functions rather than levels. In different kinds of society, even different societies, different institutions could supply the dominant cultural idiom. Deprived, now, of both levels and economic determination (except in the long run – which usually never came, and when it did, was still not determined by economic forces alone) nothing was left of base and superstructure except the words.

This multiplication of modes of production is avoided by those who take the unit of analysis to be far wider: e.g., Alavi's colonial mode of production; or the logical extreme view that the entire world now constitutes a single mode of production.

Living as we do in the midst of an economic crisis which affects Brazil and Poland, Britain and Mexico, we are only too aware that capitalism is not only a world-wide system, but still the dominant one. But we need not accept the views of those world-system theorists for whom the world has been 'capitalist since the seventeenth century', or that everything is simply capitalism. It is a view which implies, in economic terms, that capitalism is a form of exchange: of production for the market rather than a mode of production. The growing domination of the world market by countries which had reorganized their own production-systems along capitalist lines did not necessarily mean that the goods produced in their colonies or for which they traded were produced by capitalist methods. Rather, they were produced by slaves, serfs, peasant smallholders, and many other kinds of pre-capitalist workers, whose position, moreover, became consolidated precisely because of the articulation of the domestic economy to the world market. Capitalist wage-labour only became the dominant form, even in many of the older colonies, as late as the epoch of modern imperialism. Outright slavery only came to an end in Brazil less than a century ago, and even in the world's leading capitalist country only a couple of decades before

that. Socially, in a country like Ecuador, a fully-fledged bourgeois State and civil society were delayed even later. Not until just before the First World War did the new agro-exporting commercial bourgeoisie of the Coast take political power out of the hands of the Sierran landowners, an oligarchy that had dominated national life since Independence, following the Liberal victory in the Civil Wars; not until the inter-War period were beginnings made on bourgeois political and economic institutions: a Central Bank and a modern bureaucratic machinery; not until after the Second World War was the administrative revolution completed under Galo Plaza; not until the military revolution -from-above of 1972 did the new industrial bourgeoisie establish control over the economy and not until the oil bonanza of the 1970s could land reform begin as landowners were assisted by the State to turn their haciendas into capitalist estates run on the basis of wage-labour instead of debt-peonage.

The spread of capitalist relations within the economy and their eventual domination, their further penetration outside the economy and the alignment or replacement of existing institutions in accordance, is, then, always a far more protracted and uneven process than schematic models of the bourgeois State and bourgeois society allow for. It is a transition which often takes centuries. Marxist conceptions of the mode of production, of the institutions of civil society, and of the State are, of course, all ideal types. Ideal types are abstractions, perfect models which rarely occur in reality. But they are not arbitrary: they are drawn from real life. The ideal type of the State most Marxists use draws – far too much – on Marx’s analysis of the ‘nightwatchman state’ of nineteenth-century capitalist Britain, whose functions were restricted to what Radcliffe-Brown summed up as law and war. Internal ‘social control’: the protection of basic institutions and the regulation of disputes between citizens and corporate groups by monopolizing the administration of justice; externally, the defence of the society as a whole against attack. Pre-capitalist forms of the State (about which Marx made copious notes in his ethnological notebooks) often controlled both narrower and wider ranges of social life, while the later capitalist State and the socialist State penetrate nearly every area of life, so much so that the word étatisme has been coined to describe them.

In recent years, Western Marxists have embarked upon the task of transforming Marxism from a political economy into a sociology by turning their attention to the relationship between the State, the economy, and the other institutions of civil society: the family, the educational system, etc. It is, of course, a perfectly scientific procedure to abstract economic, or any other relations, and to develop ideal type models of them. But they then have to be analytically related to the other parts of society, and, today, of world society. The major strength of world-system theory lies in its demonstration that the foundations of the Third World were laid nearly half
a millennium ago, not in the 1950s, and that today development in any
country is conditioned by its place in a world division of labour. The later the
period studied, the less it becomes possible to take the 'country', or even
Europe, as the main framework for the analysis of the growth of
capitalism.\textsuperscript{80}

The structuralist-Marxist model attempts to deal with the relationships
between economy and society by postulating that any 'social formation' is a
multiplex entity in which several modes of production co-exist, one of
which, however, is dominant. It further recognizes that there are different
'instances' - political, legal, etc. - each of which has a certain degree of
autonomy and is not therefore always or narrowly determined by the
economic base. The economy, then, though not necessarily the dominant
institution, is still said to be ultimately determinant. All these qualifications,
however, do little to alter a model which, at bottom, is still one of base and
superstructure, and still, therefore, fatally flawed. Thus, the conception of
'instances' is still a conception of levels, rather than dimensions of social life;
the economic is taken to be the most fundamental and determinative
instance, while institutions like the family, legal codes, or the educational
system are labelled 'apparatuses' of the State (\textit{stic}). The model, therefore, is
scarcely any advance on Engels' attempts to rectify the patent inadequacies
of the base/superstructure model by introducing qualifications about the
relative autonomy of the non-economic, whilst still asserting that in the long
run the economy was determinant.\textsuperscript{81} Though there are many, often more
sophisticated variations, the most common version of the structuralist
model\textsuperscript{82} looks something like the one below. It is a very crude model, drawn
not so much from constructional engineering as from simple house-building.

**Social Formation**

**MODE OF PRODUCTION**

```
A 
(dominant)

MODE OF PRODUCTION B

ideological
juridico-political
superstructure

MODE OF PRODUCTION C

ideological
juridico-political
```

The larger size, and the arrows, are meant to symbolize the greater
importance of the capitalist sector. In most models, the role of the State, and
of the apparatuses attached to it, is taken to be the articulation of the
different modes of production. Since the model is an analytical framework,
and the mode of production is also considered to be a theoretical category,
this conceptual framework can be applied to any actual society ("social
formation"). Although the concept 'social formation' is just as much a
theoretical category, in structuralist usage, for some reason, it has the status
of a concrete historical entity.

There might well be more than the three modes of production represented
in the diagram. In that model, the dominant one might be capitalist industry
(mode of production A), co-existing with agriculture on traditional estates
(mode of production B) to which the labour-force was tied by debt and by
extra-economic compulsions such as the local power of the landlord or the
central power of the State. Mode of production C might be the smallholder-
peasant sector (though, strictly, they are considered incapable of generating
an authentic ideology and political praxis of their own).

Bourgeois economics has long recognized that production in different
fields (labelled 'sectors') involves differing forms of economic and social
organization, at successive ranges up to the level of the world as a whole.
It accepts class inequality as a necessary motor of enterprise. What it does not
recognize is the contradiction of interest as between classes. The concept
of the mode of production, by contrast, assumes that struggles between those
who produce and those who appropriate are intrinsic and central. The label
'mode of production', though, is a misnomer, since production never takes
place except as part of a wider set of extra-economic institutions and
relationships. A mode of production, that is, is never just a mode of
production. It is always a mode of production and appropriation. The
economy is always a political economy. More than that, it is always
contained within - and dependent upon - a matrix of structured social
relations, of which the institutions governing property are the most
important for the economy, and from which the economy can only be
abstracted by an analytical act. There is no real-life economy-in-itself.

A more creative use of the concept of mode of production, which
recognizes these issues, is that used by Eric Wolf, who eschews the base/
superstructure model by expanding the concept of mode of production to
include the social and cultural as well as the economic. For him, a mode of
production is not a system of technology, nor a stage or type of society, but a
heuristic tool which he uses to focus upon the strategic relationships of
power and wealth. Production therefore includes the reproduction of social
institutions and cultural values. This enables him to bring into his analysis
not only the technoeconomic, but kinship, caste, the potlatch, oracles and
secret societies. But it does so at the cost of blurring any distinction between
the economic and the socio-cultural: for if everything becomes a force or relation of production, the notion of the extra-economic becomes redundant and vacuous. And if matrilineal descent systems or divine kingship are no mere epiphenomena of political economy, as they are in the reductionist models he rejects, neither is the conceptual problem solved by designating everything that bears upon, is affected by, or has consequences for the economy as ‘production’ relations. As he himself brilliantly shows, capitalism does not produce caste or the Aro Chukwu oracle, nor is Indian society today a carbon copy of British, capitalist though they both are. Capitalism works upon existing cultural materials, and often introduces new ones, but the dialectical synthesis that results is always culturally specific.

The economy, then, neither determines, alone or preponderantly — though economic considerations may, of course, be uppermost very often. It is, therefore, simply not true that man must eat before he can think. People would not find food at all if they did not think, while the search for food is not necessarily the only, the main or the perpetual preoccupation even of the technologically simplest hunting-and-gathering societies. What is true is that production is a necessity, in any society. In Sahlins’ terminology, society has indeed to be ‘provisioned’; and sets of people do have common interests by virtue of their relationship to the means of production — they constitute classes, whether ‘in themselves’ or ‘for themselves’. But their allocation to a distinct place in production in the first place is itself often determined by factors other than considerations of skill or the technical requirements of production.

Of the four sets of classes, Marx singles out in the Communist Manifesto as the major paired antagonists of successive epochs, ‘oppressor and oppressed’; three of them: freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, are not categories determined by relationship to the means of production at all: they are extra-economic statuses into which people are born. It will come as no news to women or Blacks that their inferior economic opportunities are a consequence of their having chosen the wrong gender or colour — that their class position is a consequence, not a determinant, of their social being. Marx’s familiar distinction between ‘class-in-itself’ and ‘class-for-itself’ is an inadequate one, because either way it abstracts economic relationships from the wider systems of structured social inequality of which economic inequalities are merely one form: divisions, in hunting-and-gathering societies based on age and gender; aristocratic and religious divisions; caste, estate and ethnic stratification.

And it then (arbitrarily) invests economic relations with causal priority. Extra-economic divisions may coincide with class divisions, in which case they become doubly powerful. But they may also divide classes and link their members to people in other classes, vertically. Neither of Marx’s categories, then, explains social class, even if he did use that adjective.

Better theoretical tools have long been available. Max Weber’s concept of ‘status groups’ — groups to which people feel themselves to belong by virtue of a believed common descent and/or shared culture — is usually thought to be directly antithetical to the concept of class as Marx defined it, and is usually taken to refer merely to subjective differences of rank or social prestige. In fact, Weber saw status groups as collectivities just as fierce in their defence of material as well as immaterial privileges as any class motivated by practical reason. Indeed, where people who share the same cultural identity also occupy the same economic roles, a status group is also a class (or part of one), and a doubly self-conscious one because of this. More widely, Weberianism was seen by Marxists as incompatible with Marxism because Weber was a principled, life-long enemy of socialism; not only pessimistic about revolution as a liberating alternative to capitalism, but even cynical about the participation of the masses in politics. Many Marxists I know will admit, in private, to being close to Weberians. But never in public, since they do not wish to be pigeon-holed with enemies of democracy and socialism. Conversely, many who are very radical and engaged politically reject the intellectual crudities of dogmatic Marxisms, and their political counterpart — sectarianism. Yet Weber shared Marx’s view that ‘the factor which creates “class” is unambiguously economic interest, and . . . those interests involved in the market’ . . . “Property” and “lack of property”, he wrote, ‘are the basic categories of all class situations’; ‘the direct influence of social relations, institutions and groups governed by “material interests” extends (often unconsciously) into all spheres of culture without exception, even into the finest nuances of aesthetic and religious feeling’.

But he had no intention, he insisted, of replacing Marx’s ‘one-sided materialistic causal interpretation of culture and history’ by ‘an equally one-sided spiritualistic one’. ‘No economic ethic’, he wrote, ‘has ever been determined by religion — it is only one of the determinants of the economic ethic’. And the State, to him, was unequivocally an instrument used by those who claimed a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence.

Weber thus advocates not an idealist, not a materialist, but a dialectical sociology. Just as Marx over-emphasized the material in his struggle against the dominant German idealism, so Weber singled out for special attention what Marx had underplayed: the ideas and beliefs that informed capitalism, though carefully distinguishing, in the process, those institutions and relationships which were directly created or used for economic ends both from those non-economic areas which had consequences for the economy (say, religious bans on usury) and from non-economic areas affected by economic forces (e.g. the market value of Church property).

The relative weight of economic and non-economic forces was always variable, and therefore a matter only to be settled by empirical investigation. Though there was always an economic dimension to every social
institutions - and even churches keep balance-sheets - churches are not economic organizations, but religious ones. Rather than conceiving of society in terms of levels, then, with the economy as the base, society was better thought of in terms of dimensions and of specialized institutions, the relationship between the component parts of the social system being variable, not uniform. Rejecting the language of determinism (economic or otherwise), Weber conceived of the connections between the institutions which constituted the sub-systems of society, rather, in terms of 'elective affinity', a phrase be borrowed from Goethe's novel of that name. The phrase reflects Goethe's interest in natural science: the idea that there are uniform and unifying principles in both society and Nature - which might seem to justify a determinist view of the world. But he qualifies it by stressing the dependence of human society upon Nature, which ought to be the object of reverence, and by a further, Kantian, distinction between choice and compulsion, which Weber picked up. This was the notion that there had to be some degree of fit between the various parts of society, but that this need not necessarily be tight or one-to-one: a conception of relative autonomy and of probabilities which functionalists and functionalist Marxists fail to grasp. It was also a pluri-causal model. Causal connections were often oblique and mediated: capitalism no more caused Protestantism than Protestantism caused capitalism. Religious ideas were important elements - but not all of them, only those which had a bearing on people's economic behaviour - not the theology, but the ethic, the code of conduct.

In Malraux's *La Condition Humaine*, a Chinese revolutionary prophetically remarks to a Soviet emissary of the Comintern that 'Marxism contains both the idea of determinism and an emphasis upon the will. Whenever determinism becomes more important than agency, I begin to get worried.' To those Marxists for whom Marxism is a self-contained system of scientific socialism, its central assumptions are beyond question, for all their protestations to the contrary. I have even known such extreme cases as the anthropologist who argued that it would be damaging to the entire Marxist theoretical edifice - and hence to socialism - to admit that Engels' belief that a stage of 'mother-right' had preceded the stage of patriarchal organization of the family was wrong. Such dogmatism and defensiveness was understandable in the days of McCarthy, and in those countries where Marxism has become a rigid State ideology. It is, however, a major obstacle to the further development of Marxist thought and to human liberation.

Proletarian Marxists have, in practice, if not in acknowledgement, deviated massively from the base/superstructure model. Amilcar Cabral, for example, begins his classic analysis of Guinean society by examining the economy and class structure. But he also recognizes the historical legacy of a variety of pre-colonial economic institutions: different systems of land tenure and land usage; differences in the economic roles of peasants and traders in the different societies that were incorporated into the Guinean State; but also varying political forms: of State and stateless society; and of status differences: aristocrats and commoners, Muslims and 'animists'; varying forms of the family, of marriage, of the position of women, and so on. Laid on top of all this were the consequences of modern colonialism: the gulf between town and country, and, above all, the institutionalized superiority of European over African. His model of the colonial economy is also one of a political economy, with a major State sector as well as a private sector. His model of the stratification system, likewise, emphasizes the State-enforced colour-bar which kept Africans out of jobs reserved for Whites.

Anderson's magisterial studies of the emergence of capitalism in Europe begin, likewise, with modes of production: slave, feudal, and capitalist. But he then goes on - in a quite Weberian way - not only to describe the institutional specificities of each particular country, but also the persisting importance of two pan-European, trans-societal cultural institutions: the Roman Catholic Church, 'extraordinary in its persistence' and 'indispensable as a bridge between Antiquity and the Middle Ages', and the Roman law. Both of these existed long before either the Absolutist State or modern capitalism and persisted into the bourgeois epoch, the latter being adapted so as to strengthen the idea of absolute private property in land and to provide for the concentration of aristocratic power in a centralized State apparatus. The more creative Marxist anthropology, likewise, has grappled with such problems as class-variations in primordial structures of kinship and the integrative role of vertical, cross-class factions.

Dogmatic Marxism, however, is much more widespread. Its persistence is not to be explained simply in intellectual terms. Engels' *Origin of the Family*, with its sequence, borrowed from the American ethnologist, Lewis Henry Morgan, of primitive promiscuity, followed by the so-called consanguine, punaluan, and pairing forms of the family, is no more convincing today than half a dozen other similar nineteenth-century essays in what Radcliffe-Brown called 'conjunctural history'. (When he gets onto what he really knows about - the documented history of 'barbaric' society in Europe - he is much more impressive). But his appeal to a new generation of feminists does not rest on his scientific accuracy so much as his passionate conviction that relations between men and women need not be relations of superiority and inferiority. That aspiration - which I share - induces some to see primitive societies as classless and therefore more egalitarian in respect of gender relations. Classless they may be, others observe, insofar as everyone has access to the means of production; egalitarian they are not, since differences of age, gender and ritual status are converted into social divisions even more rigid than those of class society - which at least permits some degree of social mobility.
Marxism has survived despite theoretical weaknesses and political disasters because it is not simply an intellectual system—a cognitive schema or mode of analysis—but because it has normative and conative dimensions. This does not make it a religion, for it is a humanistic philosophy. Far less scientific, purely religious ideologies, it is true, have provided creeds adequate enough for the practical social purposes of the day in the past, from the conservative use of Catholicism to the revolutionary use of Protestantism.

The future of Marxism, if it is to contribute to, let alone lead, in the protection of the world against destruction and the elimination of inequality and oppression, is not improved by defending either its errors or its strengths in a religious way, but in improving it in order to improve the world. Its practical strength lies in that project: in present resistance to exploitation and in the dedication to working out better ways of living together in the future by getting rid of institutions and habits of thought developed over centuries. Marxism has regenerated itself despite disasters, and spread, not just because it offers a better material existence, but because it offers a wide vision: that of a better society. To those who arrogantly assert that it is already an adequately developed body of theory—even the only valid science of society—one can only urge a little humility in the name of the many millions who have died, from Stalin’s Russia to genocide in Kampuchea, at the hands of people who were guided by their interpretations of Marxism. The notion that these horrors are somehow unconnected to Marxist ideas, or not authentic Marxism, implies an idealist, unsociological conception of Marxism as a body-of-ideas-in-itself. Inadequate forms of Marxism—institutionalized in the form of the State—have become part of the problem.

The very success of Marxism, paradoxically, has bred a new contradiction, the growing tendency to practise what anthropologists will recognize as avoidance and incest: reading nothing but the growing volume of specifically Marxist literature (except empirical, descriptive studies); avoidance of critiques of Marxism itself; sheer ignorance of other modes of thought; and the practice of talking only to the growing population of other Marxists in an increasingly esoteric private language, within the categories of an enclosed conceptual universe. And this rather than debating with opponents about the limits and strengths of Marxism and of non-Marxist science, and being prepared to borrow from the latter (and from where else, if Marxism itself lacks the capacity to innovate?) to fill gaps, correct, complement, or innovate.

One dogmatic response is to dismiss the patent errors of Marxism as not really Marxism at all—as vulgar Marxist deviations, just as some Christians argue that Papal bastards and the Inquisition are not part of the Christian heritage; in extreme, that Christianity has never been tried. For me, Stalin and Trotsky, Gramsci and Togliatti, Lukács and Mao are all Marxists. Western Marxism, however, does have special characteristics. It is, in Anderson’s words, ‘a product of defeat’, a revolutionary creed with an ‘absent centre’: revolution.68

Its failure to explain its major historical failures—its defeat by nationalism in 1914 and by popular fascism in the 1930s—was paralleled after the Second World War by the failure of Soviet Marxism to develop an explanation of the Stalin period. Marxist theories about the Third World have by now become bogged down in a seemingly endless multiplication of exercises in mode-of-productionism and world-systematics in which the distinctive features of each country simply disappear and all become look-alikes, only distinguished from one another insofar as some are central, others peripheral or semi-peripheral. Sociology, in these studies, is merely a kind of social economics, in which the peasants of European history only paid rent and never feudal homage or Church tithes, and those of contemporary India are a class of people who never belong to castes.

The basic theoretical blockage is a concept incompatible with a dialectical sociology: the materialist image of base and superstructure. It is time, now, to pay tribute, a century after Marx’s death, to his own criticality as a man whose favourite slogan, he said, was de omnis societate utriusque—everything ought to be questioned (or, as we would now phrase it, everything is ‘up for grabs’), by consigning that concept to the same place to which Engels wanted to consign the State: ‘the Museum of Antiquities, alongside the spinning-wheel and the stone axe’.

Culture: the Missing Concept

The concept of culture has been virtually ignored by those social scientists who reduce the study of society to political economy or the study of social structure. The major exception has been cultural anthropology in the USA, and, in sociology, the functionalism of Parsons. (Malinowski’s cultural anthropology was simply another form of biological reductionism.) For Parsons, a system of social action had three dimensions: the social system, the cultural system, and the personality system of the individual actor.69

Outside the social sciences, there is a rich line of literary criticism—one of the few distinctively English intellectual traditions, a preoccupation with the relationship between the arts and society—that runs from Coleridge and Southey, through Arnold, Ruskin and D. H. Lawrence to T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis and Raymond Williams. The only other contributions of importance have been the symbolic interactionists’ studies of subcultures, and, within the Marxist canon, the writings of Gramsci and of his Peruvian counterpart, Jose Carlos Mariátegui.90
Of these, only the notion of 'subculture' has passed into more general usage. To most people, culture still means only the 'fine' arts. Its wider connotations, when recognized, are designated by other labels, such as the Marxist term 'ideology'. Ideology itself means different things to different people. To some, it signifies cognitive disorder or incoherence; to others, the distortion of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, by emotions and prejudices; ideology is something that interferes with cognition. Those who go further, and ask why irrational notions exist and persist — why truth is either ignored or rejected in favour of falsehood — are driven to conclude that the truth or falsity of propositions (their cognitive content) are not their only relevant properties, but that people espouse or reject ideas because they lead to conclusions that are morally unacceptable to them and are believed to lead to bad behaviour and conduct prejudicial to society and its institutions. They are then led to ask, as Marxists do, whose interests are served by maintaining both these institutions and these ideas; who it is that uses such ideas to legitimize, justify and rationalize their interests; and how alternative ideas are prevented from taking root. Such analysis, then, moves beyond pure cognition to normative and social issues. Questions of this kind inevitably led thinkers like Gramsci and Mariátegui beyond the technique ideology to the conception of culture. In that kind of usage, though they retain the label 'ideology', it means much more than the logical systemization of ideas as sets of interrelated propositions.

Though they never developed an adequate theorization of the concept, their work — whether that of Gramsci on intellectuals and on folk knowledge, or that of Mariátegui on Inca and Catholic religion — is informed implicitly by an awareness of the sense that any society always contains residues from earlier epochs, so that whilst some ideologies serve, organically, to buttress the contemporary social order, others are inorganic, and do not; indeed, may even constitute an actual or potential basis for dissent from the present order of things. Culture is therefore always plural, since not only classes, but professions and intellectual schools influence the way in which both their members think and behave and others. Implicitly, too, they recognized that culture has three dimensions: the cognitive, the normative and the conative; dimensions first recognized in eighteenth-century idealist philosophy, and labelled more recently, by Hannah Arendt, thinking, judging and acting.

Intellectuals are inclined by the nature of their occupation to emphasize the first of these: that culture provides us with a 'cognitive map', an intellectual, logical model of the world and of its constituent parts which supplies thereby both an ontology and a cosmology. A model of the natural world; of the place of humanity within that world; and a model of the relationship, physical or metaphysical, of that world to the cosmos. It also supplies a model of the social world and its components which tells us who we are, and how and why we differ from others, and which allocates us to social categories constructed on the bases of age, gender, descent, marital status, wealth, occupation, skill, power and so forth. The categories emphasized vary according to the world-view in question, some emphasizing personality-types, others classes, ethnic groups or religious affiliation.

But culture is not just analytical. It does more than tell us who we are or what is what: the components of the social world are also evaluated; arranged not according to some simple Manichean or Lévi-Straussian binary opposition between good and bad, but in accordance with a complex hierarchy of values. The components of the world, then, are never purely cognitive: they are always also normative. They have values attached to them which invest them with social, not merely logical, meaning. Peoples whom we call 'primitive' often see themselves as the 'human beings' or 'the People' (the name they use for themselves often means just that), not only different from all others, but superior to them. 'Barbarians', 'infidels', 'counter-revolutionaries', equally, are normative, not cognitive categories: they refer to ways of life we hold to be wrong, whereas true believers, the Chosen, or the class destined to end class society, have right (and history) on their side.

Such evaluations do not exist merely as views; they are institutionalized. Conformity to them is publicly rewarded in forms ranging from material rewards to medals, titles and other honorific expressions of social esteem; disapproved behaviour penalized by negative sanctions ranging in severity from raised eyebrows to torture. Individual behaviour which sustains social institutions is thereby endorsed; that which is not, discouraged.

Culture thus answers Chernyshevsky's famous conative question, 'What is to be done?'. It supplies a project, a design for living. In repetitive societies, the answer is simple: 'Do as your forefathers did and as the ancestors laid down.' But in more differentiated societies, the future is not such a self-evident reproduction of the past. Rival interest-groups espouse alternative projects. The definition of the future, and of what constitutes proper behaviour becomes, eventually, the terrain of what might be called cultural class struggle were the contending groups not necessarily always classes. Culture, then, supplies normative and conative meanings and not only cognitive ones.91

There are four ideal-type ways of conceptualizing culture: the elitist, the holist, the hegemonic, and the pluralist. In the first, culture implies superior values, reserved for the dominant few; in the second, a whole way of life; in the third, a set of behaviours imposed on the majority by those who rule there. The last, a relativist sense, recognizes that different communities in the same society have distinctive codes of behaviour and different value-systems — which may even be opposed.

Though presented here as an abstract taxonomy, each of these con-
ceptions of culture emerged at a different time in history and expresses changing attitudes on the part of thinkers largely of upper-class origins towards the masses. The oldest of them, the elitist, goes back, in the West, to the slave societies of Antiquity, where a leisured class dedicated themselves to studying mathematics, philosophy, music; in the East, to poetry, calligraphy, the classics: to anything, in fact, remote from the utilitarian, and, above all, from manual labour, a tradition consolidated in subsequent aristocratic conceptions of culture and cultural practices. Culture was the property of the few, the immaterial counterpart of their privileged monopoly of the material wealth of society and of political power, its symbol the long finger-nails of the mandarins who ruled Chinese society.

Culture, in this sense, implies both intellectual and social hierarchy: a set of superior values monopolized by a socially superior minority. It excludes the masses: culture is something the majority lack. There is also only one form of it. Yet it is to be acquired, either by intensive application (study) or via social osmosis, by exposure to milieux, notably a 'cultured' home, governed by the appropriate codes. Access to these, and especially to those institutions specially designed to formulate and communicate those values—from monasteries to 'good' schools—is, therefore, a jealously-guarded privilege. But noblesse oblige in a double sense: the nobility has duties towards its social inferiors; it must also defend culture against barbarism, against the uncultured: externally, the heathen and the savage; internally, the illiterate, uneducated, ignorant mass of the people, the peasants and urban poor to whom public notices are addressed in South America: 'Se culto'... they read, urging people not to put their feet on the seats of the bus or spit on the church floor.

Culture, in this sense, prescribes a complete code of manners, for these quotidian expressions of cultural conduct, which sociologists call norms of behaviour, derive from deeper ideas about the good and the bad: from values which, being ideals, are expressed, in their purest form, spiritually, in religion and art. This cultivation of the minds of the few necessarily depends upon the cultivation of the fields by the many, a primordial inequality which the Chinese rightly see as one of the 'Three Great Differences' that go back to the beginning of class society—between mental and manual labour: between town and countryside; and between industry and agriculture—a list which omits the oldest man-made inequality of all, that of gender.

Anthropology and Holism

In undifferentiated societies, wrongly called 'primitive', culture is not something ideal, set apart from the everyday material world. There is a dialectic between the ideal and the material, in which the individual, society, Nature and super-Nature form a whole. In the Trobriands, Malinowski noted, 'there is no name for "work"... The distinction between technical or practical activity and magical activity cannot be made by the use of two mutually exclusive terms.' In such societies, too, people produced not only their means of subsistence, but their own music and epic poems, and expressed their most sacred values by decorating not only their shrines, but their bodies, their dwellings, and their cattle.

The 'role inventory', in a society of this kind, often runs to no more than a few dozen roles of all kinds. In more differentiated societies, this kind of generalized distribution of culture and social division of labour gives way to one in which art becomes separated from science and both, now in pure form, from mundane production. The production of culture becomes an occupational activity of specialists producing for consumers who were their wealthy patrons, initially, and later the sponsoring institutions of mass society. In Vienna, the two great museums, dedicated to the history of art and to the natural sciences respectively, stand opposite each other. The opposition between Kunst and Naturwissenschaften is built into the stones. And dominating the cultural life of the city, still, is the art-form of the upper classes, the Opera.

Anthropologists who have studied less complex societies have, therefore, tended to see culture as a whole. Reacting against the diffusionist conception of culture as a mere bundle of discrete traits, they took Tylor's classic definition of 1871 as their starting point:

that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society.

Culture was a whole, a Gestalt, with an overall pattern. It was also the collective, cumulative achievement of humanity over and above skills transmitted through the genes.

Eighty years later, Kroeber and Kluckhohn classified 164 subsequent definitions of culture into six types: descriptive lists, like Tylor's; historical; normative; psychological; structural; and genetic, according to the different conceptions of the source of content of culture held by the various theorists. Bauman, on the other hand, concentrating on the uses of culture in drawing and maintaining social boundaries, reduces this complexity to three types: the hierarchical, binary distinction between high and low cultures; the differential conception of cultures, plural—differences between societies or between communities within the same societies; and the universalistic or generic conception, of Culture, singular, as that which separates human society from everything else: in his words, 'the boundaries of man and the human.'
In the organic conception of culture, a close fit between the institutions of a society and its values is assumed. The causal relationship between values and institutions is sometimes expressed dialectically, as when Firth describes culture as the content of social relations: neither determines the other but the relationship is usually expressed in more nakedly idealist form: it is values which determine social structure. Values, then, are taken to be the basis of society, so fundamental that they have been variously labelled 'central', 'over-arching', even 'sacred'. It is further assumed that they form a coherent and binding ideological system, characterized by a high degree of explications of formulation... [and] an authoritative and explicit promulgation... Complete individual subservience to the ideology is demanded of those who accept it, and it is regarded as essential and imperative that their conduct be completely permeated by it.  

This is plainly a limiting case only: for ideologues and for exceptional, closed total institutions like the monastery. Ideology, moreover, in this usage is reified; the contradictory interpretations even of the same ideology by competing interest-groups, and the social identities of those groups, are ignored.

Resistance to this dominant idealism has, alas, only replaced it, a paraphrase Weber, by an 'equally one-sided materialism', from Leslie White's 'scientific' theory of culture, in which the technological system was primary, to Sahlin's and Service's view of societies as 'energy-capturing systems', whose level of progress could be measured in terms of 'thermodynamic accomplishment'. Social systems and political forms were 'functions of technologies', together with the ideology 'appropriate' to each.

But since the number of kilowatt hours at the disposal of society (or those who run it) does not determine the uses to which that energy is put, who gets what, the nature of that society's social institutions, its conceptual apparatus and values, or the quality of life in that society, materialist evolutionists had as much difficulty in dealing with the non-material as idealists had in accepting the anthropological notion that lavatories, power-supplies, and banking-systems were every bit as much cultural artefacts as Bartok quartets or cathedrals. Since survival, moreover, is a minimalist, usually merely biological, concept which takes no account of changing output or changing wants, materialists have always had to resort to additional, non-material criteria in discussing progress. White's emphasis on tools and science was always counterbalanced, somewhat schizophrenically, by an equal and opposite emphasis upon culture as a supra-biological, collective product 'born of... and perpetuated by the use of symbols'. Human behaviour was symbolic behaviour. Sahlin's and Service rejected the holistic anthropology that stressed the unity of each culture in favour of a Spencerian emphasis upon differentiation as a central feature of progress and upon adaptability: the (Promethean) capacity to innovate, and the capacity of a culture to spread outside its place of origin, rather than mere adaptability to environmental determinants. The elements of materialist reductionism in their work were therefore contradicted, happily, by these more dialectical perceptions.

Literary Criticism: The Elitist Paradigm

Elitism and holism, being ideal types, do not mutually exclude one another. They can be combined in innumerable ways. In the nineteenth century, new syntheses emerged which retained some of the older aristocratic values. The more far-sighted responded to the arrival of the masses on the political scene with the realization that 'we must educate our masters'. Right-wing populism in contemporary Britain is thus rooted in a tradition of Tory democracy over a century old.

In the field of the arts, one response was to turn away from the world to a realm of pure art. More usual was the appreciation that the problem was one of 'culture and society'. The term 'culture' had long been used in varied, shifting senses: from the narrow senses of the creative arts or of a purely personal cultivation to the wider senses of a whole way of life, of civilization. The traditional exclusion of the masses from both education and political life was now replaced by the notion of a controlled, downwards hegemonic diffusion which would result in a shared, national culture.

Elitists continued to insist, as Leavis did from the 1930s to the 1960s, that civilization was embodied in a 'line' of great literature, in 'fine' art and in 'classical' or 'serious' music which expressed values conceived of as timeless, ineffable, but, now, precarious: under threat from the vulgar.

If the greatest threat, that from fascist barbarism, had been defeated, it had been achieved, at home, only via a massive liberation of popular energies and the expansion of popular political power; abroad, through alliance with the USSR. Writing in the new Labour Britain, T. S. Eliot took up the traditional defence of culture as a minority elite phenomenon.

The education of too many people [leads to] the lowering of standards... There are some grounds for believing, too, that the elimination of the upper class... can be a disaster... Education should help to preserve [that] class and select the elite.  

His conception of the elite was thus much wider than Leavis' purely culturalist/intellectual notion. It was also pluralist. Like Pareto and Mosca, Eliot conceives of various élites of people outstanding in their respective social spheres:
groups concerned with art, ... groups concerned with science, and groups concerned with philosophy, as well as groups consisting of men of action; these groups are what we call the elite. ¹⁰⁶

These different élites together formed what we might call the élite-in-general. Though the special importance of the governing élite is clearly recognized, Eliot, like the Italian élite theorists, firmly situated it within this wider élite. Unlike Mosca, he does not go on to explore the downward connections of the élite(s) with what Gramsci called ‘subaltern’ groupings at lower levels in the social structure. And he is too English to replace the concept of a ruling class completely with that of a ruling élite. For him, the élite is firmly connected to the dominant class.

Each of the vertical spheres dominated by its separate élite is horizontally divided into the creative minority who are producers of culture and the majority who consume the works of thought and art the minority produces. Collectively, they constitute the leadership of society; their function is to ‘transmit the culture they have inherited’. The consumer’s role is the traditional one of patron, audience, constituency.

But creativity, being an attribute of individuals, cannot be planned. On these grounds, Arnold’s conception of culture as a purely personal search for perfection is as unsatisfactory to him as Joad’s rationalism. Manheim’s advocacy of a meritocratic élite recruited on the basis of achievement rather than birth or wealth. Nor was a congeries of individuals dedicated to a purely expressive kind of intellectual/artistic creativity enough. The élite should be ‘formed into suitable groups, endowed with appropriate powers, and perhaps with honours and emoluments’. The creative minority, though they might originate from classes other than the dominant class, must always serve society through being attached to some class, whether higher or lower; though – he quickly adds – ‘it is likely to be the dominant class that attracts this élite to itself’. Detached from the dominant class, they would ossify and deteriorate into an hereditary aristocracy.

These are centuries-old themes. Yet there is a new, uneasy note, an awareness, over his shoulder, of the spectre of popular culture. The anthropological conception of culture as a super-organic whole, with a distinctive character greater than any ‘mere assemblage of... arts, customs and religious beliefs’, was acceptable and known to him. (He cites Layard, Mannheim and other social scientists.) Culture was ‘that which makes a society’. It was a view quite compatible with his insistence on the need to institutionalize social mobility, since gifted individuals could emerge from many different walks of life, and there are many different kinds of competence, ‘which will not all be transmitted equally to their descendants’.

Culture is here still a unitary conception: the culture of the society as a whole. The justification for the social superiority of the ‘upper levels’ is that they possess more of it than the lower orders, and that they are more conscious of it and have greater specialization in it. But since it is singular, it must never be allowed to become the ‘property of a small section of society’; rather, ‘the whole of the population should take an active part in cultural activities, though not necessarily in the same activities or on the same level’.

This unitary conception of culture was incompatible with the pluralistic notion that there might be more than one form of culture within the same society; even worse, that different groups might each have their own distinctive kind of culture. Turning from theory to reality was ‘disturbing’, for he realizes that ‘Derby Day and the dog track’ might be viewed as the religion of the people every bit as much as ‘gaiters and the Athenaeum’ might be seen as part of the religion of the higher ecclesiastics. ¹⁰⁷ Culture, in England, was in fact extremely diverse both in its content and its social distribution. It included

all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage... nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar. ¹⁰⁸

Williams has remarked that these are categories of ‘sport, food, and a little art’. ¹⁰⁹ they stick close to the arts or recreational sense of culture and stay well clear of anything grossly economic. It is also class-bound: there is a note of surprise at his own daring in considering boiled cabbage and the dogs as really culture.

Eliot was on the verge of a pluralistic model of culture which would have threatened his assumptions about a shared, societal culture in the singular. He did, indeed, go on to discuss regional ‘satellite’ cultures, expressing ‘local loyalties’, within the ‘common culture’ of the British Isles, as well as national varieties of Christianity which expressed the ‘local temperament’ of each country. But he drew back from confronting the implications of the dart board and Henley Regatta: class differences.

Marxist literary criticism did not. Nor, in the hands of its more sensitive practitioners, notably Raymond Williams, was it confined to class, but rather entailed a wider vision of the complex relations between culture and society. ¹¹⁰ His assertion that ‘culture is ordinary’ challenged the fine arts (or even arts) conception of culture: his assertion that ‘there are no masses; only ways of seeing people as masses’ distinguished the culture produced for the masses from the variety of popular modes of self-expression. Cultural revolution was as integral a part of class struggle as political activity.

The relationship between culture and society, then, was a dialectical one. If literature expressed social values, it also shaped them: ‘consciousness was no mere product of practical existence’, but ‘a condition of its practical
existence'. His initial focus had been upon 'great' literature. But he became increasingly concerned with the culture supplied by the 'mass' media: with both the categories, attitudes and images which informed it and in the relationship of these to the 'means and conditions' of their production— which are as thoroughly capitalist, in our culture, as the production of micro-chips or the marketing of fast foods.

This perspective, which he unfortunately came to label 'cultural materialism', was quite different from the older anthropological conception of material culture, which signified everything produced by humanity in material form, as objects. However material these objects, for anthropologists, culture was not material; it was 'a pattern of significance which...artifacts have, not the artifacts themselves'. Being _ideel_, it had to be acquired through consciousness; it was _learned_ behaviour. Culture, therefore, can never be reduced to the material. Commodities, Marx observed, embody so much congealed labour-power; conversely, even the most material of objects, a steel ingot or a long-playing record, embodies the _ideel._

Yet the contradictory attempt to conceptualize culture by means of categories which assigned ideas to the realm of a superstructure determined by a material base was doomed to failure. Williams makes his own dissatisfaction with this reified metaphor—'fundamentally lacking in any adequate recognition of the indissoluble connections between material production and cultural institutions and activity, and consciousness'—quite clear. But in the absence of more adequate categories developed outside Marxism, his thirty-year-long struggle to escape the twin dead-ends of materialism and idealism is frustrated by his constant, convoluted worrying of the very categories—base and superstructure, relations and forces of production—that are the cause of the trouble.

From Hegemony to Pluralism: Subculture and Counter-culture

Marxist social historians, however, have not only accepted the concept of culture, but _used_ it centrally in recent work. Foster's study of nineteenth-century England, for instance, constantly uses the word 'culture', and shows that what is designated as working-class culture was, in fact, a complex and contradictory amalgam, the resultant of class struggles every bit as hard fought as those in the economic and political spheres, in which the ruling class, to use Etzioni's terminology, used normative as well as coercive and remunerative sanctions. In the proto-revolutionary situation of post-Napoleonic England, this meant the use of unbridled repression: savage laws against combinations of workers; the regular use of troops, police, informers and _provocateurs_; of deportation and imprisonment; as well as resort to less violent forms of traditional hegemonic social control: the established Church and the powers of a parliament composed of members of the ruling class. Later, it entailed the construction and use of quite new forms of political incorporation on the part of the ruling class: the extension of the vote; the eventual development of mass political parties; ultimately, even the legality of trade unions. It also meant new missions to convert the pious urban working class, hitherto only evangelized by Nonconformists; new adult educational institutions to combat the influence of the secular Sunday Schools where Paineite ideas flourished; temperance movements; chauvinist (anti-Irish) movements which split the working class; and Masonic and other social organizations in which the 'Neo's' of the working class could associate with their betters in their leisure hours. So strong, however, is the tradition of political economy that Foster devotes only two-thirds of one page to what he himself describes as the 'social base' of this 'mass subculture' and 'the most important one of all': the public house. Working-class culture, Foster shows, did not conform to the holistic anthropological conception. In addition to occupational subcultures, there was an immense variety of social subcultures outside work. All of these were the loci of class struggle as bitter as those over the control of central and local government or over trade unionism.

Yet ruling classes have always presented their culture not only as if it were the keystone of the natural order of things but as the culture of the whole society. They have, to this degree, been thoroughly anthropological. But they also designated the mass of their subjects as uncultured, and ensured that they remained so by excluding them from access to 'high' culture. The 'twin revolutions', the Industrial Revolution in Britain and the political Revolution in France, however, made it necessary to resolve that contradiction by bridging the social gap between the classes with new political, economic and social institutions.

The analysis of these processes requires the use not just of the concept of culture, but also the notion of _subculture_, a concept developed not in the anthropological study of relatively undifferentiated societies, but in sociological studies in the heartland of modern capitalism. In 1850, Chicago had 30,000 people. By 1900, there were more than 1½ million, many of them new to America. Those who studied them in the 1920s and 1930s found that class was not as salient as ethnicity. There was a working class, but it was made up of Jews from the _stetl_; Orthodox Believers from Russia and Greece; Lutherans from Scandinavia; Catholics from Ireland and southern Italy; and Blacks from the South, who all lived in separate 'ghettos' where they shared a distinctive, common culture and language.

Early attempts to make intellectual sense of these processes began with ecological maps of the ethnic districts of the city and with theories of urbanism as a generalized way of life. But it was in-depth studies of (mainly
ethnic) communities which were to give rise to the notion of subculture, of distinctive ways of life different in kind from the dominant WASP culture. In exploring relationships within these communities, field-researchers found they were far from being disorganized or anomie; social interaction was guided by norms and values just as much as WASP culture. Later, moving from studies of minority to studies of deviant subcultures — from avant garde jazz musicians to marijuana-smokers — they found that new recruits went through secondary as well as primary socialization into the values and norms of behaviour required of the members of the group. Deviant subcultures were thus as structured and as principled as ‘straight’ ones. There were two logical extensions of this line of thought: the relativist one, which argued that no group could claim its values to be superior, only to be different or as good as those of other groups, and the more radical argument that superiority and inferiority were merely outcomes of power, of the capacity of a group to enforce its ideas and practices on others. The dominant class, which presented WASP values as if they were synonymous with the ‘American way of life’, were simply engaged in a societal con-trick: the ideological project of claiming that what was in reality only their subculture was the culture of the whole society.

These themes were developed, in more sophisticated ways, in later labelling theory. Behaviour, it was argued, was not deviant in itself, deviance was not some quality inherent in the act: some kinds of killing were socially approved of, while criminals had strict codes of honour. What constituted a social problem depended on the value-system of the group making that judgement. Orthodox criminology had reified norms; in reality, norms did nothing: people did. They believed in norms, complied with them or rejected them, constructed legal and ethical codes and imposed them on themselves and others. Nor was it the case that deviant behaviour was simply the result of inadequate socialization in those norms: of poor teaching within the family, the school, or the community, or poor learning on the part of the inadequate.

The members of deviant subcultures, they argued, were themselves social actors, not inadequate, passive victims of social forces. They were subjects, agents in social life, their actions guided by adherence to alternative codes learned and sustained as members of subcultural communities. Those norms were as much expressions of consciousness, as moral, in Durkheim’s sense, as any respectable ethic. Since values were general propositions, they had always to be interpreted when applying them to any specific situation. Further, changes in society always entailed the redefinition of old norms and the development of new ones. Norms and values, laws and customs, were therefore relative and changing, not absolute. They also varied situationally: nudity might be de rigueur on some beaches, but banned in the city centre. The more radical insisted that it was not enough merely to demonstrate that different groups adhered to different values and modes of behaviour, for some were more equal than others: the gatekeepers — from judges and policemen to priests and philosophers — who had the power and skills not merely to interpret the official codes but also to enforce them. Yet other subcultural groups criticized the dominant values, and some even sought to change them. At the very widest, Goffman argued, each one of us — the ‘straight’ as well as the deviant — was engaged in a constant series of performances designed to impress different others with different presentations of the self. We were all social activists.

Yet these rich insights into the dynamics of interpersonal relations contained no adequate, explicit model of society: they were social, not societal in their vision — either micro-sociologies of life at its face-to-face levels or what Mills called expressions of ‘middle-level’ consciousness. The nearest approximation to a societal perspective was a fuzzy image of the ‘wider society’ as, at best, a mosaic or aggregate of subcultures: more often, society-wide institutions were simply an intellectually ignored, taken-for-granted backdrop known to everyone through a shared commonsense.

Cultural anthropology was no more satisfactory when it came to conceptualizing the structure of the world within which all these innumerable cultures lived. The holistic concept of culture simply left each culture as a unique Gestalt. At best, one could merely typologize cultures, historically, as ‘Apollonian’, ‘Dionysian’, or whatever other categories one chose to use. Marxism, conversely, strong on the societal (and even international) perspective, was virtually devoid of an adequate ‘micro’ theory capable of tracing out the connections and levels which intervened between the individual and the overall society.

Yet not all anthropologists accepted the holistic image of culture uncritically. Ralph Linton had great fun demonstrating that the things considered to be ‘100 per cent American’ were the cultural products (‘traits’) of societies all over the world, often dating back centuries, even millennia, before Columbus. Cultural anthropologists also differed as between those who saw culture primarily as learned behaviour and as heritage — as a legacy handed down from generation to generation — and those like Leslie White who emphasized innovation and cumulation, the Promethean capacity to bring into being ideas and objects that never existed before. The former view lent itself to conservatism; the latter, though more sensitive to discontinuity and creativity, nevertheless rarely examined the differential distribution of culture within even the simplest societies and the existence, even there, of subcultures based on age, gender, occupation, etc.

For holistic cultural anthropologists, culture was assumed to be coterminous with society. The holistic conception of culture therefore obscures the fact that culture is always plural: that there are subcultures and counter-cultures within any society, and cultural communities whose membership
extends beyond the boundaries of any particular society. Culture is thus both wider and narrower than society; each group and category has its own subculture, while all societies have always imported and exported ideas as well as material things from stone axes to computers. In today’s ‘global village’, linked by the modern media of communication, youth cults, religious revivalism, consumerism, feminism, revolution, new and old ideas of every kind can be instantly diffused from one end of the earth to the other, when not blocked by those in power. Economic and political power are always backed by the exercise of cultural power to ‘engineer consent’ by implanting images which sustain material power and cut out unfavourable counter-images. Bismarck, usually remembered only as a man of ‘blood and iron’, was also the architect of the German Welfare State and the man who observed that you could do anything with bayonets except sit on them. Books can indeed be censored, radio transmissions jammed. But more positive justifications of the exercise of power are normally also resorted to.

The exercise of power, Mills has argued, aways includes the possibility, in the last analysis, of resort to violence, the means of which, today, is legally monopolized by the State. But power is distinguished from mere force in that it involves the notion of legitimacy, of a right to exercise force; and for many such governments, the last analysis never comes. Though there are regimes which depend almost exclusively on gunships and tanks, as in Somoza’s Nicaragua or present-day El Salvador, most regimes seek to justify their use of violence by appeal either to some kind of legitimacy, or, if not, on the pragmatic grounds that the system at least works, or pays off for most people, or that anything the opposition offers would be worse. Purely intellectual challenges may be managed through ‘repressive tolerance’ – the works of Marx are widely available and tolerated in many right-wing dictatorships as long as there is no connection between reading them and political action. And inactivity is positively encouraged, by spreading hopelessness and what the ancient Greeks called the ‘idiotic’ delusion: the notion that people should look for purely personal solutions to their problems and search for purely individual satisfactions in life; that there is no possibility of collectively challenging the established order of things, and that their interests are best served by vertically associating themselves with those above them rather than through horizontal solidarity with the underprivileged majority. But the diffusion of hopelessness and idiocy is rarely crude and total. People are also sold hope, taught that their humility will be rewarded in heaven, even the radical notion of inversion: that it will be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; that the mighty will be cast down and the meek raised up, and so on. But not here and now.

These messages are not mere direct expressions of ruling-class ways of thinking about the world imposed on other classes. Though they do embody class interests, they are aimed at other classes, telling those they rule not only what to do, but what can or cannot possibly be done. Mannheim’s simple distinction between ideology – those ideas which legitimise the status quo – and utopia – those which express the dreams and hopes of the underprivileged – for all its utility, does not adequately capture this process of ‘cross-class’ spiritual co-option through which other-worldly hope is harnessed to ensuring that this world will remain as it is.

Those who experience discrimination, exploitation, and oppression react against a domination which always includes cultural domination by generating their own forms of cultural self-expression. Even in classless societies, the underprivileged and the afflicted have their own special cults, such as women’s cults, or what Turner has called ‘communities of the afflicted’. In a society like that of Rwanda before Independence – one based on caste inequalities, not just those of class – the kabanda possession-cult offered the Hutu peasantry a freedom from the earthly distinctions of rank and caste imposed on them by their Tutsi overlords (against whom they finally revolted in 1959). Roman soldiers – and officers – brought back the egalitarian ‘mystery’ cult of Mithras from the East.

Out of the collective, subcultural experience of sharing what E. V. Walter has called ‘ilith’ as a way of life, counter-cultures of many kinds emerge. ‘Counter-culture’ is a concept scarcely developed in orthodox social science. It came into use in the USA during the war in Vietnam when the radicalization of a hitherto apolitical youth culture gave rise to a wider critique of the values of US society and to a wide range of forms of rejection and resistance. The new radicalism, however, often took forms that had little in common with traditional forms of class-conscious, atheistical socialism and more with older utopian religious sects or Bohemianism: resistance to war based on love, on flower power; communes based on transcendentalism or the quest for shared hallucinogenic or ‘polymorphous’ sex, rather than on community of goods or communal production.

But counter-culture is a phenomenon that had long been understood by many who never used that abstract term but were fully aware of concrete counter-cultures. In one of the seminal documents of modern times, Mao Tsetung describes how, when he went to Hunan in 1926 to organize the peasantry, he found that they had already organized themselves into peasant associations with 2 million members and 10 million supporters, armed with spears rather than guns. He had already written a general sketch of ‘the classes in Chinese society’: the landlord and comprador classes; the middle class; the petty-bourgeoisie; the semi-proletariat (with five sub-divisions); the proletariat and the ‘lumpenproletariat’. A year later, now with first-hand experience of peasant struggles, he described their economic actions: stopping speculation in grain, putting ceilings on rents, reducing the interest on loans, and establishing co-operatives; and their political actions:
animals but had often been forced to sell. To a landlord culture of conspicuous consumption, frivolous display, waste and idleness, they opposed a fiercely puritan peasant counter-culture of frugality and the husbanding of economic resources. There was to be no more 'flower drum' entertainment; no more chanting of New Year greetings to the accompaniment of castanets; no more praising of the local deities and singing lotus rhymes. The 'foolish' custom of paying New Year calls was to cease, together with festival processions in honour of the god of pestilence, the purchase of pastry and fruit for ritual presents, the burning of paper clothing during the Festival of the Spirits, the pasting-up of posters for good luck in the New Year, the smoking of water-pipes, letting-off of fire-crackers and firing shotguns, Taoist and Buddhist services for the dead, gifts of money at funerals, and other prohibitions, 'too many to enumerate'.

Engels once advised people who wanted to know what the dictatorship of the proletariat would be like to look at the Paris Commune. Hunan in 1926 similarly illustrates what a counter-culture looks like. But this kind of head-on confrontation between class cultures is by no means typical of non-revolutionary situations. More often subordinate classes are presented with several different ways of interpreting their underprivileged position in society. They are exposed, Parkin has argued, to the hegemonic ideas of the dominant value-system which justify their inferiority. They are also exposed to subcultural ideologies of two kinds: subordinate value-systems which promote 'accommodative' responses to the facts of inequality and low status and which commonly eschew any kind of preoccupation with society as a whole at all, but seek for satisfactions in life at the face-to-face levels of the community and family, and often of a purely personal kind – in religion, gambling, and a hundred and one other forms; and radical value-systems, which promote opposition. The latter, he argues, usually finds expression in the working-class political party, whose ideology is usually articulated by intellectuals.

Theorists of mass culture see the working class as passive consumers in their leisure-time pursuits, too, whether in the home or in the pub or club, above all as audiences for literature and TV designed by others: culture for the masses, rather than culture of the masses. The popularity of this culture of the lowest common denominator is as indisputable as the political deafness of the working class in the countries of developed capitalism to those who urge them to revolt. But most people do also choose some at least of the better-quality programmes (not necessarily arts programmes, but the best in current events, sport, and comedy, too) some of the time, while there is an enormous variety of creative, sociable and active ways of using leisure-time, some old, some new, from gardening to making your own music, many of which are not to be recognized as culture by those who use that term only in the narrow, 'fine arts' sense.
Radical political values also grew out of, and still persist at the local level of working-class life. In one study of council house tenants in London, nearly half strongly condemned the ownership of more than one house and nearly three-quarters approved of sit-ins by workers, and over half believed that workers should have more say in running the factories they worked in—either ‘a big say’ or as much as the owners. More widely, the majority held a dichotomous view of society, which they saw as a class system, divided into ‘Them’ and ‘Us’, in which the rich are also the powerful.

Yet the working class is not homogeneous in other respects and other situations. Though most people do recognize a structural opposition of interest and status as between themselves and those who employ them, most of the time, in everyday life, for most practical purposes, they are not faced with such issues, and commonly operate with less societal views. Their reference-groups, as Runciman has shown, are usually much more proximate: they do not compare themselves with financiers or company directors, but with those of more immediate relevance in their home and work environments. Thus married men contrast their lot with that of single men without family responsibilities; night-shift workers with those on nine to five; and men with women (‘working for pin-money’, in one stereotype). The real working class, unlike Althusser’s mythical proletariat—which is guided by ‘science’, not ‘ideology’—is also subject to a plurality of historic cultural influences, many quite ancient, which influence the ways in which people see the world. Though the hegemonic culture (itself in various forms) of the bourgeoisie constitutes one pole, and the counter-culture of socialism the other, there are a variety of ideologies in between these. ‘Upside-downers’, for instance, rate doing a hard manual job or a socially valuable job highly. They put nurses and agricultural labourers high in their scheme of things, and company directors and university lecturers low.

But culture, we have seen, is not just a societal phenomenon: it is often both wider and narrower than the bounds of any one societal formation. Nor are classes the only relevant units of culture. Ruling classes have the power to disseminate their ideas to those they dominate. Whether they succeed—whether these ideas are internalized—depends on so many variables that it has to be a matter for empirical investigation. Class, of course, is in any case a category, not an organized entity. Like other social categories, such as women or youth, classes may or may not perceive themselves as having interests in common: the protection of privileges, or protest against exploitation and stigma. Such categories are not structured wholes, but recruiting-grounds for organized groups which sometimes claim to represent the whole, sometimes to speak only for this or that segment of it. The rise and spread of student radicalism, of the Woodstock nation, the revival of Islam, the growth of women’s movements across large stretches of the globe, are powerful evidence that a sense of common identity and of shared culture can give rise to social movements that quickly transcend the boundaries of any particular society and become supra-societal and international in scope.

Many of the most important cultural identities of our, and any, time—from religion to nationalism—therefore cut across class, vertically.

The word ‘culture’, then, like that other major keyword, ‘social’, contains a variety of overlapping meanings accreted over centuries. Each of these captures some aspects of social life and omits others. For the cultural anthropology of the 1930s, ‘culture’ was a totalizing concept. Culture was a whole, a Gestalt, in which the various groups and institutions reinforced one another and contributed to the functioning of the whole. It was also an idealist conception, in which values were primary, and further concealed an idealist ontology, since Culture, with a capital C, was reified. It was Culture which did things: provided roles and allocated people to them, including even the role of deviant. The ‘over-socialized conception of man’, of which Wrong complained, thus had its counterpart in an over-societized conception of society which omitted both trans-societal and intra-societal relations. Its modern descendant is structuralist anthropology.

The ‘arts’ conception of culture was equally idealist. Ideas were the motor of history; the institutions within which they were produced and the circuits through which they flowed were the heart and life-blood of social life. It is a view which has the virtue of emphasizing the content of social life: the values and projects which inform social institutions and structures. But ideas were conceived of as autonomous—as pure and unrelated to interests—while the historic monopoly of high culture by small élites blinded its proponents not only to subcultural differences and counter-cultural oppositions, but also to what Lévi-Strauss has described as bricolage: people’s capacity to select bits and pieces of the systems intellectuals build and re-combine them for their own purposes in their own ways.

The word ‘culture’ cannot be divested of these complex penumbra of meanings by insisting on stipulative definitions, by fiat. The only alternative is to coin completely new terms. But to do so would be to lose sight of what all these historic usages do have in common: that they constitute what Wittgenstein called a ‘family’ of overlapping meanings which direct our attention to society as a whole and insist that it cannot be reduced to the economic or the political. This does not imply a new culturalism, in which culture becomes more important than political economy: rather, it involves examining the interplay between economic and political institutions and the rest of social life.

Economists have long used the term ‘social’ in a residual sense; to denote relations other than those entailed in production and the market. In doing so, they necessarily conflate vast and varied domains of social life—religion, sport, sexual mores, art; as if these constituted some kind of outer space through which the space-ship of the economy floats. But ‘social’, in this
sense, is just as problematic, for the economy itself is a zone of specialized social relationships which obtain in the spheres of production and the market, and these are always informed by extra-economic interests and values. By drawing too rigid a boundary between the economic and the social and the cultural, these interrelationships are obscured. Nor does the term 'socio-cultural' solve the problem, for its meaning is still residual: that which is not economic or political (and it is clumsy, and deservedly, therefore, unpopular). What we need to avoid is not only the assumption that the 'cultural' is a separate sphere, but that it is causally secondary (merely 'super-structural'). It is, in fact, the realm of those crucial institutions in which the ideas we live by are produced and through which they are communicated – and penetrate even the economy.

Popular thought draws no such absolute boundaries. It recognizes that there is an economy, and that there are institutions we all recognize as political. But the word ‘culture’, like the word ‘social’, is used in a whole variety of ways which overlap, constituting a family of meanings. No usage can be definitive, for all involve abstracting from the seamless web of social life. The main criterion has to be a heuristic one: whatever helps us understand better. Even the fine arts conception of culture, we saw, is not without its value, for it focuses upon that central activity: the production and consumption of ideas. Rather than adopt a stipulative definition, therefore, I prefer to preserve some of the richness of popular ambiguity by using the term, at times, in the wider, anthropological sense of a whole Gestalt, and at other times, in the sectoral sense: that which lies outside the sphere of political economy. Which use is intended will either be made explicit or will be clear from the context. The positive value of using the word ‘culture’ in this overlapping fashion cannot be logically definitive; it can only lie in the demonstration that it provides a richer understanding of social life than those one-dimensional or two-dimensional approaches to the study of society which simply leave out most of human behaviour.

II The Undoing of the Peasantry

Before Agriculture

We suffer from a severely impaired sense of history. Creatures more or less like today's humans have existed on earth for over a million years. Recognizably human societies, where people make tools and produce art, go back many tens of thousands of years. But agriculture, the major technical break-through before industry, only goes back a few thousand years. And what we choose to call the 'Great Transformation', industrialization, only began about two hundred years ago, and is still incomplete over most of the globe. Even this brief period, Kumar has argued, has itself been misread in a 'premature', 'historical abbreviation', an 'unjustifiable fore-shortening' of the 'contradictory, uneven and long drawn-out' history of the industrialization process. In 1851, the year conventionally taken as marking the triumph of industry in the first major capitalist country, Britain, the year of the Crystal Palace exhibition, he argues that the factory system was still in its infancy; industrial 'villages' were more common than modern cities; and the workforce was still heavily concentrated in agriculture and domestic service. Only at the end of the century did machinery displace seasonal travelling labourers in agriculture and a city proletariat homogeneous enough to give rise to a (reformist) party of Labour come into existence.

The wider the sweep of historical studies, the greater the temptation to use them to construct or buttress evolutionary cosmologies informed by metaphysics. These may be either optimistic or pessimistic. Most nineteenth-century theorists were optimists, though there were gloomier 'social' interpretations of Darwin. Cosmic optimism was to receive its 'quietus' in 1914: 'the idea of progress', it has been said, 'was buried in the mud of Flanders.'

Yet cosmic optimism is not entirely dead. Theorists aiming at 'future shock' confidently proclaim the end even of the industrial age: we are already living, apparently, in a 'post-industrial' world, and have crossed a new Great Watershed in which micro-processors, nuclear energy, space technology and genetic engineering will soon render all previous history trivial. For pessimists, it is these very innovations that induce unease, reinforced by the knowledge that we may be on the point of exterminating
Decolonization

The first major wave of decolonization—in the Americas—was the consequence of the collapse of ancien régimes in Europe under the impact of the French Revolution. Its dominant ideology, inevitably, was the new, triumphant liberalism. But it did not triumph everywhere, and where it did, was quite compatible with a later wave of expansion on the part of the leading industrial powers. Progress meant (and justified) the elimination of barbarism. By 1884–5, they had parcelled up Africa, the last uncolonized continent, between them. But they had also completed the process, begun five centuries earlier, of creating a single world-wide social system.

Both direct resistance and attempts to exploit inter-imperialist rivalries had failed. The French might make common cause with Tippoo Sultan against the British in India—and even supply him with a mechanical tiger which went through the motions of eating an East India Company officer, from whom terrible groans emerged—but both were defeated, in the end, by the superior might of the world’s first industrialized country.

Yet the epoch of high imperialism lasted a remarkably short time. No sooner had primary resistance been broken than a new wave of revolt against imperialist domination broke out in China, Persia, Turkey, Mexico, South Africa, Cuba and the Philippines. Even as late as the 1930s, many of these movements, like the great Indian Mutiny nearly a century earlier, still looked to a restoration of the past. The Saya San Rebellion in Burma, in which 9000 were captured and 350 hanged, despite the magical amulets they wore, drew upon the millenarian tradition of folk Buddhism for its ideology. Saya San claimed to be the Setkya-min avenging king of Burmese legend, the Buddha Yaza, the ‘divinely sent creator of a Buddhist utopia’. He went to the scaffold defiantly: ‘In all my future existences’, he swore, ‘may I always conquer the British.’

The generation that followed remembered the dead and the cause they had died for. In the 1930s, in a country whose independence struggle had been strangled by the USA, a Filipino schoolboy, asked to write an essay on ‘The Cow’, wrote: ‘A Cow is an animal with one leg at each corner. It has horns and gives milk, but as for me, give me independence.’ By that time, primary resistance and backward-looking revolt had given way to new kinds of anti-colonial movements which looked forward to the construction of new kinds of society after independence, the models for which were no longer, as they had been in the nineteenth century, the liberal democracy of the West, but more often some kind of socialism. The Western sequence, in which liberalism had been followed by the emergence of social democracy, was not duplicated in the colonial world. There, Western-style democracy hardly took root, for after 1917 a new, more revolutionary social alternative was available. The overthrow of capitalism in a major but ‘backward’ European country injected a quite new, social element into what had hitherto been a purely nationalist resistance to foreign rule. To many radical young people, the scenario for the future was not necessarily simply to be a re-run of what had happened in the heartlands of capitalism—the triumph of the bourgeoisie.

Yet socialists, though often influential, never succeeded in winning the leadership of anti-imperialist movements before the Second World War, in part because they addressed themselves to a working class which doctrine identified as the revolutionary force, but which often scarcely existed. The leadership of even the revolutionary anti-imperialist movements remained in the hands of modernizers who saw the future of their countries as one of capitalist development. The linking of nationalism with socialism was only successfully to be achieved during the Second World War, with the Soviet defeat of Nazi invasion in 1945 and the communist-led liberation of China four years later.

Many colonies achieved independence without traumatic struggles. The independence which was granted to Ceylon, India, Syria, Lebanon, the Philippines in the years immediately after the Second World War was to be the prototype for the last major wave of decolonization in British and French Africa during the 1960s.

Most of these countries soon came to realize that they were now involved in a new, neo-colonial relationship with the West, one in which political independence was combined with continuing economic dependence and with participation in a world-wide anti-communist front. For those unprepared to accept that position, the only major alternative, inevitably, was capitalism’s major rival: Soviet-style communism. But few were prepared to see it implanted in their countries. In those countries where mass revolutionary communist parties did emerge, notably China, those parties came to power not only because of the leadership they had given on social issues, but because they had played a leading role in the struggle against foreign invaders. Inevitably, they soon developed their own, national forms of communism.

Non-communist revolutionary nationalist movements in countries like Indonesia were even more resistant to Soviet influence. They had not
struggled to free themselves from capitalist imperialism simply in order to fall under the domination of a new Superpower. Within less than a decade from the end of the War, this mood was to translate itself into a new concept: the notion of a Third World – well-expressed in the old Trotskyist slogan, 'Neither Moscow nor Washington' – and in a new political praxis: 'non-alignment'. Co-existence with communism abroad, however, was perfectly compatible with the massacre of hundreds of thousands of communists at home.

The leadership came from Nehru in India, independent only since 1947; Indonesia, where armed revolution had triumphed in 1949; from Nasser in the United Arab Republic, whose confrontation with the West culminated in the Anglo-French invasion at Suez in 1956 and in the acceptance of aid from the Soviet Union; from Ghana, where Nkrumah had come out of gaol to lead his country to independence in 1957 and to inspire anti-colonial movements across Africa; and from Tito in Yugoslavia, the first Eastern European country to break with the USSR. Practically all of the leading members of the new groupings – which insisted that they did not constitute a 'bloc' – had only recently been colonies. Their fierce assertion of the right to independence excited little enthusiasm in Latin American countries, which had been politically independent for over a century, however qualified; that independence was by the economic and political domination of the major capitalist states, firstly Britain, later the USA, including regular military intervention in the countries closest to the US borders: Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Nor, for Latin America, was the integration of the nation-state a major problem.

The prime interest of the newer states was the liberation of the remaining colonies, and, internally, the decolonization of their own societies and cultures. In the 1930s, Mariátegui had called for the 'Peruvianization' of Peru; now, African leaders called for the 're-Africanization' of Africa.

There now began a whole series of explorations of common interests, in Afro-Asian Conferences, meetings of Heads of State, etc., which were to culminate in the Conference of twenty-nine African and Asian countries in Bandung in 1955.

Anti-colonialism necessarily brought them into confrontation with the West. But vis-à-vis the Second World, the 'first great failure' of the new grouping was their 'mealy-mouthed evasion' and 'sickening . . . timidity' when faced with the Soviet invasion of Hungary, in contrast to their vigorous denunciation of the invasion of Egypt. This was not due to pro-Sovietism so much as to the preoccupation of the new nation-states with their own major initial problem, that of holding the country together. What countries like India feared was that UN intervention in Hungary would, in Nehru's words, 'reduce Hungary to less than a sovereign state . . . [and] . . . set a bad precedent', i.e. for Kashmir, where UN intervention might well mean the loss of India's control over that territory.

To the new states, in any case, the actions of the Soviet Union in Europe, whatever they thought about them, were no immediate threat to them. The principal external danger they faced was from revanchiste attempts by ex-colonial Powers, smarting under the loss of Empire, to restore control in ways that might stop short of actually re-establishing colonial rule, but certainly involved the manipulation of internal divisions and, in the extreme, support for secession movements, as in Katanga.

One of the most widespread hyper-intentional current myths among the more conspiratorially-minded proponents of underdevelopment theory is the belief that independence was simply a controlled transfer of power to reliable local bourgeoisies on the part of the former colonial Powers and the classes they represented. It was by no means so controlled. Even in countries where the transition to independence occurred without armed struggle, leaders like Nkrumah, far from being seen as reliable, were regarded as dangerous Reds. Like Kenyatta, Nkrumah emerged from gaol to form a government and soon after to become the President of an independent country. These were by no means the ideal sound successors colonialists would have preferred. But their preferences were not decisive. Rather, these leaders were the choice of the people. Nor was power simply handed over. It was wrested from the hands of those who tried to cling on to it, particularly in settler territories: in Algeria alone, the struggle to dislodge the colonists cost the lives of a million people. That war was only one in a protracted series of last-ditch efforts to maintain imperial rule, from Indonesia at the end of the Second World War through to Vietnam and Algeria. Those two wars, however, signalled the end of the line. France's ignominious defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 did not mean the end of French intransigence and repression elsewhere. Indeed, France managed to crush the urban guerrilla movement in Algiers through the unbridled use of torture. But the costs, material and moral, were becoming intolerable at home. By the 1960s, both France and Britain realized that fundamental concessions had to be made. Decolonization was the order of the day.

Holland had been the first imperialist country to throw in the sponge, by granting Indonesia her independence after years of vicious, large-scale warfare. Britain and France fought on, at first with some success, in Malaya and in Kenya, where 'Mau Mau' was defeated, but with the increasing realization that what they were engaged in was little more than the Canute-like project, without any visible end in sight, of sweeping back the sea. Under Macmillan and de Gaulle, in the early 1960s, the die was cast. In 1960, seventeen new countries appeared on the world scene. The power vacuum that resulted was, however, swiftly filled by the greatest Superpower in history, the USA, which now assumed a global role as the world's policeman. Increasing military intervention and destabilization, from the
Dominican Republic to Vietnam, and the mobilization of their dependent allies in a crusade against communism, were, however, only one side of the coin, for military-political involvement was underpinned by a new set of economic arrangements: control over world-prices, aid, and investment by multinational corporations. Indirect neo-colonial control, first pioneered in Britain and then by the USA in Latin America during the nineteenth century, now became the new global strategy.

The notion that the ruling élites in the new states were all conscious agents of international capitalism from the beginning is a view which deprives them of any independent interests or autonomous action. They were scarcely bourgeoisie proper, most of the leadership being at best petty-bourgeois, usually low-level, government functionaries. They were, rather, a 'new class', a political élite who used their control of the State to turn themselves into a propertied class. Frank has called them a 'lumpen'-bourgeoisie, a class incapable of undertaking the bourgeois project of creating a capitalist society. Fanon called them a 'caste', 'good for nothing' except their 'historic mission' as intermediaries - as junior partners of foreign capital - a role they readily accepted since it brought them personal riches and a measure of dependent development to their countries.  

Many of them had no clear project at all, in the first place. Only those with the strongest commitment to creating a more equitable kind of society, and who also had a very clear idea of how to go about it, would have been able to withstand the intolerable pressures which the small, poor, agrarian societies they inherited faced. There were very few such people or parties. Many of those who by no means shared his socialist convictions would have agreed with Julius Nyerere's later frank admission that 'if you had asked me what I intended to do after independence I would have given you only the vaguest idea of a programme.'

Most, faced with circumstances over which they had no control - especially the prices they received for their exports - and which left them only minimal room for manoeuvre, simply gave in to those pressures which were the most immediate, those from the capitalist world whose markets were vital to them. They positively welcomed the prospect of finding the capital needed for development by inviting in the multinational corporations. The possibility of development, of any kind, over-rode any worries about what kind of development it would be.

The new governments had been swept to power on a wave of nationalist enthusiasms which was often channelled into one main mass party. In others, like Ghana or Kenya, sizeable smaller parties existed, mostly with an ethnic/regional base. Colonial governments had made it very difficult for class-based parties or movements to survive, even if the peasantry in the Reserves of Kenya and the landless proletarians ('squatters') on the settler estates of the White Highlands had provided most of the fighters in the Mau forces. The urban proletariat usually generated trade unions rather than parties.

After the honeymoon period following Independence, the new governments faced serious economic and political problems that their opponents were not slow to exploit. They therefore set out to break that opposition, though not necessarily by force. In many countries, a mix of incorporation and 'legal' authoritarianism was used. Thus in socialist Tanzania, the trade union federation, the TPF, which had supported the main party, TANU, against its smaller pre-Independence rival, the UTP, was brought under close party-government control even before actual Independence in 1962. Two years later, it was replaced altogether by a new federation, NUTA, firmly controlled by the Minister of Labour, who was designated by the President as the Union's first general secretary. This represented marriage under duress. The trade union movement had become merely one wing of single-party government in an étatiste society: 'the modern form', Fanon called it, 'of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie'.

The elimination of opposition took different forms in different countries, but everywhere the trend was in the same direction. In countries like Kenya, where the preservation of a Westminster type constitution and a parliamentary regime had been one of the conditions for the transfer of power by Britain, the elimination of opposition was a complicated process. In Kenya, the main opposition was led by Oginga Odinga, backed by the large Luo ethnic group of western Kenya, who soon found themselves outnumbered and manoeuvred in parliament, and their party, the KPU, together with the Coast-based KADU, was banned in 1969. Most of the defeated were later allowed to join KANU, the now-dominant single-party, as even Odinga himself (who had been detained) eventually did, only to be expelled in 1982. But more and more frequently, there was simply a coup, either on the part of a section of the armed forces or in which parties called in the army to crush their opponents. By the late 1960s, most of Africa had fallen under one form or another of monocratic regimes, either 'no-party', military regimes, or single-party ones. Where the parliamentary trappings were preserved, or where a tiny opposition was tolerated, it became what Macpherson has called a 'quasi-party system'.

Westminster constitutions, in countries which had been ruled by colonial officials since their creation, and which, in many if not most cases, had had no more than one or two years of experience of operating a system in which opposition was legal and constitutional, were doomed to wither on the vine. The social bases which might have breathed life into a multi-party system were themselves silenced.

The elimination of opposition inside and outside parliament was generally justified on the grounds that national unity was threatened by tribalism or separatism. It is, of course, true that many opposition parties were parties
which spoke for ethnic minorities (sometimes large ones), though class-based opposition was similarly denounced as divisive, even in a socialist State like Tanzania. The desire to create a united country was real enough, but it was all too easily exploited by the new classes which were able to use their numerical strength as leaders of the larger ethnic groups while using the slogan of anti-tribalism and the power of the State they now controlled to squeeze out their rivals.

In these struggles, both government and opposition parties looked abroad for support. Foreign Powers, including the Superpowers, were only too happy to take on board as allies these ready-made mass parties. In Kenya in the 1960s, the Luo opposition, reacting against a nakedly pro-capitalist government, took on a leftist tinge; in Zimbabwe, two decades later, it was the government which pre-empted the radical, anti-imperialist position, denouncing the opposition as pro-South African. Under such conditions, the adoption of what looked like class politics couched in terms of Western ideologies and social programmes became a rhetorical code through which ethnic domination and ethnic resistance were expressed. But class interests and party affiliations do not fit neatly with ethnic divisions. Thus ZAPU is not just a party of the Ndebele and ZANU the party of the Shona. It is an opposition party which attracts those whose main concern is not their ethnic affiliation but the fact that they never obtained land before or after Independence; those who worked on White farms, where increasing rationalization has meant the loss of their jobs; as well as those who never experienced the politicizing effects of the guerrilla war for whom older ethnic categories do remain more salient. Even the latter, however, appeal to new conceptions of Shona identity, or as speakers of Shona languages, that have no counterpart in any of the political entities of the past.

In the 1960s, the populist governments had also talked a good deal about 'socialism', wishing to distance themselves from the colonial Powers, which were capitalist Powers, and to emphasize their identification with the masses. Though it was difficult to see it at the time, in retrospect it now seems that there was perhaps an inverse relationship between the amount of socialism talked and the amount practised. Even Kenyatta's Kenya, soon to become a 'sub-imperialist' bastion of Western investment, published a famous red-covered document in 1965 — entitled *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya*. The word 'socialism', though, always had a qualifying adjective attached to it: 'African' or 'Arab' socialism or 'people's' socialism, labels which disguised the reality of supremely nationalist regimes to which the class struggle was as threatening as ethnic rivalries. They were purely verbal forms of socialism, and never went beyond words.

Nearly all the new countries, too, drew up national Development Plans. Most of these were 'little more than public relations exercises for foreigners', who, it was hoped, would fund one or another of the projects. Most Plans, in fact, were simply lists of particular projects, of diverse kinds and very varied in their scale and in their implications for the use of resources. Such 'Plans' were then hawked around various Western governments in the hope that they would fund this or that project. Most never were funded. These procedures, however, did give funding agencies considerable and demeaning influence over the internal affairs of poor foreign countries, for they naturally insisted on 'pre-investment surveys' before parting with their money and monitored the progress of their chosen projects from time to time. Since there was no way the governments of poor countries could avoid such humiliating conditions and controls any more than they could control world prices, and since the technocrats and the advisers who formulated the Plans (mainly foreign economists) did little to involve the middle and lower-level administrators who would have to carry them out, let alone the people whose interests they believed they could best evaluate, many even of the projects that were funded never got off the ground.

It was axiomatic, too, that no fundamental structural changes in the distribution of political power or economic resources would be involved, and that those in power would have to endorse whatever was proposed. The Plans, that is, were inherently conservative. Given this formidable set of constraints, deceptions and self-deceptions, it was scarcely surprising that most Plans lacked coherence and omitted to mention the key problems that were to make it impossible to translate aspirations and intentions into actuality. The reasons for these failures were basically political, because in all but a handful of oil-producing countries the Plans depended upon foreign aid, and because, internally, for all their monopoly of power and the highly-centralized machinery of the single party (often modelled on the 'democratic-centralist' parties of the Second World), these new parties and administrative machines were hollow shells, partly because they were hastily and poorly organized, but more fundamentally because they lacked mass support, attracting instead a mass of opportunists of all kinds. In a country like Kenya, the ruling class had become so unpopular by 1983 that when a military *coup* was attempted, the poor of Nairobi rushed out into the streets, cheering.

Everywhere, whatever their relationship to ethnic movements, those who were seriously committed to democracy and to socialism were defeated, replaced by one kind or another of monocentric regime, including such bizarre despotisms as that of Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Republic. By the 1970s, Tanzania apart, radical-populist governments and parties had been virtually eliminated in Africa. Most of them did not fall; they were pushed, and much of the muscle used was applied by foreigners. The radical young hero of Zaire's independence struggle, Patrice
Lumumba, was beaten and murdered, and his body stuffed into a refrigerator. The man who replaced him, Colonel Mobutu, is still President. Foreign mercenaries and hired hitmen were also freely used to kill leading individuals and to spread terror by massacring whole villages. And everywhere the CIA—with 16,500 personnel and a budget of $750 million in the mid-1970s—was energetically engaged in ‘destabilization’, especially in countries where Soviet or Chinese influence was suspected. $550 million of this was earmarked for ‘Clandestine Services’, which included ‘Health Alteration’ programmes, such as murdering or helping to murder individuals like Lumumba and Trujillo, and attempting to murder Fidel Castro, and promoting the massacre of whole populations and the destabilization of whole countries. Nearly 40,000 Latin American students have been trained in counter-insurgency techniques at the School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone, among its alumni a galaxy of subsequent dictators, of whom General Pinochet of Chile is the best-known. One million policemen from 41 countries and over 500 high-level military trained at the Inter-American Defense College on the Potomac also help to keep order. First World intervention, however, is much more varied and usually much less dramatic: European Social-Democracy, especially West German, supports its counterparts in Latin America; the CIO-AFL and international ‘free’ trade union organizations act as a Labour arm of the State Department.

The task of all these organizations is made easier because they are able to exploit internal divisions in the Third World, for conflicts such as that between the Nilotic South and the arabitized North in the Sudan, between Iran and Iraq, or between Ethiopia and Eritrea are not creations of the CIA. They arise out of differences rooted in history and culture. Neither is the exploitation of those differences by governments inflamed by irrational chauvinism, or, more often, seeking to head off popular discontent by calculated appeals to historic enmities, something that is masterminded by the giant Powers. But today, in a global society, all such disputes cease to be private quarrels. US governments see revolutions, even in tiny countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador or Guatemala, as military threats to their southern defence perimeter and potential detonators of regional revolution.

But older spheres of influence, and many of these local historic animosities, have been increasingly subsumed within a global neo-colonial strategy in which the former imperial Powers now play only secondary roles. Recent anti-colonial revolutions have also been infused much more emphatically with a new social content because they have had to turn for assistance to the only countries that could and would provide it: the Second World.

Earlier, there had never been any great sympathy for communism even on the part of leaders often believed by the more paranoid Western politicians to be closet communists. Those who had visited Moscow, like Kenyatta and Nkrumah, who were not Marxists, as well as those like George Padmore and C. L. R. James, who were, had been impressed, above all, by the way Russia had, to use the title of one of Padmore’s books, ‘transformed her colonial empire’. They were therefore attracted by the idea of reproducing the institutions which had been the organizational foundation of that transformation and the machinery of mobilization: the democratic-centralist Party and the State planning apparatus. They do not seem to have been particularly concerned that it had been an authoritarian development strategy which had achieved industrialization only at the cost of the lives of tens of millions of workers, peasants, and intellectuals and of the great majority of the leadership that had made the Revolution. Their eventual disillusion with the USSR, rather, was due to what they saw as the USSR’s attempt to subordinate national liberation movements across the world to its own national interests and to impose Soviet models and strategies upon those movements.

After 1945, by which time the USSR had emerged as the second most powerful state in the world, Stalin’s political caution, and the need to allocate all available capital to the rebuilding of the shattered cities of the USSR and to the communist bloc, precluded the provision of assistance to colonial liberation movements or the governments of newly-independent countries. By the 1960s, however, the end of Stalinism, and the expansion of the Soviet economy, made possible the beginning of a new era of ‘forward’ policy vis-à-vis the Third World. Military equipment, training and military advisers were made available to national liberation movements and friendly states, while the Aswan Dam became the symbol of the emergence of the USSR as a major source of capital for non-military development projects. Up to 1960, the bulk of China’s foreign aid had come from the USSR. Vietnam’s triumph over the greatest Power in world history was primarily due to the expenditure of Vietnamese blood, but they could not have fought without Soviet weapons. Without Soviet materials, too, Cuba’s revolution would probably have been crushed.

In Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, the most archaic colonial Power of all had rejected the new strategy of decolonization and even tried to solve its domestic problems and at the same time inject new life into these ultra-colonial possessions by encouraging a new wave of settlement by poor Portuguese immigrants. The result, inevitably, was bitter armed struggle, which ended in the victory of revolutionary movements which had depended heavily upon Soviet and Second World assistance. By the 1970s, then, a new set of underdeveloped countries, indebted and sympathetic to the Second World, had emerged within the Third, while Soviet aid, including military, was being extended on a large scale to such anti-communist countries as India.
Models of the Third World

The emergence of the Third World, world-system theorists have argued, goes back to the beginnings of capitalism in Europe and the beginnings of European expansion overseas. At that time, it was only a Third World in itself. A Third World for itself — a group of countries conscious of their common colonial history and of its legacy: underdevelopment — only emerged five centuries later, after the Second World War.

The Afro-Asian grouping of the 1950s began as a coming-together of countries that had reached different points in the decolonization process. Some had just achieved their independence; others were still struggling to win it. Yet others, like Cuba, had been politically independent, but had only just succeeded in establishing a true economic independence of the capitalist world, while countries like China had never formally lost their independence, though they had become semi-colonies. Chou en-Lai, who played a major role in the building up of the original Afro-Asian grouping, was not simply a representative of communism. He was the spokesman for the world's largest underdeveloped communist state. By then, the USSR, by contrast, was no longer eligible for membership of a grouping of underdeveloped countries, for it was not only a developed country, but a Superpower.

The unity of such a diverse set of countries, extremely varied in their cultural heritages, with very different historical experiences and marked differences in the patterns of their economies, whatever their common history of subjection to colonialism and their common underdevelopment both as colonies and as independent states, was inherently problematic. It was increased by the subscription of some to forms of Marxism, and by the unapologetic invitation, by many more, to multinational corporations to come in and develop their countries along capitalist lines. But the closest elective affinity between the political search for a 'third way' or 'third force' internationally and its counterpart in internal policy was the economic strategy of a mixed economy, in which private ownership would be under the firm control of the State. Its socio-political counterpart, populism, purported to reject both capitalism and communism in their classical Western forms.

The coherence of such a group was necessarily dependent on the presence of a common enemy. It was a negative unity: politically, against colonialism; in economic terms, a solidarity between the 'proletarian nations' in opposition to the developed ones.

The notion that the countries which were now coming into being were different in kind from both the First and the Second Worlds seized the imagination after the experience of global Cold War and a major conflict in Korea. The term 'Third World' did not even originate in the Third World at all but in post-war France. Some have therefore assumed that it reflects Gaullist thinking, since that movement saw itself as the major opponent of the powerful Communist Party at home, and sought to avoid French and European dependence on the United States by rallying Western Europe in the face of the new threat from a non-communized Eastern Europe.

The term, in fact, emerged in a very different political milieu, that of the non-communist Left, which had played an heroic and militant part in the Resistance and which now continued to espouse a militant socialism despite being overshadowed by the much larger Communist Party. One major focus for those for whom neither social democracy nor the Soviet Union were synonymous with socialism was the newspaper edited by Claude Boudet, L'Observateur. They naturally saw parallels between their own search for a 'third way' between capitalism and Stalinist communism and the struggles of a new wave of militant anti-colonial movements which opposed imperialism but were by no means pro-communist.

The analogy was a peculiarly French one: the 'tiers monde' was the analogue of the tiers état of pre-revolutionary France: the estate of the bourgeois, the petty bourgeois, the artisans, the peasants and workers who lacked the privileges of the first two estates, the clergy and the nobility. The first public use of the term came in an article of L'Observateur on 14 August 1952 by Alfred Sauvy, the demographer, entitled Trois Mondes, Une Planète. The Third World, he declared, 'ignoré, exploité, méprisé, comme le tiers état, veut lui aussi être quelque chose'.

The term was quickly taken up in academic circles, but soon became diffused outside those confines in an epoch when it looked as if the Second World War would be followed only too quickly by the Third, as the Cold War in Europe — symbolized by the eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation of the Berlin airlift — threatened to turn itself into the very hot kind of anti-communist war being fought in Third World countries like Korea and Malaya.

The search for a 'third way' in Europe, on the part of weak socialist movements overwhelmed by the hysteria of McCarthyism and by the construction of a new anti-communist alliance, NATO, was doomed to failure. It was to leave traces in the association of figures like Anserin Bevan with those who now emerged as the leaders of a 'non-aligned' grouping of countries, most of which had only just won their independence. The term 'underdevelopment' first seems to have been used in an official UN document in 1951. Since some Third World countries objected, either on the grounds that they were developing or even that they were already developed but in ways different from those of the West, various euphemisms
were later substituted: 'less-developed' or 'developing', 'en vie de développement', 'late-developing', etc., etc. It was not a question of whether they were or were not developing, but rather an exercise in what Gunnar Myrdal called 'diplomacy by terminology'. From that year onwards, UN documents began classifying countries into three categories. The first two were categories of political economy in that what were labelled as 'economically developed countries' (sometimes, more accurately, as 'developed market economies') were the 'free enterprise' countries. (Even though by this time the USSR, despite war-time devastation, had emerged as the second major industrial country in the world, it was excluded: Western Germany, while equally devastated, was included.) The second category, the 'centrally-planned economies', lumped together, on political grounds, the industrialized USSR and the still agrarian Eastern European countries. The rest, however, in the third category, were simply classified according to economic criteria, whatever the differences in their social systems or cultures, as 'primary producing countries'. The criteria used were, therefore, a mix both of the political and the economic, different criteria being invoked in different cases. Logically, there ought to have been four boxes: the developed capitalist world; the underdeveloped capitalist countries; the developed communist world; and the underdeveloped communist countries. Yet at this time there was only one industrialized communist country. The rest — Eastern Europe, China and North Vietnam — were so economically weak and backward, and apparently so dominated by the USSR, that they were assumed to constitute a solidarity bloc and simply lumped together with that country as the Second World.

From the very beginning, then, there were two different bases, albeit inconsistently used and rarely spelt out, for conceptualizing the components of the modern world-system; 'political economy', a two-dimensional concept, was, in fact, usually decomposed, some stressing political criteria, others the economic. The result was very different conceptions of the Third World.

The concept of the Third World also necessarily implies the existence of two prior worlds. (It is also stipulative in that it assumes there to be three and only three.) It is important, therefore, to spell out also what the characteristics of the first two worlds are; an operation, again, that is all too rarely performed. They are of course not only political and economic.

The First World emerged as, and remains, an economy based upon private property in the means of production and characterized by its necessary concomitants, the existence of a supply of exploitable wage-labour, and competition between firms seeking to maximize profit in a market economy. All of these institutions and structures are legitimized by assumptions so deep that they are scarcely ever inspected, let alone questioned: property by the theory of possessive individualism; competition by the laissez-faire belief that the good of the majority is best ensured by institutionalizing the search for private gain; while politically, individualism means the equality of all citizens before the law and before the ballot-box, the separation of powers, and the existence of a legitimate opposition, including socialist and communist parties. The absence of social equality, which left poverty to be catered for by religiously-inspired charity and by public assistance based on a biological conception of basic needs and a punitive conception of deserts, has subsequently been replaced by newer conceptions of rights to social justice based on customary levels of minimal wants, as a matter of entitlement. In place of the older solidarities provided by religion, the Welfare State thus supplies a dimension missing in the older ideology of citizenship and countervails and damps down the worst effects of the theory and practice of possessive individualism.

The power of the State has also grown immensely, both in terms of its intervention in the economy and in terms of its involvement in all areas of social life.

The contrast with the Second World could scarcely be more striking. There, the economy is based upon collective, above all State, ownership of the means of production and upon the planning of production, rather than on private property and the market. Both economy and society are controlled by a ruling class whose power is based, not upon private property, but upon control of the State in the shape of the democratic centralist single party. Access to this elite is based upon meritocratic competition and upon the internalization of the official culture, including the ideology of the State, or, more precisely, of the class which controls the State apparatuses. With the passage of time, political domination has ceased to depend principally upon the exercise of terror, as it did during the Stalin era, but rests upon the control and manipulation of the media of communication and socialization, through which the hegemonic culture is diffused and public opinion shaped.

The nature of the Third World seemed so self-evident in the 1960s that in a book on The Third World I published in 1964, I saw no need to define it any more precisely than that it was the world made up of the ex-colonial, newly-independent, non-aligned countries. Nor did I trouble to define any more rigorously the characteristics of the First and Second Worlds.

Yet the problems of how to reconcile the conception of a single world-system with the conception of three distinct worlds was there from the beginning. Many writers continued, (and continue) however, to use both without confronting these problems. Their definitions of the three worlds, in consequence, are usually descriptive, often arbitrary, and at times so loose as to be casual. Horowitz, for example, described the Third World reasonably enough, as made up of the ex-colonial, non-aligned countries, 'thoroughly dedicated to becoming industrialized', but then went on to assert — in a quite cavalier manner — that they drew their technology from the
First World and their ideology from the Second.\textsuperscript{18}

The central notion was the notion of dependency. Third World countries did not have a distinctive economic system (or mode of production) different in kind from that of the capitalist world; politically weaker, and with a lower level of development of productive forces, they are exploited by the latter as sources of cheap labour, of raw materials, and latterly of manufactured goods, while the West specializes in advanced technology.

But dependency is not a purely economic concept. It is a category of political economy, since it describes inequalities of power as between states, economic institutions and actors operating on the world-market. Cultural dependency was usually simply omitted from most models.

There is no necessary opposition, of course, between political and economic models. In reality, most people use a mixture of both, but usually inconsistently, and without providing justifications for doing so. I present them in the following table, however, in opposed pure, extreme form – as Weberian ideal types – even if, in the real world, only certain ideologues fit either extreme, because the procedure points up important differences.

The first, the political, sees the world as divided into two opposed political camps, characterized by differences of social system and ideology: capitalism and communism. The second takes levels of economic development as the crucial criterion; the world is therefore divided not into capitalist and communist countries, but into developed countries and underdeveloped ones. These two models are diagrammatically represented in the meta-model below (which only gives the more important countries or representatives of each category).

Moving across the rows, horizontally, the world is divided politically into two sets of capitalist and communist countries respectively. This model prevailed during the Cold War. It classifies together the USSR, Eastern Europe and North Korea (cell 2) with underdeveloped communist countries such as China and Cuba. The former is sometimes called the ‘West’ (in its widest usage, though, of course, that label is often reserved for the advanced capitalist countries alone).

Conceptions of the Third World in economic terms read vertically down the columns, thereby combining industrialized capitalist countries like Japan or the EEC (cell 1) with industrialized communist countries like the USSR or North Korea (cell 2), but separating both of these from that other half of the world, the world made up of both underdeveloped capitalist countries like Bolivia, Botswana or Bangladesh (cell 3) and underdeveloped communist countries such as Cuba (cell 4). The first half is what has now come to be called the ‘North’ (cells 1 and 2); the second, the ‘South’ (cells 3 and 4).

Economic models naturally attracted economists, both on the Left and the Right. The level of development of productive forces was the key causal factor, though there were differences as to what the main element was; for some, it was the accumulation of capital; for others, the presence or absence of the entrepreneurial spirit. Political institutions, social arrangements, and cultural differences were usually treated as irrelevant in these models, or subsumed under the phrase ceteris paribus. It was a reductionist, economic conception of development and of its causes and impediments.

To some people, taxonomies like these are merely academic exercises. Yet they clarify the distinctive political praxis which each of the various models both justifies and expresses. Ideas, as W. I. Thomas observed, are ‘real in their consequences’, and the names we give things – the taxonomies we construct and then impose on the world – have, as Hobbes noted, consequences not just for the way we think about the world but also for the way we act in it. The real-life implications of the Chinese conception of the three worlds for instance, differs from any of the foregoing, and – surprisingly for a Marxist regime – treats the distinction between capitalist and communist countries as a subsidiary matter. Far more important, in their view, are the differences in levels of development of the productive forces, whether in a capitalist or a communist society, which enable the rich countries to exploit the poor. The most powerful of all are two only – the Superpowers – which ‘compete’ with each other for world hegemony, but ‘collude’ to prevent any challenge to the world balance of power which they have created and which they jointly maintain. Central to that competition is the struggle to win over Second and Third World countries to their side. The Second World they see as a set of countries with relatively advanced levels of economic development – which again puts communist countries like Hungary or Czechoslovakia in the same bracket as capitalist countries like
Italy or Brazil, despite differences of ideology and social system. The Third World consists of the least economically developed countries, including China herself. As the majority of underprivileged mankind, they have a common interest in bringing the domination of the Superpowers to an end.

At one level, this is an economic or technicist model, one in terms of levels of development and forces of production, not a class model, in which the nature of the social system is the primary criterion. But it has clear political implications. Since the principal contradiction is that between the Superpowers and the rest, the precondition for development on a global scale is the ending of their joint domination of the world. For a time, both the Superpowers were jointly condemned, but by the mid-1970s, the USSR, rather than the leading capitalist Power, had been identified as the greater menace. The Chinese model of the three worlds thus requires a modification of our original diagram.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DEVELOPED</th>
<th>UNDERDEVELOPED</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUPERPOWERS</td>
<td>OTHER</td>
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<td>CAPITALIST</td>
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<td>COMMUNIST</td>
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| FIRST WORLD | SECOND WORLD | THIRD WORLD |

Starting from the same basic theoretical assumption that countries are to be classified according to their level of economic development other theorists have arrived at quite different conclusions – and policy implications. Wallerstein, as we saw, rejects the notion that there are three, or even two worlds. For him, there is only a single world-system, which is a capitalist one and has been so since the seventeenth century. Hence it follows that, according to him, 'socialist systems do not exist in the contemporary world'.

The communist state is merely a 'collective capitalist firm as long as it remains a participant in the capitalist market.' Since any system, by definition, is made up of parts, however, he takes the 'country' as the unit of the world-system. Countries are then classified into three types: those at the centre of the system ('core countries'); countries on the 'periphery'; and 'semi-peripheral' countries. In this model, communist countries do not constitute a distinct type of society: the Second World is decomposed and divided into one or other of the three categories, the Soviet Union, for example, being a core country and Cuba a peripheral one. Since the model is predominantly an economic one, it ignores such institutions as the Warsaw Pact or the military assistance given by the USSR to Cuba, Vietnam and other regimes and movements. Yet paradoxically, it ignores the existence of such economic institutional realities as COMECON, or the post-revolutionary aid supplied by the USSR to Cuba and Vietnam.

Institutionalized state socialism, in this basically neo-Trotskyist view of the world, is not socialism at all. Socialism is seen as a system of production which can only be realized when collectively organized at world level. It is hard to see how the transition to that level of organization could ever be made at all since the world, as the model recognizes, is composed of nation-states, and revolutions have occurred and can only continue to occur in real-life countries, not via some kind of global orgasm. Further, whatever one's reservations about and criticisms of Soviet and other forms of State socialism, and the distortions caused by the struggle to survive and grow in a world in which capitalism is still far stronger materially and militarily, the socialism that has developed up to now – however authoritarian – is fundamentally oriented to establishing not only a collectivist, but an egalitarian alternative to capitalism, and draws its ideas and ideals from the Marxist founding fathers. It is, therefore, a variant of socialism, and to refuse it that title, even when it does damage to socialist values, is simply an arbitrary, dogmatic and stipulative judgement.

The other kind of economic model differs fundamentally from both the Chinese and neo-Trotskyist versions in its value-assumptions. The aid-lobby, which advocates massive redirection of world resources in order to develop the presently impoverished regions of the globe, is made up of people of varied political persuasions, the majority probably Christian and humanists to whom capitalism and communism are equally repugnant ideologies which merely legitimize the rule of two different kinds of political elites.

One of the most influential political models of the three worlds, naturally, has been that promulgated by the communist Superpower. Since Soviet policy is usually seen in the West simply as one of brutal expansionism, it becomes important to examine the assumptions which inform Soviet policy, as expressed by Soviet theorists themselves – an operation only too rarely performed.

The Soviet model of the world reflects the duality of interests of a country which is both a nation-state whose first priority is the consolidation and preservation of its social system at home, and a Superpower supporting movements of national liberation and socialist states outside Europe. Like
any other nation-state, it is particularly sensitive to threats to its borders—with particularly good reason after invasion and destruction on a gigantic scale twice in less than a quarter-century. That sensitivity is most acute with relation to those countries of Eastern Europe whose socialism was designed in the USSR and implanted by the Red Army. There, mere friendship between states is not enough. The entire social system, with its distinctive political institutions and ideology, has to be kept in being, by force if necessary.

These considerations scarcely explain Soviet involvement in Ethiopia or even Afghanistan (even though that country does have common borders with the USSR). Nor does the paranoid assumption that the USSR simply moves in wherever it can. From Stalin’s abandonment of the Greek communists at the end of the Second World War to the very limited support for the Allende government in Chile, the USSR’s record has not always been one of unequivocal support for socialist or even communist movements. Conversely, she has traded with Argentina, despite its ultra-Right military regime, and helped a (Marxist) Ethiopian government to contain Eritrean independence movements which also claim to be Marxist.

Many who would defend the protection extended by the USSR to Cuba because that country was threatened by US invasion (though not Krushchev’s provocative installation of rockets), or Cuba’s assistance to Angola, find no such justification for Soviet (and Cuban) military involvement in Eritrea, or, now, for the use of counter-insurgency methods pioneered by the USA in Vietnam to impose socialism by gunship on Afghanistan. The dilemma of the USSR in the face of Marxist-led regimes that came to power via coup d’etat (without the mass involvement in the revolution that occurred in Angola and Mozambique) is a very real and tragic one, for to have failed to intervene would have meant abandoning Marxist revolutionaries (whose arrival in power was not brought about by the USSR) to their fate, and the installation of ultra-reactionary regimes. In the Ethiopian case, the removal of the feudal ruling class and the distribution of their lands did initially generate an ex post facto popularity among the masses. But the utter ruthlessness of the regime towards any opposition, even on the Marxist Left, itself owes much not only to Soviet conceptions of the one-party state and of the necessity for ideological conformity, but to the military and security organs which Soviet advisers directly helped to create.22

The wider theoretical underpinnings of these Soviet policies towards the Third World are scarcely ever studied. In contradistinction to Chinese policy, the Soviet model of the three worlds is not based on levels of development. It is a political model, which discriminates between kinds of states according to the nature of their social system, the primary distinction being that between the socialist and capitalist societies. Though the objective interests of the Third World are, in their view, to detach themselves from capitalism and take the socialist road, most of these countries are tied by authoritarian governments to the Western chariot. Yet some do strive to preserve a degree of independence of the Western embrace, and others even to extend their autonomy and their room for manoeuvre. They are, in Soviet parlance, ‘progressive’ countries, which have embarked on a ‘non-capitalist path’, which constitutes a ‘transition to socialism’ in terms of the internal structure of those societies, and is anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist at the global level.

Soviet theorists explain this contradiction between internal and external policy in terms of an analysis of the class structure of such countries: having only a weak indigenous bourgeoisie, no strong party has emerged to represent its interests. Since the working class, likewise, scarcely exists, a significant workers’ party is equally absent. The class struggle therefore takes place between quite different classes than those characteristic of advanced capitalism. Apart from the rich comprador accomplices of Western imperialism, the majority of the propertied classes are landowners, small peasants, and urban petty bourgeois. The most exploited elements are mainly non-proletarians, notably those without any work at all. Where these progressive forces are effectively mobilized — usually by petty bourgeoisie and intellectual elements — they sometimes come to power on a platform of ‘national democracy’, and then use the power of the State to curtail foreign monopolies and to limit exploitation, to extend state ownership, and to plan and diversify the economy, especially agriculture; and to democratize hitherto dictator-ridden societies.

On the Left, outside the USSR, this strategy has been criticized because it has resulted, in practice, in subordinating the task of creating a Marxist workers’ party and a revolution based on mass involvement to reliance on dictatorial and authoritarian methods; secondly, because it under-emphasizes class struggle, especially the opposition between the interests of the exploited classes and those of the elite who control the State and the dominant Party; and finally because it places too much emphasis upon external considerations — the global struggle between imperialism and socialism and pro-Sovietism in foreign policy — at the expense of internal class struggle, including struggles over different strategies of development.23

From Politics to Economics

With the passage of time, the ideas that had informed the Third World’s own conceptions of itself shifted, as new kinds of problems became more salient...
within those countries; as relations between them and the developed world changed; and as important changes took place in the Second World.

In its formative period, the Afro-Asian grouping had been primarily a political grouping, concerned with the independence of the State and with internal decolonization, the replacement of foreign personnel and the creation of a national culture. It was only later, after the euphoria of political independence had subsided and the reality of economic dependence had been experienced, that the emphasis shifted to the problem of neo-colonialism, an experience distilled in a book with that title published by Nkrumah in 1965. The discovery of just how little control small, underdeveloped countries had over institutions whose power set limits upon the decisions they could make — and which seem likely to do so for the indefinite future — was only slowly borne in upon governments which had been swept to power on a heady wave of mass enthusiasm and were confident that this new energy of the masses could be harnessed for development.

Djilas' conception of the governing elites in Eastern Europe as a 'new class' inverted Marx's image of the State as the mere 'executive committee' of the bourgeois class: by virtue of their control of the State, he argued, they also controlled the economy. But they did not own the means of production. Others therefore argued that they should be labelled an 'elite', not a class. But in the new, etatisiste, post-colonial countries, the new elites used the power of the State to turn themselves into a propertied capitalist class, albeit as junior partners to the multinationals. They are therefore both a political elite and a new class.

Yet whatever the degree of their monopoly of local power in single-party states, the class that owned the mines, the plantations, the factories and the banks was not even in the country, but outside it: in the First World.

The nation-state is still a significant unit in international politics, depending on the political weight of the country — which is not entirely a matter of economic or even military strength. It still remains significant, too, insofar as the political decisions governments take (tariffs, tax laws, etc.) have consequences for the economy for both foreigners and natives. But even major countries like Britain today belong to the wider political and economic communities and military blocs of the EEC and NATO; and most Second World countries belong to COMECON as well as the Warsaw Pact. The newer communist states depend heavily on the Second World for both protection and for assistance with their development plans, while the influence of the smaller Third World capitalist countries upon world affairs scarcely extends beyond the use (or sale) of their UN vote. Economically, a government like that of Botswana has less to spend every year on ensuring the survival, let alone the development, of the country than people in Britain spend on deodorants and slimming foods or on their gardens or their pets. But far more important than even the larger governments are the multinational corporations.

These operate, by definition, at a new, 'transcendental' global level, and can shift their operations and investments from one country to the other depending on profitability, political stability, etc. This does not mean that they have no national affiliations. They are, indeed, based in one or other of the leading capitalist countries, of which the USA and Japan are the most important. But their operations are worldwide. The largest, Exxon, has some 300 subsidiaries in over fifty countries. Political influence apart, the sheer scale of their operations means that the decisions they take are often more important to the economy of a country than those taken by its government, and not only in the case of the smaller countries. Even large, developed countries are losing the capacity to control their own economic future. Today, General Motors spends more than the Japanese government (and Japan is the world's fourth largest industrial Power); Ford spends more than the French government's defence expenditure; and Imperial Chemical Industries has a budget larger than that of Norway. In the Third World, in 1970, only three Latin American countries — Brazil, Mexico and Argentina — had a GNP superior to the annual sales of General Motors, Standard Oil, Ford and Royal Dutch Shell. The capacity of governments in societies with a GNP of less than US $450 per capita per annum to exercise sovereign choice is thus extremely limited. Even where the State has taken over the ownership of major economic enterprises, world commodity prices are beyond its control, while the operation of those enterprises is usually still carried out by expatriate organizations (often the former owners), which charge heavily for management services. Where they still retain ownership, limits set on dividends or on their repatriation can readily be compensated for. The profits retained permit further expansion, while novel forms of income such as payments for technical know-how, patent rights and licences, are quite as rewarding as old-fashioned dividends, while transfer pricing enables the parent company in the developed centre to charge their local subsidiaries abroad inordinately high prices for components, chemicals, and other sophisticated products from the First World. Even in Tanzania, where practically everything had been taken into State ownership, the haemorrhage was debilitating.

The vulnerability of Africa, by far the poorest part of the world economy, to capitalist world economic crisis, was reflected, in 1982, in outbreaks of protest in Morocco, the Sudan and Tanzania at drastic increases in food prices as a result of IMF pressure. Africa's external public debt had grown to more than four times what it had been nine years earlier, and whereas only two African countries had credit agreements with the World Bank four years ago, twenty-one of the forty-eight African members had called on the Bank for credit by the end of 1981. Globally, the debt burden grew from $19 billion in 1960 to $376 billion in 1976.
The shock of surprise at realizing just how limited the power of the State was in economic matters expressed by Robert Mugabe in 1982 was no news to leaders of an earlier cohort of the new nations of Africa. At the time of Independence, Julius Nyerere has said, they had ‘assumed that political liberation would take care of the economic problem’.\(^\text{29}\) Two decades later, he had learned differently:

Most of Africa is now free from colonial rule. \ldots\) I know that we were right in our united demand for freedom from colonial rule. I know that we are right to support the demand for political freedom which is still being made by the peoples of southern Africa. \ldots\) Our mistake was not in our demand for freedom; it was in the assumption that freedom – real freedom – would necessarily and with little trouble follow liberation from alien rule. \ldots\)

A new African government which tries to act on economic matters in the interests of national development, and for the betterment of its own masses \ldots\) immediately discovers that it inherited the power to make laws, to direct the civil service, to treat with foreign governments, and so on, but that it did not inherit effective power over economic developments in its own country. \[Hence\ldots\) to a very large number of Africa's peoples, independence has brought no change in economic conditions, and very little – if any – social change. Progress is very slow when considered in the light of what we know to be possible for life on earth. And injustice – even tyranny – is rampant in a continent whose peoples demanded independence as a remedy for those same evils.

\ldots\) If deliberate countervailing action is not taken, external economic forces determine the nature of the economy a country shall have, what investment shall be undertaken and where, and what kind of development – if any – will take place within our national borders.

Neo-colonialism is a very real, and very severe, limitation on national sovereignty. \ldots\) Our countries are effectively being governed by people who have only the most marginal interest in our affairs – if any – and even that only in so far as it affects their own well-being. That, in fact, is the meaning – and the practice – of neo-colonialism. It operates under the cover of political colonialism while that continues. Its existence and meaning becomes more obvious after independence.\(^\text{29}\)

One response to neo-colonialism, Nyerere notes, was not to resist it, but to adapt to it, even to glory in it:

Some of our people identify their own personal interests with the existing neo-colonial situation \ldots\) the local agents of foreign capitalists, and \ldots\) the local capitalists who have developed in the shadow of large foreign enterprises. Such people may feel that their wealth and status depend upon the continued dominance of the external economic power. \ldots\)

They point to the statistics of their Gross National Product as an example of what can be gained from it – rather in the manner of a high-class prostitute glorying in her furs and jewels\(^\text{30}\)

Nyerere thus recognizes that capitalist development (as in adjoining Kenya), which he, as a socialist, rejects, is nevertheless a fact in certain of the new states.

In the nineteenth century, Marx had feared that socialism would be established first in the older centres of capitalism (Europe), but then find itself threatened by dynamic new capitalism in the colonial world. Since this did not happen, some dependency theorists have argued that growth, especially industrial growth, is not possible in countries dominated by the capitalist First World. The fact is that the annual rate of growth of manufacturing industry in recent years has been higher in Third World countries than in the First World – 11.2 per cent between 1960 and 1970; 8.7 per cent between 1970 and 1979 – albeit from a low initial base, and with rates as low as 3.7 per cent in very low-income countries. Warren's attack on the 'illusion of underdevelopment' was the first challenge on the Left to dependency theory. The evidence, he argued, showed that Marx had been right after all – capitalist development was taking place in the Third World rather than the development of underdevelopment,\(^\text{31}\) to which his critics replied that this was only growth, not development, since it still left those countries under the domination of the multinationals centred in the First World; others called it 'dependent development'.

Whatever the words used, it was abundantly clear that very rapid industrialization had taken place and was taking place in a number of formerly agrarian countries. Because labour-costs were very low, especially in countries where authoritarian governments kept trade unions firmly under control or actually abolished them, foreign capital flowed in, expecting a far higher rate of return on its investment than it would get in comparable industries in the First World. The textile industry was one of the first to shift its operations to the Third World. Automobile assembly, then automobile production, followed; then shipbuilding. A whole range of new, light but modern, sophisticated industries, producing transistor radios, plastics, chemicals, cameras, tv sets, components, now employ millions of people in a growing number of Third World countries. In enclave countries like Hong Kong or Singapore, and in the 'free production zones' within larger countries such as Mexico, most of this is for export. Such zones have even been established inside China, mostly in the form of joint enterprises. Countries with huge internal markets like India or Brazil have developed very large industrial and manufacturing sectors which flourish side-by-side with vast zones of peasant poverty. India possesses several of the world's largest and most advanced steel plants; those in Brazil produce 12 million
tons a year and feed her automobile industry and her factories. In Mexico, industrial growth, as in Brazil, began as early as the 1930s, followed by the import substitution of the Second World War. But during the 1950s and 1960s, manufacturing industry nearly quadrupled and the workforce doubled.  

A very different kind of massive increase in national income has occurred in the OPEC countries, which were formerly impoverished client states of the West or actual colonies. But whereas Mexico and Venezuela have used their increased income from oil to import the means of industrialization and of the modernization of agriculture along agribusiness lines, the ruling classes in those Near Eastern countries which are the biggest producers in the world are not seriously interested in modernization, while their appetites for luxurious living can be satisfied from only a tiny percentage of their oil-revenues. Even such major oil-producers as Mexico and Venezuela are therefore merely included among other 'middle-income' countries in World Bank tables, and are now having great difficulty in servicing their foreign debt, whereas countries like Saudi Arabia, Libya or Kuwait, with so much income that they cannot use it all at home and who invest it in the First World — with major consequences for the economies of that World — now constitute a separate category in World Bank statistics as 'capital surplus oil-exporters'.

Two-by-two tables such as the ones we have used to classify models of the three worlds enable us to understand the logic — and therefore the foreign policies — of those who use them. But they also have their limitations. The categories 'underdeveloped' and 'developed', 'communist' and 'capitalist' do explain a great deal about real-life international groupings because countries with those kinds of characteristics have interests in common. But they do not explain everything, and were not intended to. Since they are timeless, synchronic models, with only four categories, they cannot, inherently, capture relationships other than those built into the model: whether relationships which cut across those categories, such as political ties between countries in different cells (India and the USSR; the US and China), or relationships between countries in the same cell. Thus Czechoslovakia and the USSR may both be developed communist countries (and the former country even has a higher GNP per capita than the Soviet Union) but that does not tell us that the USSR dominates Czechoslovakia politically. Since the basic unit is the country, relationships between the major groups within the country (classes, ethnic groups, religious communities, etc.) are left out of the picture.

Nor can such schemas capture change, whether it be economic change of the kind we have just discussed, or shifts of political allegiance at world level. Internal social change, in many countries, has been very rapid and very uneven. They therefore display contradictory economic mixes (developed industry, but low living-standards, as in Turkey; high living-standards, but a limited industrial sector, as in New Zealand or Uruguay) which makes for disagreement about how to classify them. There is dispute, too, on political grounds: whether to put South Africa and Israel into the First World, to which both are firmly attached politically, or into the Third, because of the persistence of the colonial syndrome of racial exploitation and oppression. These disputes are generally resolved 'by fiat', to use Cicorel's term, and in different ways by different people: by stipulating that one criterion or the other will be used and others ignored.

Such considerations have induced many theorists to abandon the notion of three worlds altogether. Goldthorpe, who retains the overall label 'Third World', which he defines simply as the poor countries, proceeds, firstly, to separate out the communist countries and then to further sub-divide them into the old and the new communist states. The capitalist world is broken down even further: into the better-off poor, the middling poor, the poorer and the poorest (apart from anomalies and unclassifiable small countries and territories); nine groupings in all. Others, in the spirit of V. S. Naipaul's sardonic designation of the Caribbean as the 'Third World's Third World' describe the really poor countries as the Fourth World.

One logical end-product of this multiplication of worlds would be the abandonment of the concept of 'world' and its replacement by a purely linear list of countries ranked in order of level of development. The World Bank goes farthest in this direction, ranking each country from the lowest, Kampuchea, to the highest, the United Arab Emirates, on the basis of a set of indicators of levels of development: GNP per capita, food production, annual growth of production, adult literacy and life-expectancy rates. Even if we ignore the technical problems of compiling such figures, the use of indicators of this kind often obscures important social issues. The richest country on earth, in terms of GNP per capita, for instance, is, as already stated, the United Arab Emirates ($26,850 million, 1982). Yet only a few people monopolize the great bulk of this wealth; the vast majority of the population get the rest — as in any other capitalist country. Most of the wage-earners, moreover, are foreign immigrant workers. Half a million nonnationals from the two Yemens, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, South Korea, Turkey, Pakistan, and elsewhere worked in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in 1975, outnumbering nationals by more than two to one. Figures of income per capita, again, do not tell us that Whites in the mines of South Africa get eight times more than Black workers.

And as with earlier UN statistics, political criteria are smuggled into economic language. Thus the 'non-market' industrial economies (a category which does not include Yugoslavia, China or Romania) are ranked, in a league-table of their own. The underdeveloped communist countries,
however, are merely listed together with capitalist underdeveloped countries as 114 ‘poor’ countries, which are then divided into even more categories: ‘low income’, ‘middle income’, ‘industrial market economies’ and ‘high-income oil-exporters’ (formerly known as ‘capital surplus’ oil-exporters). The line dividing the highest low income country, Togo ($410 per capita per annum) from the lowest in the middle income group, Ghana (with $420), is purely arbitrary, while Israel, the highest of the middle income group of countries, with $4500 per capita per annum, is similarly separated, again by flat, from Ireland, the lowest of the group of industrialized countries, which has $4880 per capita per annum. This classification also results in such strange bed-fellows as the adjacent pairs Malawi and Mozambique, Yugoslavia and Argentina, Romania and Portugal, India and Haiti, Cuba and South Korea. Using these criteria, Hong Kong and Brazil are excluded from the list of industrialized countries, while Portugal, South Africa and Ireland are included. 35

Third World: Resistance and Change

These intellectual attempts to abolish the Third World have been paralleled by political scepticism about the existence of a Third World both on the Left and the Right. Régis Debray, for instance, has written that,

‘Third World’ is a lumber-room of a term, a shapeless bag in which we jumble together, to hasten on their disappearance, nations, classes, races, civilizations and continents as if we were afraid to name them individually and distinguish one from another: it is the modern version of the Greek barbaros, whereby all those who did not speak the language of Pericles were lumped together in a single word... Yet what is there in common between Saudi Arabia and the People’s Republic of Vietnam, between Israel and Yemen, between Cuba and Brazil?

... The term ‘Third World’... indicates a certain backwardness in economic and social development [but] the real meaning of the ‘Third World’ is that it presents the concept of a world apart, equidistant from the capitalist first world and the socialist second world, whose sole inner determining principle is that of underdevelopment.... It conceals—and this is its main usefulness—the paradoxical unity of the capitalist mode of production all over the world... in which the lower level of ‘underdevelopment’ is maintained and continued by the ‘development’ of the upper... The ‘Third World’ is in fact an annexe of the first world, an enclave in the international system of market relations.... It is an astute piece of stage-management... to distinguish as merely a statistical gap something that is the necessary result of an international and national system of exploitation... everyone in the poor countries is poor, everyone in the rich countries is rich, even the poor.... What ‘Third World’ means in the last analysis is to reject or evade the capitalism/socialism dilemma.... Anyone who uses the latter term will inevitably tend, whether consciously or not, to isolate any actual ‘national liberation’ movement from the international socialist movement.... True, there is a certain solidarity among the ‘three continents’: but it comes more from outside than from within: they share the same economic exploiter, the same political opponent—imperialism—but it is a hollow unity, a kind of negative community. 36

The demolition job on the Right was terser. The Third World, the then US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, declared in January 1981, is a ‘myth’.

The rationales underlying these two rejections of the concept of a Third World could not have been more different. Debray was criticizing the proposition that these countries possess economies and social systems different in kind from either the First or Second Worlds (e.g. the notion of a mixed economy, or the populist conception of a State run in the interests of the people rather than any particular class). To him, they are all either socialist or capitalist countries. There are capitalist Third World countries and socialist ones. All of the capitalist countries are exploited dependencies of the First World; an integral part of world capitalism. Politically, too, these countries align themselves with either the capitalist or communist blocs.

Behind these verbal wrangles then, there are serious differences of political position. To understand them, we need to distinguish more carefully between international economic and political relationships (which may or may not overlap) and differences in internal economic and social systems.

The accusation that the concept of the Third World is only a piece of mystification, designed to persuade people into asserting an equal independence of both the First and Second Worlds, is an accurate one. That was exactly what the pioneers of non-alignment intended. On the Left, however, that perspective was never accepted by all; some identified themselves politically with the Second World. But the majority of countries, most of which were non-communist, also saw the Third World as a grouping of poor countries with a common interest in ending First World exploitation. But other radicals and revolutionaries, Marxists included, had no difficulty in using the term ‘Third World’ in exactly the same sense that caused Debray to reject it: to express the existence of a world system in which the capitalist First World dominates and exploits the capitalist Third World. Robin Winks, for example, described the Third World as a world ‘owned, managed and underdeveloped by the First World’. 37 Pierre Jalée, a Marxist,
of most of its members – the capitalist Third World – to the First World, and of a minority to the Second World. No country was more aligned than the host country in 1979, Cuba. The counterpart of this external polarization has been the internal disappearance of the populist governments of the 1960s. In Africa Nyerere’s Tanzania is the sole survivor, faced with desperate economic difficulties. A victim of the one-party system, which Nyerere defends, Oginga Odinga, in neighbouring Kenya, lamented that the one-party system was ‘fast becoming a commandist institution . . . a source of political instability’. To Ben Bella, one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, who had been imprisoned for sixteen years, non-alignment died in 1965, when Colonel Boumédiène seized power in Algiers on the eve of the Afro-Asian Conference. Internally, since then, the consumerist society and ‘development . . . in terms of GNP’ had displaced cultural priorities and self-management.

Those who had done the fighting were shut out. In Algeria, the armies that had sat out the war in Morocco and Tunisia were in power while the guerrilla commanders of the wilayas occupied only very minor posts. In Kenya, Mau Mau fighters found themselves living in the shanty-towns of Nairobi while Kenyatta became a very wealthy man. He was succeeded by Daniel arap Moi, a Mozurewa-type former government appointee in the colonial legislature. The Minister for Constitutional Affairs, Njonjo, had, as Crown Counsel and Public Prosecutor, administered the State of Emergency under which thousands had been herded into prison-camps and many executed.

The decay of the original principle of non-alignment was dramatically symbolized at the 1979 meeting of the non-aligned countries in Havana, with the marginalization of the eighty-seven-year-old Tito, one of the founding fathers of the movement, who tried, without success, to prevent the adoption of resolutions which laid the blame for underdevelopment primarily on the capitalist world and who tried to reassert the Movement’s independence of both East and West:

To many observers, it sounded like the last will and testament of the only surviving member of the movement which he created with Nehru, Nasser, Nkrumah and Sukarno twenty years ago. Tito sat alone at a table as though becalmed in the eye of the hurricane which had been whipping round the conference hall. As the conference reached its climax, it became increasingly clear that Yugoslavia had . . . become isolated.

A year later, Tito was dead.

In the 1961 non-aligned meeting, at Belgrade, there had only been twenty-five full members, plus three observers from Latin America and thirty-five representatives of national liberation movements. By 1979, at Havana, there were ninety-five full members and only nineteen observers, most of them representing independent states, plus representatives from

for whom the world is ‘sliced into two’, into the socialist and capitalist ‘groups’, and the latter into the ‘imperialist zone’ and the ‘Third World’, uses the term not with the intention of mystifying his readers as to the reality of First World exploitation, but precisely in order to draw attention to it. And the country with which Debray has identified himself so closely, Cuba, strongly stresses the common interests of the ‘Tricontinental’ countries, the exploited continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and plays a major role in the Non-Aligned Movement.

On the Right, however, the rulers of many Third World countries have indeed used the language of non-alignment, and of themselves as spokesmen of the wretched of the earth, in precisely the demagogic way to which Debray objects: internally, in order to present an image of common interests as between themselves and the people they exploit, and externally, to project a pretence of non-alignment that disguises the reality of very aligned – normally pro-First World – policies. Their rhetoric is a rhetoric of ‘national unity’ and ‘independence’ even of the ‘sacred revolution’ (which means the day they seized power), and of ‘solidarity’ with other poor countries. The reality is that, every day, they sell their countries into an ever-deeper dependence on the multinationals.

After the ‘Bandung’ honeymoon period of the 1950s, the Afro-Asian grouping consolidated itself as a force independent of both the blocs. A sympathetic observer who was perfectly aware of the self-seeking character of many of the new élites could nevertheless still refer to the Third World in 1963 as a ‘vast fellowship of the dispossessed’. But the gap between the rhetoric of a non-aligned neutralist Third World and political reality, present from its beginnings, steadily widened. A careful study of UN voting patterns shows that whereas in its early years the non-aligned did ‘reach an impressive degree of coherence and were clearly identifiable as a distinct group’, by the end of the 1960s they were ‘no longer clearly identifiable as a group that behaved distinctly in East-West relationships’; ‘as a voting bloc’, there had been ‘complete collapse’. By contrast, a virulently anti-communist group of Asian countries, ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines), which only voted the same way on a third of all issues in the late 1960s, did so nine times out of ten a decade later.

The doctrine of non-alignment, of course, was never an absolute. It always included not only alignment against colonialism, but the right to side with one or other of the Superpowers in any particular dispute, where that Power adopted a justifiable position. What was precluded, in Nyerere’s words, was ‘any permanent diplomatic or military identification with the Great Powers’ (my italics). But politically today, the great majority of the non-aligned are actually very aligned. As an independent political grouping, the Third World has been split down the middle by the attachment, de facto,
eight European countries and many international agencies. The organization had become the major forum of the Third World. In 1961, Cuba had been isolated in Latin America. In 1979, Cuba was the host country, and there were eight Heads of State from Latin American and Caribbean countries, plus five Foreign Ministers. Their main concern was North American influence and the power of the multinationals. The Arab countries were preoccupied with oil and with Israel, issues which brought them into conflict with the West. New revolutionary governments were also present from Africa. Only India, Egypt and the fiercely anti-communist countries of South-east Asia put up any consistent opposition.

The paradox is that these radical resolutions were passed by an assembly in which the majority of Heads of State were from countries in which they had seized power from populist governments which had claimed, verbally at least, to be the spokesmen of the common people. The rhetoric of the new regimes was usually that of stamping out the corruption of their predecessors and the inauguration of efficiency in government. They usually claimed, too, to represent the whole nation and to reject the divisive class-biased policies of the past. What it added up to in practice was the defence of property and the elimination of opposition. In reality, at the level of foreign policy, there was little unanimity except on the two issues of Israel and South Africa—the last important residues of colonialism.

Culturally, of course, Debray is right: the Third World is only a 'negative community'. All that it has shared in common has been the colonial experience, and even that legacy has left quite different systems of education, of public administration, even modes of thought in countries which had been subjected to the very different cultural hegemony of England or France. The apparent paradox is readily resolved, however, for what these governments were concerned about, now that most countries had achieved their independence, were economic rather than political problems.

The political meetings had continued throughout the 1970s. In 1964 in Cairo; in 1970 in Lusaka; in 1973 in Algiers; in 1976 in Sri Lanka; and in 1979 in Havana. But even these meetings were increasingly focused on economic issues. The turning-point had come in 1962 when seventy-seven countries had succeeded despite opposition from the industrialized world in winning UN backing for a World Conference on Trade and Development. UNCTAD I took place in Geneva in 1964; UNCTAD II in New Delhi in 1968; UNCTAD III in Santiago in 1972; UNCTAD IV in Nairobi in 1976; UNCTAD V in Manila in 1979; and UNCTAD VI in Belgrade in 1983. Over that period, the non-aligned also held their own meetings on economic issues at Dakar, Lima, Delhi and elsewhere. But by 1979, they were becoming increasingly frustrated and divided by the foot-dragging of the West, by the Sino-Soviet dispute, and by divisions within the Third World itself.

OPEC, the very Third World organization which had demonstrated the power of Third World producers to co-operate in raising the prices of primary commodities, now proved to be far more damaging to the economies of the poorer countries. Even the more industrialized, like Turkey or Brazil, were now having to spend a third to a half of their foreign earnings merely in order to pay their oil bills. For the very poor, it meant disaster, especially as world recession affected their exports. The establishment of a sizeable OPEC fund to help non-oil-producing in the Third World, at favourable terms, did little to counterbalance these losses. UNCTAD V had been especially disastrous: the more industrialized Third World countries, strongly dependent on the multinational corporations, blocked proposals for a code of conduct for multinationals; the developed capitalist countries fought off proposals to discuss world energy problems; and no progress was made on attempts to establish a common fund to control stocks of raw materials in order to stabilize prices at present controlled by the operations of the market in the commodity-exchanges of London and New York.46

Though manufacturing now constitutes a fifth of the GDP of the underdeveloped countries as a whole, over half of this comes from nine newly-industrializing countries, mainly in Latin America and East Asia. Primary commodities, which were two-thirds of the exports of the underdeveloped countries at the beginning of the 1970s, are now only a half. Leaving aside the spectacular NICs, over half of the exports even of countries like Bangladesh and India are now manufactures. Some of this goes to other Third World countries. Poor/ rich and agricultural/industrial, then, no longer neatly overlap. But the older pattern of centre/periphery trade persists: 84 per cent of the imports of the developed countries from the Third World in 1978 still consisted of primary commodities, mainly agricultural products and minerals; 82 per cent of the imports of the Third World from the developed countries were manufactures.

Many countries are still dependent on one or two commodities for their foreign earnings in a world where prices for 33 such commodities, which varied by an average of 5 per cent during the 1950s and 1960s, fluctuated, on average, by 12 per cent during the 1970s. Cash-crops—rubber, cocoa, jute, tea, coffee, etc.—are still the main exports for most countries: tea constitutes half of India’s exports; bananas, two-thirds of Costa Rica’s; rubber, a half of Malaysia’s; cocoa, two-thirds of Ghana’s, etc. Minerals, including petroleum, constitute over four-fifths of the exports of Chile, Zambia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Iran and Iraq, while the Third World provides the developed world with nearly all its tin and chrome, three-quarters of its petroleum, two-thirds of its iron ore, half its phosphates, bauxite and copper, and two-fifths of its zinc and lead.47

In agriculture, as we saw, the drive to industrialize and to increase cash-crop production for export has led to increasing dependence on imports of
food. Between 1955 and 1970 Third World food imports doubled. Though prices for oil increased greatly after 1973, between 1950 and 1982 the terms of trade for exporters of agricultural commodities and minerals deteriorated, making attempts to plan national economic development difficult in the extreme. Third World countries, too, have to compete with each other for a share of the same market. Hence attempts to build organizations similar to OPEC which could control world prices for other primary commodities have met with very little success, since although the First World may not be able to survive without the oil, the tungsten, or the manganese of the Third World, it can certainly live without bananas and can produce substitutes for sisal.

The most vital strategic resources of all, which the West must have at all costs, were identified recently by ex-President Nixon: oil and minerals. It is this which explains the gap between the rhetoric of commitment to defence of the free world and the reality of shoring up archaic and repressive monarchies and sheikhdoms in the Arab world, as well as America's special hatred for Iran's revolution. The power of the Zionist lobby inside the USA is certainly a major factor in US support for Israel, but that country also plays a major role in destabilizing and dividing the Middle East and the Maghreb, for all the talk of the 'brotherhood' of the Islamic community. It is not because of covert racism, either, that the West avoids any actions which might seriously endanger the stability of South Africa despite the unpopularity support for this racist regime brings. The increasingly militaristic South African and Israeli regimes, and the sheikhs, receive support because 'from the American viewpoint South Africa is to strategic materials what Saudi Arabia is to oil'.

Suppliers of those materials are in a position to demand political support as well as high prices. But those dependent on less crucial commodities, even reactionary governments, find themselves frustrated and resentful at their economic disadvantage vis-à-vis the West, and join in the demand for New International Economic Order. It is these common interests, independently of other differences of social system or ideology, that are emphasized in the newest image of the Third World. The non-aligned movement, it asserts, has not only become the authentic voice of the overwhelming majority of the countries of the Third World, but the main object of its common hostility is now the First World. At the UN, the Third World has long had a majority, which frequently votes with the Second World to successfully carry motions denouncing the West. No less than eighty-seven Third World countries even risked US disapproval sufficiently to attend a conference in revolutionary Nicaragua in January 1983 to denounce US policy in Central America and the Caribbean.

In this triumphantist version of the Third World, consolidated under Cuban leadership at the Havana meeting of the non-aligned in 1979, the socialist countries are seen as the allies of the poor countries, which 'objectively' are playing a 'progressive' role, at the international level by virtue of their participation in the movement of the poor majority of mankind, whatever the nature of the social system within those countries. The analysis inevitably soft-pedals some aspects of the unacceptable face of the Third World: such ruthless regimes as Uganda, Singapore, Kampuchea, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are included, whereas China, the largest country in the world, let alone the Third World, is not recognized as a Third World country at all. This is because the criteria, in the final analysis, are not just economic, but political: only countries which are members of the movement are included. China, despite its major role in the formative days of the Afro-Asian grouping, is no longer a member of such organizations (and also has a permanent seat on the Security Council). Hence while the Open University 'Third World Studies' course takes Turkey as one of its first case-studies, in this political model, Turkey is not a Third World country at all, since she belongs to no Third World organizations, and is a member of NATO and OECD.

Yet the underlying divisions remain. The First World is not just the USA. The ex-colonies of Britain and France in Africa have been given special status under the Lomé Convention which carries with it free or preferential access to the markets of the EEC for their agricultural products, and some measure of price-stabilization. It is a huge market, since Western Europe's political consolidation has brought together not only rich countries like France, whose GDP is greater than that of forty-one countries south of the Rio Grande, but 'newly-industrialized' ones like Spain, which produces nearly as much as Brazil. Germany and France together outstrip the USSR in output by nearly a fifth.

The Western European image of the Eastern countries as a military threat to their security carries no weight, of course, in countries like Vietnam, Angola or Mozambique which owe their independence to Soviet and other Second World military assistance and which, together with Cuba, now depend on those countries for development aid as well as continued military protection and diplomatic support. ('Have you any idea what modern arms cost? I once heard Amilcar Cabral ask a public meeting of sympathizers.) Hence even the destruction of the Polish workers' movement evokes no significant criticism in these countries. But after Soviet military intervention in a Third World country, Afghanistan, 111 countries voted against the USSR in the UN; only 12 of the 22 votes she could muster were from Third World countries.

The Soviet record in the Third World is neither one of consistent success nor of a deliberate 'forward' policy. In the Arab world, the balance, Halliday concludes, has been a 'net deficit'. As well as supporting mass revolutions, she has found herself dragged along in the wake of Marxist-led
revolts and coups of various kinds. Support for a popular revolution like that in Cuba has long been a debilitating drain on the Soviet economy, but has been a political asset. Ethiopia, where popular support for land-reform was displaced by horror at sectarian butchery at home and repression in Eritrea, and the invasion of Afghanistan, have proved both economically burdensome and politically even more embarrassing. And despite Western paranoia, Soviet military assistance was as non-existent in Nicaragua’s revolution as it had been in Cuba’s. The brutality of the Batista and Somoza regimes brought together in one broad front a coalition of parties, classes and, in the Nicaraguan case, even much of the Church. In Guatemala, as we saw, the alliance is based on a struggle for self-determination on the part of many different ethnic groups as well as class struggle. Marxists, though very influential and well-organized, by no means exercise unquestioned control over their allies in such situations. They also face continuing opposition. In post-revolutionary Zimbabwe, Marxist cadres are a distinct minority in a government which came to power as a result of armed struggle in which there were two guerrilla armies, each based on one of the two major ethnic groups, and which had inherited a flourishing, White-dominated, capitalist economy, heavily dependent upon South Africa and the capitalist market. The party the USSR backed, Nkomo’s ZAPU party, and its military wing, the ZIPLA guerrilla army, failed to win power.

The revolutionary experience in these countries, and the ensuing regimes, are vastly different from those of Eastern Europe four decades ago. They differ profoundly, too, from the revolutionary regimes of China or Vietnam, where the authority of a powerful centralized Communist Party is unchallenged, or even those of countries like Angola and Mozambique (leaving aside the most centralized of all, North Korea). Geography and history also make post-revolutionary Nicaragua highly vulnerable to US economic pressure and destabilization, and render Soviet assistance highly problematic.

By comparison with the USSR, the other major communist country, China, has been unable to exercise anything like the influence, even within the Third World, that her size would seem to warrant. In terms of numbers at least, she has been called ‘half a Superpower’. That she was herself an underdeveloped country was also an asset in her relations with other Third World countries. China, the Chinese have constantly insisted, is part of the Third World. Her very underdevelopment, however, explains part of her failure to build a network of allies, for she simply lacks the resources with which to assist them. Despite that, she did win many friends in the 1950s, initially because of her active role in the Afro-Asian movement, and after the rapprochement with the USA when the opening of China to the non-communist world in 1972 brought the amazed realization that all this time she had been pioneering a revolutionary development strategy that differed, obviously, from the classical pattern of the capitalist Industrial Revolution, but also rejected its Soviet counterpart of sacrificing consumption (and a whole generation) in the interests of building a heavy industrial base. Nor had the peasantry been brutally destroyed. Instead, they had been formed into self-governing communes. Industry ‘walked on two legs’ like everything else. A Soviet-style heavy industrial base had been built, mainly in the North-east; but there was also a more primitive industrial sector, symbolized by the backyard iron-foundries of the Great Leap Forward period.

Chinese aid, inevitably limited in size, was, however, aid without strings. Its high-water mark was the building of the railway between Tanzania and Zambia, which China not only financed but built with the labour of tens of thousands of unskilled volunteers and technicians, all of whom lived at the Third World standards of living which the people of Tanzania.

Chinese support for movements of national liberation, too, won her friends among revolutionaries. But in the 1960s, her readiness to back any kind of movement or regime so long as it was anti-Soviet quickly lost her most of these friends on the Left. The friendship of rightist generals in Pakistan or of authoritarian figures like Mrs Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka, who had just slaughtered tens of thousands of young rebels, was no substitute. By the seventies, China was isolated both in the Second and Third Worlds. Finally, she invaded socialist Vietnam, after all that country’s sufferings. More concerned with trade and with assistance from the West in modernizing her economy and in building an anti-Soviet front, her Third World activities lapsed. By the late 1970s, only small sects and micro-Communist Parties in countries like Paraguay or New Zealand still claimed to be Maoist.

The communist world today, then, is clearly no longer a bloc. These rivalries between different communisms, too, have had divisive effects on revolutionary movements in the Third World. Those who make successful revolutions always protest that they have no intention of exporting their ideas – and then proceed to do so. In the 1930s, Brazilian workers spent their energies in bitter disputes about the relative merits of the rival projects of Bakunin, Trotsky, and Stalin. By the 1970s, disputes between Maoist and other revolutionary groups were being fought out not only with words but with sub-machineguns. The arrogance displayed by Che Guevara towards the local Bolivian communists and the peasants he fought for not only cost him his life but set back revolution in a whole continent.

The First World has exhibited much more cohesion than either the Second or the Third, and has had the economic resources with which to bring refractory Third World governments into line. Where that proved insufficient, force was used, either directly or indirectly. Resistance to that repression cost such a high price in blood that the prospect of turning their
country into another Vietnam or of facing the genocide being practised in Central America today is one that people are driven to only in very special circumstances: when no other alternative seems viable.

Until the beginning of the world recession in 1973, economic expansion in many Third World countries had in fact presented millions with new opportunities for individual social mobility. Nineteenth-century imperialism had been based on contempt for native cultures and the belief that they would be replaced by Western culture. The economic and political hegemony of the First World was to be complemented by establishing its cultural hegemony. To nineteenth-century colonists, the superiority not just of Western technology, but of Western social institutions and cultural values, was self-evident. Even Marx had been impressed by the alchemy as well as the horrors wrought by capitalism:

It has accomplished wonders that far surpass Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals. . . . [Its] expeditions . . . put all former migrations of nations and crusades in the shade, [its] productive power is more massive and more colossal than all previous generations put together. . . . As in material, so in intellectual production. . . . All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned. . . . The bourgeoisie . . . draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. . . . It creates a world after its own image.

The culture of the West was equally impressive to its victims. The ‘comprador’ allies of imperialism were naturally the most responsive to Western influence, the paradigm, in this century, being the Soong dynasty of inter-War China with the Christianized family of Chiang Kai-shek, the political controller; T. V. Soong, the banker; and Madame Chiang. The upper classes, increasingly, were actually educated in the West; Pandit Nehru, for example, went to Harrow. Even the radicals took their ideologies, first liberalism and positivism, then nationalism and Marxism, from the West.

Cultural Imperialism, Cultural Resistance, and Cultural Revolution

But the messages which emanate from the Second World rarely reach the majority of those living in the capitalist Third World. For them, economic and political domination and penetration are accompanied by a new, more intensive and more extensive cultural imperialism. For the rich and the middle classes, the dream is no longer that of visiting Lourdes, or to do the Grand Tour of Europe. It is to visit the Middle Kingdom itself. The rich send their children to be socialized in the First World: to prep schools, and then to Cornell or Oxford. Middle-class students go to the State Universitites or spend a year as an au pair in the Mid-West learning the English that will be vital to their futures. For the less affluent, the great dream beamed at them night and day on TV is to visit the secular shrines of Western culture in person at least once in their lives— a new version of the Muslim hajj; be it a holiday in Miami, which is fast becoming the Mecca of South America, or in Las Vegas, where they can live like millionaires for a few days, and dedicate themselves in playing as well as working (though in quarters and not thousands) at acquiring money; or in Hollywood, the apotheosis of the dream of becoming a young, sexy star; or a family holiday in Disneyland, where they are given (in a state which, until a century ago, was at the margins of Western civilization) a plastic, comic-book reduction of the world’s cultural diversity, from cannibals to Western pioneers, to the level of a high-tech fun-fair in which, ironically, it is the cardinal American values of enterprise and individual freedom that are emphasized. Today, the tourist flow from the Third World to the First, or to First-World-style cultural enclaves within their own country, has become a mass phenomenon. The First World even meets the Third World face-to-face in playgrounds such as Tijuana or Hong Kong, where, paradoxically, Americans go to experience the mysteries of the East or to buy sombreros or mushrooms while the locals go to live it up American-style. But all can enjoy the symbols of modernity: brothels, ballet, hard rock, hamburgers, whisky, jeans and bikinis. Those who have to stay at home have TV or their transistor. Even the illiterate can ‘read’ strip-cartoon booklets. From the soap-operas, the chat-shows, the money-games and the romances they absorb Western culture vicariously, though mainly the ideal of the life-styles of the rich. They can even experience a more collective identification with something greater than themselves by watching the national team on the screen, even if they cannot afford to go to Maracaná, the Aztec stadium, and Wembley, the great shrines of the new world-religion of soccer, themselves.

Meanwhile, back in the First World, more and more people are experiencing disillusion with the Western dream, some because world recession is now depriving them of the steady rise in material prosperity they had become accustomed to since 1945; others, because they reject capitalist consumerism. During the Vietnam War, vast numbers of American youth were ‘turned off’ by a culture which meant death on a genocidal scale for the Vietnamese and on a lesser scale for those drafted into the American army. From that, they progressed to a wider critique of materialism. Many dropped out, temporarily at least, of mainstream society, some into various forms of the culture of narcissism, others escaping into a separate reality provided by hallucinogenic drugs, or into new forms of sexual experience, in the attempt to recover the primitive or the natural, the ‘world we have lost’, usually within small groups, from life-style communes to Californian
versions of Hindu ashrams.

That movement largely degenerated, after Vietnam, into a preoccupation with the Self and with purely interpersonal relationships, a mere ‘do-your-own-thing’ lifestyle devoid of any societal, let alone political content, which soon degenerated into health fads and religious cults that were perfectly compatible with the materialism of the ‘Me society’.

If the rejection of consumerism remains widespread, not surprisingly it is strongest amongst those who are not poor. In the form of the ecology movement, it has actually grown into a major force in Western Europe. Such people (mainly young) are no more attracted by the materialism of the Second World. Socialism, for them, means the transformation of human relations, now, not mobilization to increase production so as to bring about abundance and freedom in the future. A generation traumatized by the prospect of nuclear extermination and by the slower destruction of the environment on which human life depends find the largely technologistic Soviet imagery of a communist future, quoted with approval by Luis Corvalán, the leader of the Chilean Communist Party, no more attractive:

To lengthen the life of man to between 150 and 200 years, to end contagious diseases . . .
To put at the service of man all the forces of nature . . .
To apply atomic energy to industry, transport and construction . . .
To foresee and prevent the consequences of natural disasters . . .
To manufacture all the substances known in the world . . . and others that nature does not possess . . .
To obtain new breeds of animals and varieties of plants . . .
To modify and make habitable the barren areas of the earth . . .
To learn to control the weather . . .

For all these dreams, the Second World is a negative Utopia for most people in the First in material terms. For them, Eastern Europe means queues, shortages and bureaucratic inefficiency. The media of the Western world ensures that these are the only aspects of the Second World they get to hear about. Soviet living-standards have in fact risen far more than is realized by most in the West. Between 1965 and 1980, the monthly wage rose from 96.5 roubles to 168.5: by 1980, 85 per cent of all families had TV sets, as against 24 per cent 15 years earlier, and 84 per cent now also have refrigerators. Whereas they were eating mainly bread and potatoes two decades ago, they now eat a lot more meat and vegetables. The number of doctors has doubled. Visitors from Eastern Europe, too, for all the seductions of Marks and Spencers and the Beatles, are genuinely shocked, even dismayed, by the naked inequalities, the advertising and the decaying public services of the West.

But the strains of life in a rigidly controlled society and the drain of military expenditures are reflected in the Second World in the deterioration of health conditions which have hitherto been exemplary in rising infant mortality, alcoholism, and death by trauma (suicide, murder, and fatal accidents).

World-system theorists are right to remind us that economic conditions within the Second World are affected by the crisis of the capitalist world which dominates world-trade and which therefore determines the prices of the imports and the exports of the Second World and the volume of their foreign earnings. The anarchy of capitalism, which is beyond the control of the planners of the Second World, therefore affects the lives of consumers and enterprises in Kharkov and Havana as well as in Taipéh and Frankfurt. Food-queues in Warsaw are the consequence not only of an inadequate agriculture, but of the need to export food in order to pay that country’s gigantic bill for goods imported from the West.

The social costs of the world arms-race are also visible in the First World. The co-existence of private affluence and public squalor has long attracted criticism and caused self-doubt even on the part of liberal US Ambassadors of good family. For wealth has been better distributed, and the quality of life has been superior to that of the USA in countries like Sweden, Switzerland, Norway and Denmark, not just for a rich minority, but for most people. Personal incomes may lag behind those in the USA (though they increased in France and Germany from a third of those in the USA in 1950 to three-quarters by 1976) but more of that wealth is used for public rather than purely individual ends. Whereas the USA had the lowest levels of infant and neo-natal mortality in the 1950s, by 1972 she had fallen behind France, Belgium, West Germany and England.

The recession in the capitalist world has exacerbated these trends. Where people had come to expect a continuously rising standard of living, and a redistributive system of welfare, during the post-war decades, as of right, with recession they are now vulnerable to advocates of a scarcity psychology that sees Keynesian State intervention in both economy and society as not only impossible but unjustifiable in an era of decline, the remedies for which, they assert, must include the lowering of expectations. The social institutions built up by the working class in the past to protect their collective interests are less strongly defended in an era of demoralization and are more and more vigorously attacked.

None of this makes for radicalism, as theorists of the revolutionary consequences of immiseration have long preached. One reason is that the safety-net of the Welfare State now prevents total immiseration of the kind familiar in the 1930s in Britain and even in the USA. Another reason is that there is now a dual labour market. Those who have work feel that they own a valuable piece of property – a job. Where the rate of inflation is held down, too, they may even experience a rise in real earnings. Yet there are tens of
millions who have only their labour-power to sell, but labour-power that nobody wishes to buy. Even for them, however, radical, let alone revolutionary responses still fail to materialize because no vision of an alternative society, no utopia in Mannheim’s sense, has gripped the masses, and no revolutionary project, in Sartre’s terms, therefore, exists. By revolutionary I do not mean the readiness to resort to violence or to meet force with force (though it includes those possibilities and could come to that in the future as it has done in the past) but that the idea of actually replacing the existing social system with a quite different kind of society only exists among a minority even of those who call themselves socialists and an even tinier proportion of the working class. Even when galvanized into a political confrontation with the State, as in France in 1968, the working classes of the Western world, and their organizations, have exhibited trade-union consciousness, taking their stand on enlarging their share of the national cake or defending that which they have. The idea of taking over the bakery has not occurred to them, or if it has, has frightened them.

One major reason, in the past, has been the deterioration of the major alternative vision that did exist, that of socialism, due to its being identified with the USSR. Stalin’s terror ensured that. But a whole generation has grown up since then for whom Stalin is only a name in a history book. The international communist movement, moreover, led by the Italian Communist Party in the West and by Romania in the East has long accepted the principle that communism is now a polycentric, not a unitary phenomenon, despite Soviet opposition. That principle recognized the fact of differences in national forms of communism. But today, there are three major transnational forms of communism: the Soviet, the Chinese, and Euro-Communism, the last of which accepts the legitimacy of institutionalized opposition, plurality of political parties, the possibility of change of government, the protection and extension of civil rights, accountability, and other classic rights won during the bourgeois epoch.

But Soviet control of Eastern Europe has scarcely weakened, even if today the repression of working-class resistance is now carried out by the Polish rather than the Red Army. In Eastern Europe, paradoxically, the working class, which has never made a successful revolution in any capitalist country, advanced or underdeveloped, has consistently been the major force for social change and has borne the costs of resistance from the rising of the workers in East Germany in 1953, through the Hungarian Revolution centred on the factories of Csepel in 1956, to the ‘Prague spring’ of 1968 and the Solidarity movement in Poland.

Soviet-style socialism therefore remains a negative Utopia on other than economic grounds because it evokes a past of mass prison-camps and a present of much more selective psychiatric wards, gaols, and exile for those who dare to dissent.
have often conflicted with what C. Wright Mills called ‘Victorian’ Marxists and others for whom class was the only form of meaningful inequality and the politics of gender or race a ‘deviation’, in the end, most of the Left has come round to accepting that ethnic self-determination, women’s liberation, nuclear disarmament, and even ecology, are issues it has to take up, even if they have still not developed the theoretical categories with which to express the overlaps and contradictions between class exploitation and exploitation based on gender or ethnicity.

Finding answers to those questions requires new convergences, moving ‘beyond the fragments’, and the modernization of traditional theories. The ideals that informed those theories remain valid, however, and need to be both reasserted and made relevant to modern problems. In the 1960s, it seemed to many that the ideals they believed in, sadly eroded during the Cold War, were being given new expression in the Third World in the positive neutralism that the Third World called ‘non-alignment’. This has now been taken up in Europe in movements that seek to build bridges and to create or take advantage of whatever chinks in the wall between East and West there are and to remove nuclear weapons from countries on both sides of the divide, or that identification with the insulted and the injured, the wretched of the earth, which induces comfortable, non-political people to devote themselves to raise money, not just for the victims of the disasters that inevitably afflict whole peoples permanently on the edge of starvation, but in order to eliminate the structural causes of these famines.

It was these ideals that Mr Haig was trying to denigrate when he said that the Third World was a ‘myth’, and in particular the neutralist position that Third World countries had a perfect right to choose whether they would accept military, political and economic aid from the Second World or the First. Even reactionary Third World governments resented the limits placed on their autonomy by the leading Superpower.

The Second World originally attracted poor countries not just because its most powerful member was a potential source of material assistance, or because that country became the second greatest Power on earth within a generation, but because the smaller countries of the Eastern bloc, which were predominantly agrarian in 1945 (Czechoslovakia apart), all succeeded in industrializing themselves rapidly.

A country like the USA, during its development, was able to draw upon immense natural resources; it was a continent rather than a country. The two biggest communist countries likewise disposed of human as well as natural resources on an immense scale. Despite external pressures and war, the USSR between the World Wars and China up to the 1960s were able to build their economies autarkically, with a minimum of foreign trade or aid.

Yet the First World’s efforts to discourage relations between the underdeveloped world and the Second World have been largely successful.

There has, too, been more than enough dismal evidence to support another aspect of what Mr Haig meant: that a situation of common poverty has not proved a viable basis for political co-operation. Inter-state organizations such as the Andean Pact have remained feeble, or, like the East African Community, have actually disintegrated. Since the Second World War, we are always being told, there has been no nuclear war. But the spread of nuclear weapons has not prevented the outbreak of wars waged with ever more sophisticated technological equipment, of increasing barbarity, nearly all of them in the Third World. They have cost the lives of 25 million people.

The ideals of the founding fathers of non-alignment have been sadly tarnished in the process. They have proved too much for poor countries to sustain. From Kampuchea to Uganda, Third World élites must bear their share of the responsibility for turning whole regions into slaughterhouses; it is not just the multinationals which bleed countries white and drive their leaders and their people to acts of chauvinist desperation. Nothing symbolizes that decay more than the occupation of the Presidency of the Organization of African Unity by Idi Amin.

In the face of these realities, Gramsci’s famous assertion that he was an intellectual pessimist, but an optimist in spirit, is the only rational response. Optimism of the spirit has already seized the people of Greece, Spain and France. In the Third World, too, the non-aligned movement, despite its divisions, has grown, because the reality that sustains it – the facts of dependence and underdevelopment – have not gone away. The Third World, that is, is not a myth. The various meanings with which the term ‘Third World’ has been invested show family resemblances, even though they do not fully coincide. They have, that is, a common referent in the real world out there: the unequal, institutionalized distribution of wealth and illth on a world scale.

In a world capitalist recession, optimism about the possibility of growth has given way, over much of the Third World, to a new mood of pessimism, and in the West to new philosophies of ‘limits to growth’. In Black Africa, the average annual growth of GDP per capita during the 1970s was a mere 0.8 per cent; by 1978, food production had declined to 80 per cent of what it had been in 1961; and by 1990, it is estimated the poorer African countries will have to import three times as much food simply in order to maintain already inadequate levels of nutrition. Uneven development is polarizing the Third World between the NICs at one extremity and the ‘basket cases’ at the other. More and more governments therefore see their main problem in the future no longer as one of how to industrialize themselves, but of how to feed their peoples. Any industrial development, they now believe, can only be based on the use of technologies appropriate to countries with plenty of labour but minimal capital.

Complementing this shift in Third World thinking is the growing belief
that the drive towards infinity, both in production and consumption, which has powered modern capitalism has not only run down but is no longer a worthwhile focus for human energies anyhow; that US-style consumerism and the American way of life are not physically possible for the entire population of the globe, given that America presently consumes at least a third of many of the world's scarcest resources and that natural resources are a collective human heritage and not commodities to be sold on the market and consumed by the highest bidder. The drive to infinity has been equally characteristic of state socialism, which in their formative years in particular have been so preoccupied with raising material living-standards in very poor countries that the maximization of production becomes an unquestioned primary goal to which everything else, including the toleration of alternative philosophies, is subordinated.

Optimists call this 'doom-watching' and point to the under-utilization of two-thirds of the world's cultivable land, and to the unknown and unused potential of the resources of the seabed and of outer space. Millions have died in famines in India and elsewhere, Sen has shown, not because there was not enough food, but because speculators hoarded it and poor people could not afford to buy it. 'The law', he concludes 'stands between food availability and food entitlement' - and laws can be changed. There are even those who contemplate the unthinkable with confidence. Mao Tse-tung claimed that

There is nothing in the world that does not arise, develop, and disappear. Monkeys turned into men, mankind arose; in the end, the whole human race will disappear, it may turn into something else [and] the earth itself will cease to exist . . .

When the theologians talk about doomsday they are pessimistic and terrify people. We say the end of mankind is something which will produce something far more advanced than mankind.

Few share that sublime confidence. Today, capitalist and communist countries alike seek to yoke Third World countries to their chariot-wheels. Their rivalry divides the Third World and consumes resources which are more than ample to provide a life free from poverty for every one on earth and from the scandalous over-consumption of the First World.

But the greatest waste by far is the ever-escalating expenditure upon military weapons. World military expenditure is now roughly equal to the entire income in cash and in kind of the poorest half of the world's population. We have already noted the disastrous consequences of the world arms race and of the new Cold War for the economies of poor Third World countries and for a Second World which subordinates consumption to defence. Since the end of the Second World War, too, we have become more and more conscious that the two countries which were growing the fastest were those which lost the war, Germany and Japan, not just because they had re-equipped their industry with the latest in technology but because their research and investment was overwhelmingly devoted to civilian production. Britain took the opposite course, attempting to maintain her traditional status as a world Power, and now a nuclear one, with a declining economic base. Her rate of growth and her ability to compete on the international market steadily deteriorated. The two countries with the highest growth-rates today, Japan and West Germany, spend less than 7 per cent of their R&D budget on defence; Britain and the USA spend 30 per cent. In Britain, the Ministry of Defence is the largest employer of scientists and engineers. In the USA, after President Reagan took office, government defence R&D almost doubled to $31 billion, while civilian R&D fell from $17 to $14 billion a year.

The costs of war have now begun to tell even on the economy of the world's No 1 capitalist country, for the USA is now able to balance its trade-account with Japan (aircraft sales apart) principally through the export of food, including, ironically, soya-beans, in order to pay for the Japanese electronics and cars which make steady inroads on the US domestic market. The machine-tools used in US industry are now twice as old as those used in Japan.

These economic consequences apart, the end-product of the arms race, if not halted, will be regression to a new epoch of hunting and collecting far more savage than the world before agriculture. Within the Third World, hitherto, the binary opposition between development and underdevelopment has been the overriding obsessional concern: in the First and Second Worlds, the Great Fear is, increasingly, the nuclear threat. There are different principal contradictions. This was understandable when underdeveloped countries did not possess nuclear weapons. But many soon will. Today, both these issues of underdevelopment and nuclear war are coming together. The last redoubts of colonialism, Israel and South Africa, probably already have the Bomb, and might well use it as a Götterdämmerung rather than recognize the rights of peoples they dominate. Authoritarian regimes from Brazil to Iraq are hell-bent on acquiring their own nuclear weapons, disguised, at first, as peaceful reactors. Their immediate cost will be not only the continuing poverty of their peoples, but their continuing repression. Their ultimate cost may well be a supporting role in a scenario of global destruction in which those who survive or who are merely spectators will be the most unfortunate.

Bourgeois democracy classically promised liberty in the form of political and civic rights for the individual. It still means these things, and has added to them a measure of redistribution of wealth which caters for the needs of the least privileged. That kind of democracy, painfully won over centuries, and then defended and extended by later generations, is embodied not just
in parliaments and courts, in questions in the House and Royal Commissions, but in a whole political praxis of life in innumerable pressure-groups and cause organizations, and in the possibility — almost the habit — of forming new ones whenever they are needed, and in the expectation as of right that those who rule them will be accountable to those they claim to represent.

These things are always under threat, however, and the liberal concept still excludes both economic equality and fraternity, in the form of the collective ownership and control of material resources, which lie at the heart of socialism and which make equality more than a juridical or a minimalist conception — the notion that ‘the courts are open to rich and poor alike, just like the Ritz Hotel’. To the poor of the Third World, the institutionalized socialism of the communist countries is seen as a system which provides bread, but not freedom. To even the least privileged in the First World, it means the absence of both. Unless socialism promises more freedom and greater prosperity, it will remain, in the West, a form of politics oriented to humanizing capitalism rather than replacing it by another kind of society altogether. Its project should be, therefore, not the abolition of the gains of the bourgeois epoch, but their extension; of more democracy, not less; and of a richer kind of co-operative life now, not in the future; and a promise, too, not just of bread and TV sets, but of using the world’s wealth so as to meet the human needs of the majority of mankind rather than to make a very few very rich indeed and to divide humankind into an aristocracy who live in the First World and an underclass who live in the Third.

None of this is going to be achieved merely by increasing the flow of ‘aid’. Aid in its present form given to governments in their present form merely increases a poor country’s economic and political dependence. Its aim, Joan Robinson has said, is ‘to perpetuate the system that makes aid necessary’. Conversely, it strengthens the export-industries of the rich countries and provides profits for banks. The mere servicing of foreign debt (of which aid is only one component) today absorbs more than half the export earnings of many countries. Since 1972, the Third World has spent $268.5 million on arms alone from the five biggest suppliers in the First World. Now, in an era of recession, they are unable to cope even with interest payments, let alone paying back the capital borrowed, causing countries to default and threatening the stability of the entire world financial system. 64

Nor does private aid make any significant difference. It is like trying to sweep back the sea with a broom. Organizations like War on Want have therefore shifted from a policy of simply giving to the world’s poor to one of enabling them to fend for themselves. Saving even the minority they can assist from total starvation or slower death through diseases of poverty is eminently worth-while and necessary. But for all its virtues, it does nothing to change the structures which will continue to generate the disasters to which people in the First World so compassionately respond.

**ONE WORLD OR THREE?**

We said at the outset that these countries are not naturally poor. They have been made poor. Nor is their problem one of needing to be taught how to produce. It is that the wealth they do produce ends up elsewhere. The situation will continue as long as they receive low prices for their products and pay high prices for what we sell them.

These poor countries are quite different from societies with ‘Zen economies’ which the nineteenth century called ‘primitive communism’ — the ‘original affluent societies’ in which people produce individually and appropriately socially. Production is a necessary social activity and will remain so. But those societies still provide us, as they provided Lewis Henry Morgan, with evidence that there have been, and will be, societies in which the economy is neither the primary preoccupation, nor an end in itself, but a means of meeting human needs and satisfying social wants; evidence, in Morgan’s words, that ‘a mere property career is not the final destiny of mankind’, and that ‘the next higher plane of society’ would be ‘revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the ancient gents’. In Marx’s vision — so often reduced to a monochromatic economic determinism — Economic Man, beloved of bourgeois political economy, would disappear in the socialism of the future. We would enter the ‘realm of freedom’ only when ‘labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations’ ceased: ‘in the nature of things ... beyond the sphere of material production’.

Socialism, Engels believed, would emancipate people from the domination by hierarchical structures which even the Labour movement had produced. ‘The German proletariat today’, he wrote in 1885, ‘... does not need any official organization any longer, either public or secret; the simply, self-evident interconnection of like-minded class suffices, without any statutes, committees, resolutions, or other tangible forms, to shake the whole German empire to its foundations. ... The simple feeling of solidarity, based on the understanding of the identity of class position, suffices to create and hold together one and the same great party of the proletariat among the workers of all countries and tongues.’ 65

Two decades later, Lenin repeated and extended that vision in *State and Revolution*. Every cook would rule the State; all that was needed to run society were the ‘extraordinarily simple’ skills of ‘book-keeping and control, ... within the reach of anybody who can read and write and knows the first four arithmetical rules’. Because he went on to create a centralized society dominated by a centralized Party, we do not know, today, whether to laugh or cry at these words.

Socialist societies, up to now, have been built by those for whom politics was conviction politics. Their ideal of a co-operative and egalitarian society drove them to organize parties powerful enough to overthrow the State, and
then to use the power of the new states they had created to pull and push, sometimes force, people along the path of their vision. It was also strong enough to induce millions of ordinary people to give their lives. But only a small proportion of the Chinese people, Mao once said, were socialists, and individual solutions to their problems still meet with a ready response today. Intransigent towards opposition and intolerant of diversity, iron resolution enabled the Bolsheviks to modernize the wretchedly backward Tsarist Empire despite famine, civil war and invasion; transformed a ruined China into a country where a billion people have enough to eat and whose health system commands the world's respect; and turned a sugar-plantation with a playground-cum-brothel enclave for the rich of Cuba and the USA into an inspiration for the poor of Latin America.

They are not the only kind of intransigent conviction politicians, but their goals are the opposite of those in the West who are using the power of the State to dismantle the machinery of social support for the disadvantaged built up over generations and to replace it by a society in which the race goes to the strong and the weak to the wall. We know the consequences: the glitter and opulence of luxury hotels and condominiums, and the drug addiction centres in those devastated social battlefields called Harlem and the South Bronx.

It is possible to create an infinitely better society than that; possible, too, in countries where democracy has been developed over centuries, not driven underground, to create a much more participatory kind of society than that of the Second World. The problem, moreover, is not one of mobilizing people in order to create wealth, but the equitable distribution of the wealth that already exists. Marx, Warren has argued, was right after all: capitalism is developing in the Third World. He also believed that socialism would emerge first in the West. That belief was falsified by events. After the experience of Chile, that bourgeois, Europeanized and parliamentary society, it is hard to believe that ruling classes anywhere will give way to elected socialist governments with good grace. Class struggle might well give way to class war, in Miliband's words, even in the West. In reaction, the organizations of those who seek change become themselves tougher and more rigid. But socialism in the West, if it ever comes, might well prove to be much closer to Engels' and Lenin's visions than the kinds of socialism that have emerged hitherto in poor countries with no heritage of democracy.

Appendix

The Urban Poor in the Workshop of the World

Henry Mayhew was an extraordinary man who lived in an extraordinary place at an extraordinary time. Apart from writing books and plays, promoting philanthropical reform, and even helping to edit Punch at one point, he devoted years of his life to the detailed ethnographic description of the life of the lower depths of London society.

London was not a centre of basic industry; as the capital, it had an unusually large tertiary sector which gave unstable employment to hundreds of thousands who ministered to the needs of the rich, from those in the garment-trades to servants. But there were hundreds of thousands of others who led even more precarious lives.

Mayhew's study of them was by no means only a qualitative one, though it is so vivid that I cannot resist giving a sample of the richness of his descriptions below. In his personal lifestyle, he was an 'undisciplined ... irreverent Bohemian'. But he was also an obsessive quantifier, who would spend hours calculating the weight of the excreta of the average horse (41lb, 9oz, 'in a fresh state') in order to arrive at an estimate of the total volume of horse-dung on the streets of London, or calculating that a ton of cigar-ends were thrown into the gutters every week (210,000 a week, equalling one ton).

His total dedication to discovering the truth disturbed others who preferred not to know about human misery or have it brought to public attention, and who therefore accused him of socialism, radicalism, and other bad things. But Mayhew was unstoppable.

He also rejected the categories used in official statistics, devising instead a classification of occupations of his own which, in true Victorian fashion, invoked moral and not only economic criteria. Workers were distinguished from non-workers; the former then divided into 'enrichers', 'auxiliaries', 'benefactors' and 'servitors'; the latter into 'those who cannot work' and 'those who will not'. He devoted only one page to 'those who need not work' because they draw their income from rent, dividends, yearly stipends, 'obsolete or nominal offices', 'trade in which they do not appear', etc., but the sarcasm is obvious. Per contra, there are many hundreds of compelling,
gatherers, lightermen and heavers; 'lumpers' of timber, dock-labourers, watermen, steamboat men, omnibus workers and cab-drivers.

The poverty of the poorest was abysmal. In one lodging house, there were bunks

... each about 7 feet long, and 1 foot 10 inches wide, and the grating on which the straw mattress is placed is about 12 inches from the ground. The wooden partitions between the 'bunks' are about 4 feet high ... there are five rows of about 24 deep; two rows being placed head to head, with a gangway between each of such two rows, and the other row against the wall. The average number of persons sleeping in this house of a night is 60 ... about 30 pick-pockets, 10 street-beggars, a few infirm old people who subsist occasionally upon parish relief and occasionally upon charity, 10 or 15 dock-labourers, about the same number of low and precarious callings. ... At one time there were as many as 9 persons ... who subsisted by picking up dog's dung out of the street, getting about 5s. for every basketful.  

Notes

Preface

1 Cajka (1978), p. 16.
4 See also Gutzwiller (1967).
5 Ibid., pp. 231-2.
7 Holm and Stewart (1967), Chap. 3.
9 ibid., pp. 231-2.
10 Worsley (1964), Chap. 1.
12 Worsley (1964), p. 82.
13 Rodney (1972).
14 Rowse (1950), p. 43.
17 Lockhart (1972).
20 Lockhart (1972).
27 Hobsbawm (1968), p. 53.
29 Hobsbawm (1968), p. 54.
30 Elliott, op. cit., p. 367.
31 Alavi (1982), p. 50. Alavi calls the mercantilist phase of colonialism 'pre-capitalist' and the industrial phase the 'colonial' mode of production.
32 Brockway (1979).
34 Ibid., pp. 206 and 137.
35 Ibid., p. 52.
36 Ibid., p. 158.
38 Stavrianos, op. cit., p. 230.
43 In Lerner (1968), p. 7.
46 Frank (1969), p. 34.
47 Shils (1972); Shils and Young (1953).
49 Gouldner (1955).
51 Bergesen (1980).
53 See the essays by Booth and O'Brien, respectively, in O surplus et al. (1975).
54 Frank (1969 and 1971); Wallerstein (1974 and 1979); Amin (1974).
For Wallerstein's classification of countries as belonging either to the 'centre', the 'periphery', or the 'semi-periphery' of the world system, and the difficulties this creates, see Worsley (1980).


Notes scribbled on an envelope found among his papers (Hughes 1959), pp. 71–2.

Hobsbawm (1972b), pp. 270–1.


Published in Science at the Crossroads, Kniga, Moscow, 1931.

Sahlins (1976), Chap. 3.


Nettl (1966).


Though Gouldner addresses himself to some of the same issues in a later work, the categories he uses - 'Scientific' and 'Critical' Marxism - seem to me less illuminating (Gouldner 1980).


Harris (1968), p. 240.

Gamst (1980); Ross (1980).

Sahlins (1976), p. 156.


Terray (1972).

Godelier (1978).

Kramer (1968).

Though Anderson emphasizes the existence of Europe-wide institutions, and of symbiosis between East and West, both of which go back to the Roman Empire (and to a certain degree, even the boundaries), his basic unit of analysis, chapter by chapter, is the country.

Curiously, though most backward states, notably Russia, Austria and Poland, are included, Portugal, the first significant Power to expand outside Europe (and which plays a major part in Wallerstein's study) receives no such attention in Anderson's Eurocentric work (Anderson 1974a and 1974b).


For example, Harnecker (1974), Part 1.

See Parkin (1982), Chap. 4.


Cabral (1971).


Alavi (1973).


Parsons (1951), Chaps 1 and 3.

The twenty volumes of Mariategui published by Biblioteca Amauta in Lima remain mostly untranslated. Of those in English, Seven Essays on Peruvian Reality is the most important.

Mario Otero, though he retains the term 'ideology', has produced a very similar conceptualization of culture. 'Ideologies', he writes, 'are of two kinds: religious and socio-political. . . . A socio-political ideology is a vision of the social world: it is a set of beliefs about the ordering and political control of community life. These beliefs can be grouped into four sets:

(a) ontological affirmations about the nature of the person and the nature of society; what kinds of things persons are (material, spiritual, or a mixture of both), the way they combine to form communities and what these consist in (animal, cultural, or a mixture of both);

(b) affirmations about economic, cultural and political problems of these various kinds of communities: what the nature of these problems is and what priorities they indicate;

(c) value judgments about persons and their social activities as well as those about organizations and their ends; what is good and what is bad for society;

(d) a programme of action (or of inaction) for solving social problems (or simply maintaining the existing social order) and for bringing about the alignment of individual with social ends' (Otero 1980, p. 165).

Pierre Bourdieu likewise distinguishes between 'perceptions', 'appreciations', and 'actions' (Bourdieu 1972, pp. 174–8).

Worsley (1982).


For one part of the rich and profound cosmology and philosophy of one Australian tribe, see Berndt and Berndt (1951 and 1952).

Etymology still preserves some traces of this ancient, unitary kind of culture:

Like 'ars' in Latin and 'art' in English, the German word 'Kunst' had originally two different meanings the second of which is now all but extinct. On the one hand, it denoted 'können', that is, man's ability purportly to produce things or effects, as nature produces such objects or creatures as stones, trees and butterflies, or such phenomena as rainbows, earthquakes and thunderstorms. On the other hand, it denoted 'kennen', that is, theoretical knowledge or insight as opposed to practice. In the first, or wider, sense, the word 'Kunst' could be applied to the activities of any producer of things, as the architect, the carver, the embroiderer or the weaver; but also to the activities of any producer of effects, as the physician or the bee-keeper. In the second, or narrower, sense— which still survives in the expression 'Die freien Künste' or 'the Liberal Arts'—astronomy could still be called 'Kunst der Stern' ('art of the stars').

(Planovsky 1943), II, p. 242.)

See the fictitious 'miniature role system' on p. 73 of Nadel (1957).


Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952).

Bauman (1973), Chap. 1.

Firth (1951), p. 27.

Shils (1968), p. 66.


Sahlins and Service (1968).

White op. cit., p. 39.


Ibid., p. 36.

Ibid., pp. 32–8.

Ibid., p. 31.


Ibid.


Etzioni (1964).


Turner (1968).

de Heusch (1964).

Walter (1973).

The main attempt to theorize the concept being Roszak's The Making of a Counter-Culture (1970). In academic circles, radical alternatives to orthodox theory proliferated in the form of journals and 'counter-courses' (Pateman 1972).

120 Parkin (1954), Chap. 3.
121 The opening chapter of Hoggart's pioneering study of working-class culture captures both the persistence and variety of traditional forms and the constant emergence of new ones (Hoggart (1957)).
124 Runciman (1972).
125 Young and Willmott (1956).

2 The Undoing of the Peasantry
1 Kumar (1978), pp. 132, 139.
2 Ibid., p. 164.
4 Peters (1960).
5 Thompson, E. P. (1967).
6 Holmberg (1950), pp. 30, 91.
9 Ibid., p. 9.
10 Lee (1979).
11 Malinowski (1922).
12 Salisbury (1962).
13 Malinowski, op. cit., p. 515.
14 Lewis and Barnouw (1956).
15 Burgess (1977), Chap. 5.
17 J. Le Goff, quoted in Shaw (1982).
21 Shatin (1971); Wolf (1966).
22 Chayanov (1967). The best summaries and appraisals of his work are Kerblay's Introduction to this work and Archetti's Introduction to the Spanish translation of Chayanov (1974).
23 Thus Mcgee (1973) uses the term 'urban peasantry' to describe the family household economy of 'marginal' subsistence entrepreneurs engaged in street trade (see below Chapter 3). Roberts' Peasants in Cities (1978), despite its title, is a 'macro' study of the political economy of migrants to the urban areas. The changes implicit in that title, involving the encounter between rural and urban values and behaviour patterns have been explored more explicitly, usually, by anthropologists such as Lloyd (1979).
24 Sahlin, op. cit., p. 76.
25 This kind of analysis is, of course, equally applicable to industrial society. Thus, Rowntree found in his classic studies of York published in 1901 that poverty was in large measure a function of the phase reached in the family cycle. Its incidence was heaviest at two points: after the birth of the first child, when two incomes were suddenly reduced to one, and at the point when a man's physical powers began to decline (Rowntree (1901)). The difference from peasant society, however, is that the size of the enterprise (factory) is in no way conditioned by the size or composition of any particular family.
26 Wolf, op. cit., pp. 3-10.
27 Redfield (1946); Lewis (1951).
29 Chi (1936).
30 Skinner, op. cit., p. 3.
31 Ibid., p. 35.
32 Ibid., p. 39.
33 Arensburg (1937), Chap. 5, 'Shops, Pubs and Fairs'.
34 Wolf (1957).
35 To be precise, the village community was called the obshchina; the mir was the council that ran the village. But the two terms have been used interchangeably and the latter has gained the wider currency.
36 Robinson (1932), pp. 71-5.
37 Sahlin (1972), p. 82.
38 Geertz (1963b).
40 Elvin (1973); Needham (1954-80).
41 Coulborn (1965), p. 4.
45 Ganshof (1952), p. 50.
47 Gouldner (1960).
49 Ganshof (1952), p. 130.
50 Wilhelm Abel, cited in Wolf (1966), pp. 5-6, 9.
52 The primitiveness of the state machinery was mirrored in the primitiveness of the technological equipment used in administration. King Alfred, Bloch records, 'conceived the idea of carrying with him everywhere a supply of candles . . . to mark the passing of hours' (op. cit., p. 73). The administrative system of the Byzantine Empire, at the same time, was divided into many departments, each with a numerous staff trained in the keeping of elaborate records.
54 Ibid., pp. 83, 100.
57 Ibid., p. 146.
58 Moore (1967).
60 Hill (1969), pp. 19, 56, 70.
61 Ibid., pp. 269-70.
62 Ibid., p. 267.
64 Foster, J. (1974), Chap. 3.
65 Hill, op. cit., p. 261.
67 Wittfogel's conception of 'Oriental Despotism' is not just one of a State 'stronger than society' but of one in which 'total terror', 'total submission', and 'government by flogging' are the routine bases of social order and the creation of 'total loneliness' a standard technique for preventing the consolidation of resistance (Wittfogel (1957)). For a study of an African state (the Zulu) in which terror was a normal instrument of rule, see Walter (1969).
68 Anderson (1974b), Chapter 1 in Parts 1 and 2 of that work.
70 Robinson (1949), p. 17.
71 Many into North America. Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) relate how the Doukhobors were forced to leave their homeland for the Caucasus, then to Egypt, then for Canada, where they continued their resistance to military service and to secular education. Among their many metamorphoses and contradictions, these people, who believed that God was in every individual, produced the theocratic dynasty of the Virginics. For the Sons of Freedom, in Canada, during the Depression of the 1930s, their pacifism was perfectly compatible with the use of dynamic against an irreligious State power, and walking in processions, naked, to protest against military service and State education.
72 Macfarlane (1978), Chap. 7.
73 Cited in Gunawardana (1975).
made more responsive to their ‘customers, employees and stock-holders’ (see Ilich (1973), p. 88, my italics). As for socialism, it is merely the development of equally repulsive forms of bureaucracy. Such ideas are perennially popular among people rebelling against a world in which they are always under the authority of their elders at school, at work, and in the home. It surfaced powerfully during the epoch of student revolt, and was movingly captured in the film One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.

118 For example Finer’s discussion of caudillismo in countries of ‘low’ political culture (Finer (1962)).


5 One World or Three?

1 Scott (1976), pp. 149 ff.
5 Ibid., p. 240 ff.
17 MacPherson (1962).
19 Jen (1974). Recently, there has been a shift back to treating both Superpowers as equally deserving of condemnation.
20 Wallerstein (1974); Worsley (1980).
23 Thomas (1978); Kelemen (1982).
24 Dijlas (1957).
26 For Tanzania, see Shivjee (1976); for Kenya, see Leys (1975), Chap. 4. Technology royalties paid by Mexico have in recent years amounted to sixth of the value of her exports (Stavrianos (1981), p. 447).
29 Address to the Convocation of the University of Ibadan, 17 November 1976, in Goulbourne (1979) Chap. 14.
32 Ibarra et al. (1977), Vol. 1, pp. 108–9, Table 6; pp. 76–7,
33 Goldthorpe (1975), Chap. 4.
34 For example, Wolf-Philips (1979). The term ‘Fourth World’ has also been applied to ‘indigenous peoples who today are completely or partly deprived of the right to their own territory and its riches, and who have limited or no influence on their own destiny’, in the words of the International Workshop for Indigenous Affairs (1981) of Copenhagen, and, by extension, to ‘describe the specially underprivileged in the “other America”: not just the poor, but also the imprisoned, the sick, the elderly, and the underaged’ (Hamalian and Karl (1976)).
38 Jaléé (1968), pp. 5–6.
41 Salim (1981).
45 Jonathan Steele, the Guardian, 7 September 1979.
46 For a survey of these meetings, see the section ‘Economia’ in the Guía del Tercer Mundo 1981, pp. 480–540.
47 Taylor (1979), Chap. 2.
48 Quoted from Fortune magazine in Stavrianos, p. 761.
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self-inflicted wound', the Guardian, 25 August 1983. For the USA, see Melman (1974).
64 Payer (1974).
65 Conclusion to the History of the Communist League.

Appendix The Urban Poor in the Workshop of the World

1 Jones (1971).
2 Thompson and Yeo (1971), p. 84.
3 Quennel (1949), p. 15.
4 Ibid., p. 54.
5 Ibid., pp. 50-2.
6 Ibid., p. 53.
7 Ibid., p. 71.
8 Ibid., pp. 552-3.

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