

GRAMSCI'S WRITINGS ON THE STATE AND HEGEMONY, 1916-35
- A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

by

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The rise of Eurocommunism in the last few years has put the problems of a Marxist analysis and political strategy in relation to State and class hegemony at the centre of current debates. Gramsci, the first Marxist theorist to systematically attempt to distinguish the different structures of class rule in East and West, and therefore to pose the need for a revolutionary strategy specific to the Western capitalist states, has been the magnetic pole of reference for the contending analyses.

Interpretations have frequently used Gramsci as ammunition for political polemic with scant respect for his writings. In Britain this exchange, of recent origin, sees the confrontation between pro-Italian Communist Party interpreters and various Trotskyist tendencies. With the exception of Perry Anderson's contribution in *New Left Review* 100, the debate is singularly arid. There is an abyss between the really productive interpretation of Gramsci by intellectuals, especially historians, in a more strictly academic field, and his use for more direct political analysis. 1) It is a small indication of that separation between Marxist intellectuals and the working class movement that has perpetuated 'academicism', on the one hand, and 'workerism' on the other.

In Italy Gramsci has sadly suffered the same fate, only there the battle over his soul has raged for longer and has a much more tangible importance at a political level. 2) The papal succession from St. Peter is paralleled by the PCI's succession from St. Antonio, and many are the heretics, agnostics and unbelievers who contend its legitimacy or value. In the current period, Gramsci's writings are used ever more in the name of 'raison d'etat' as the PCI identifies the interests of the working class with the defence of the democratic State.

This is not the place for detailed analysis of how Gramsci has been used and interpreted since the time of the publication of the Notebooks in the 1950's, but it might be useful to briefly summarize the key points of contention over the questions of the State and 'Hegemony'. Firstly, in relation to the State the differences centre on whether Gramsci's analyses conceived the democratic State as a means for the achievement of socialism in the West, and hence as a structure in which the parliamentary organs could be given a new content, or whether his conception of socialism necessarily involved the destruction of the existing State and the construction of a new one on entirely different premises. Secondly differences have emerged on what Gramsci meant by the necessity for the working class to be hegemonic before taking power; and whether the concept itself is applicable only to the rule of the bourgeoisie in a capitalist society. However, needless to say, the problem is infinitely complex. In this contribution some indications are made in relation to these general

political issues, though its nature is much more a reading of Gramsci than a systematic treatment of the various interpretations of his work. The following piece on Gramsci's writings originally written as an MA dissertation in August 1976 and subsequently revised, is an attempt to trace the development of his concepts of 'Hegemony' and the State from his early writings through to the Prison Notebooks. These writings are grouped in 4 sections: Gramsci's early intellectual formation, the Ordine Nuovo articles, Gramsci on fascism and the revolutionary party, and finally the Prison Notebooks. This set of divisions corresponds to a periodisation in relation to Gramsci's political activity - as propagandist for the Socialist Party (1916-18), the promoter of the factory councils movement (1919-20), as member and then leader of the Communist Party (1921-26), and lastly as 'full-time theoretician' in prison. In each of these periods Gramsci's writings take a different form - from a series of articles in the papers of the PSI, through 'Ordine Nuovo' (a paper partly founded by himself), to the internal documents letters and reports required by the PCI and the Third International (on top of articles in Unità), to the more theoretical and analytic Notebooks. However, the shifts and breaks in Gramsci's thinking do not mirror this periodisation, and they are analysed in this piece as they are registered in his concepts. It should be made clear, and this is also a confession of a profound limitation, that this article is a textual reading, rather than a comprehensive historical enquiry, and is largely restricted to Gramsci's own works.

AN OUTLINE OF GRAMSCI INTELLECTUAL FORMATION - 1916-19

Gramsci's early intellectual formation, before the Ordine Nuovo writings, was shaped by a strongly Italian interpretation of two mainstream European traditions - Idealism and Marxism - through the writings of Benedetto Croce and Antonio Labriola, who were the respective protagonists of these traditions. His commitment to them was not simply intellectual: the dominant theoreticians of the socialist movement, the German social democrats, had led their party into the war and the whole European working class into its deepest crisis, and this was seen by Gramsci as a sign of theoretical as well as political failure. Gramsci rebelled against a Marxism which made men the passive agencies of economic laws, and proclaimed the freedom of the will. In his famous article greeting the Bolshevik revolution, 'The revolution against 'Capital' ', he affirmed his faith in Idealism and refutation of the Marxism of the 2nd International:

'They (the Bolsheviks) are not 'Marxists'; they have not compiled from the works of the Master's an eternal doctrine of dogmatic assertions. They live the Marxist thought which will never die, and which is the continuation of Italian and German idealist thought, which in Marx was contaminated with positivistic and naturalist encrustations. This thinking poses always Man, and the society of men, as the chief maker of history, and not ugly economic facts.' 3)

A key Crocean text for Gramsci was 'teoria della storia della storiografia', which rejected any conception of history claiming to relate the 'facts' as objectively and scientifically validated for all time (Positivist school of history). Croce proposed that history was produced according to contemporary levels of knowledge; and that it was subjectively appropriated by each generation. The conclusion that Gramsci drew was that history was therefore no longer an external determinant but a means of understanding and emancipation. His article 'Socialismo e Cultura', published in Grido del Popolo in January 1916, is marked by this Crocean historicism:

'Man is above all spiritual, that is to say a historical being, and not a natural creation; and again 'to know oneself, which is to be in control of oneself, to distinguish oneself, to emerge from the chaos, to be an element of order, but of an order and discipline proper to an ideal.' 4)

It is through history that Man appropriates self-knowledge by locating himself in time and space.

As the above quotation indicates, Gramsci conceived the process of

'emancipation' in this period as an aggregate of individual actions which continually multiplied. This perspective, however, was not purely personal or Crocean; it expressed the Socialist Party's position on political propagandising as a process of conversion of the masses (later referred to by Gramsci as 'evangelism'). In 'Socialismo e Culture' Gramsci goes on to find forerunners to the socialists in the Enlightenment intellectuals, who, through 'critical work' and 'cultural penetration', prepared the way for the French Revolution, the seizure of power itself. His own political activity 'lived' this vision of educating the masses through newspapers, meetings, educational circles and so on. Gramsci, as full-time journalist for Avanti (with his personal column, 'Sotto la mole') and for Grido del Popolo, wrote about everything under the sun in his attempt to challenge the totality of life under capitalism; (A thief who stole papers from a ministry is applauded as the only real reformer of bureaucracy, and the Italian 'sport' of cardplaying is compared unfavourably to British football because it is a source of factional politics rather than two party democracy). After he got his job on Avanti, he argued, in a series of important articles, that 'the problem of education is the most important class problem' and that 'the first step in emancipating oneself from political and social slavery is that of freeing the mind'.

Gramsci's conception of political struggle as struggle on several fronts, cultural and social, underwent several changes as he became more critical of the PSI tradition, but the importance he attached to the problems of long-term cultural transformation remains a hallmark of his writings. This comes over clearly in an article for Ordine Nuovo in January 1921 entitled 'Marinetti rivoluzionario?'. 5) In it, the Futurist movement is very positively assessed by Gramsci, taking his lead from Lunacharsky on this occasion, as a relentless attack on bourgeois traditions in music, painting and even in language and everyday behaviour. He sees it as opening the breach which the working class should enter in order to develop its own autonomous culture. This is a possibility before the taking of political power, because the capitalist 'spiritual heirarchy' prejudices, idols etc., can be destroyed even though the factories must not be. The Futurists, writes Gramsci,

'had faith in themselves, in the impetuosity of youthful energies; they had a clear conception that our epoch was the epoch of big industry, of tumultuous and intense life which had to have new forms of art, philosophy, customs and language. They had this clearly revolutionary and absolutely Marxist conception, while the socialists did not think about such things.'

This uncritical enthusiasm for the Futurists should certainly be treated with suspicion. Walter Benjamin in his 'Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (Illuminations, Fontana, London 1973, p244) laconically points to one of the aspects of Futurism : 'This is the situation of politics (the exaltation of war), which fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.' The Futurist movement's Bergsonian philosophy of continuous change was far from being Marxist. It can be said that Gramsci was carried away: a young intellectual in Turin, who had just escaped the stagnant culture of rural Sardinia, he shared some of the Futurists' infatuation with industry and technology, and their total scorn for the Italian 'character' (ie. a nation of 3rd rate Puccini's). Trotsky was shrewd in observing that Futurism arose in those countries that combined uneven development, both feudal modes of production and the most capital intensive, modern industry. Gramsci shared that cultural milieu with the Futurists.

The important point to make, however, is that Gramsci is here again proposing an offensive against the 'spiritual hierarchies' of the bourgeoisie prior to the seizure of power by the working class. This does not mean 'instrumentalizing' the artist and laying down norms for socialist culture, as Zhdanov was later to do, but directing artists through the very process of forming a new culture and ethics. Nor is there an idea of culture suddenly reflecting the changed relations of production of a socialist society. There is a disjuncture between the levels of economics and artistic production because works of art cannot be made to order like the commodities of a factory.

Gramsci's conception of politics as cultural propaganda and agitation, formed under the influence of Croce cannot be conflated with his idea of 'hegemony' as elaborated in the Prison Notebooks. Here it is more like a Hegelian notion of 'weltanschauung'. This conception was, in effect, transformed in relation to the workers' movement in Turin in 1919-20, and in the face of Bordiga's interpretation of Marxism and political practice. As early as 1912, when he had already developed the outlines of a theory of a revolutionary party nearer to Lenin's than to the PSI, Bordiga rejected the politics of cultural messianism : 'The need for study should be proclaimed in a congress of school-teachers, not socialists. You don't become a socialist through instruction but through experiencing the real needs of the class to which you belong.' 6) Whilst Gramsci moved closer to Bordiga's idea of culture learnt through struggle, he did not accept that it arose spontaneously and only in response to particular conjunctures. In Ordine Nuovo and his political work from 1919, he developed a conception of cultural struggle that combined the acquisition of practical skills and of the

knowledge required for the attainment of a full 'humanity'.

Ordine Nuovo Writings.

Before 1919 Gramsci had already taken a clear position of opposition to the war and hence on the class nature of the Italian State. On the outbreak of war he had condoned Mussolini's interventionism in an article in Avanti which his enemies subsequently used against him, but he quickly realized his mistake. It is not until his writings in Ordine Nuovo, however, that he really grappled with the problem of the State. The overthrow of the Italian State, itself, seemed to be on the agenda and it was vital for the PSI to develop its leadership of the working class to this end. Two approaches to the problem of state power emerged in the PSI in opposition to the PSI leadership of Serrati : that of the 'Ordine Nuovo' group and Gramsci in Turin, and that of Bordiga and his sympathisers in Naples. They both revolved around the duality of the process of destroying the existing state and constructing the new worker's state.

Bordiga stressed the necessity of the act of destruction prior to the formation of organs of workers' self-government, whilst Gramsci pressed for the formation of workers' government at the base as part of the process of destroying the State and as the guarantee of the survival of those organs. It was through this heated debate within the PSI that the fraction, which founded the Communist Party, was formed.

Gramsci's conception of revolution centred on the duality of the process of destruction/construction and its dialectical unity. He wrote in Ordine Nuovo in July 1919. 7)

"The formula 'conquest of the State' must be understood in this sense - the creation of a new type of State generated by the collective experience of the working class, and its replacement of the democratic - parliamentary State".

and again a year later

"To the extent that it is possible to achieve this by the action of a party, it is necessary to create the conditions in which there will not be two revolutions, but in which the popular revolt against the bourgeois state will find organized forces capable of beginning the transformation of the national apparatus of production from an instrument of plutocratic oppression into an instrument of communist liberation" 8)

Gramsci is never in any doubt about the necessity of destroying the state apparatus as a whole, but this task tends to be displaced by the preoccupation with forming the new State. The reasons for this can be found in the "catastrophism" theories widespread among revolutionaries during the

'biennio rosso' (1919-20), in the preoccupation with the experiences of the German and Hungarian soviets and in a theoretical approach that still contains currents of economism of the 2nd. International and Hegelian conceptions of consciousness.

The revolutionary hopes of the immediate post-war years were made up of a religious belief in chiliasm, in the death-throes of the capitalist regimes. Economic slump and the international upturn in class struggle seemed to signal the presence of the objective conditions for revolution and the subjective readiness of the working class to take power. Gramsci wrote on May Day, 1919:

"Among the workers and peasants internationally is found the reborn youth of human civilization ...bad cannot prevail...The world is saving itself from itself with its own energies that, in sorrow and desperation, are born with a richness of moral character and an unprecedented potentiality for sacrifice and seriousness. One society, the capitalist one, is collapsing, and a revolution, the communist one, is coming at a forced march. Death seeks to infect the living, but the triumph of life is by now as secure and certain as destiny...The working class is assuming its form of power which is already the revolution in action..." 9)

The political crises of the bourgeois regimes were seen as the reflex of the crisis in production, and charges of menshevism levelled at those who predicted further capitalist development.

"The Italian State does not function politically, because the apparatuses of industrial and agricultural production which are the substance of the political State, no longer function" 10)

This 'economism' in Gramsci's writings, the reduction of the political to the economic level, may seem surprising in view of Gramsci's battle against the determinist ideas of the 2nd International, but what in effect he is doing is turning economism into a theory justifying immediate revolutionary action.

It is most evident in Ordine Nuovo of 1919 where the growth of the consciousness of workers seems to be immanent in and developing through the very relations of production:

"Closely associated in the community of production workers are automatically drawn to express their will to power in terms of principles inherent in the relations of production and exchange. All the utopian, religious and petty bourgeois ideologies will collapse; communist psychology will rapidly and permanently be consolidated, constantly sparked by revolutionary enthusiasm, and will show the tenacious perseverance of

the iron discipline of work" 11)

Gramsci visualizes a linear development of consciousness which necessarily grows in the worker who conceives himself as a producer and hence as a maker of history..

"Moving from this cell, the factory, seen as a unity and as the creative act of a determinate product, the worker rises to the understanding of always vaster units up to the level of the nation which is in its totality a gigantic apparatus of production".. 12)

The consequence of this vision of the formation of consciousness was an orientation to workers which limited their political role to the point of production. The worker was fantastically idealized..

"the working class remains alone in its love of work and of the machine. Today the working class dominates production and is the boss of society...because it is the only heroic force of production that can infuse it with life..." 13)

Moreover a dangerously reformist politics can insert itself within this scheme. The State's role as the organizing force of the bourgeoisie is seen as an epiphenomenon of its economic organization, and hence a seizure of the economic infrastructure will determine the collapse of the bourgeoisie superstructure. The working class therefore must organize itself primarily in the productive apparatus, in councils because such organization is enforced by the process of production itself. It is therefore contractual and necessary, whereas other organizations like the political party and the union are only voluntary associations.

In making these distinctions between the "contractual" and the "voluntary" organizations of the working class, Gramsci was taking up the analysis of the syndicalists, only replacing the union with the council. Lergardelle, in 1911, spoke of the "lien de necessite" and the "lien de volonte". Implicit in this formulation was the conception of revolution as a process growing within the bourgeois regime, in which councils formed a counter-power of proletariat-producers. At its worst this led to a productivism at the service of the bourgeoisie, as part of a campaign to demoralize the bosses.

"To those who object that in this way one is collaborating with our adversaries with the owners of the factories, we reply that instead this is the only way to make them hear in fact that the end of their domination is near, because the working class now conceives the possibility of producing by itself and of producing better; thus, it acquires every day a clearer certainty that

it alone is capable of saving the whole world from ruin and desolation". 14)

Gramsci's willingness to promote innovation and technical development when production was still under the control of the bourgeoisie even when workers' sacrifices were involved stemmed from his infatuation with modernism mentioned previously. His view of the forces of production as autonomous from the relations of production, as neutral in themselves, and as simply held back from full development by the capitalist organization of society, stems from the Marxism of the 2nd International.

This conception was the commonsense of the epoch for Marxists and bourgeois theorists alike. Petri, an anarchist, who wrote articles in Ordine Nuovo on Taylorism in October-November 1919, shared Taylor's idea exactly, that 'techniques of work, like machines, are invariant in relation to types of society'. Except that under communism, the productivity of labour would increase because external discipline would be replaced by voluntary co-operation - 'Communism, which is at the heart of the worker, can revive the perfect mechanism constructed by Taylor, and the council is the fundamental unit in which the consciousness of the producer is formed'. 15)

The theoretical weakness of revolutionaries in this post war period is understandable given the conditions of mass poverty and unemployment when the crucial problem was to increase production. Gramsci went a long way in tackling the issue of control, and this had political effects on the development of the struggle itself - for instance, involvement of non-union workers in the voting for the factory delegates, and in Ordine Nuovo's successful demand for the collectivization of piece-rates as a means of reducing divisions between workers. However, since Agnelli's (the owners of Fiat) strategy was to increase productivity via the intensification of 'relative exploitation' (Taylorisation) within the new 8 hour day, the absence of a counter-strategy precisely in relation to the comprehensive policy of de-skilling (ie the elimination of craft elements of workers' control) meant that there was the absence of an intermediary level between wage struggles of the union and the occupation of the factories under the councils. 16)

Criticism of this aspect of Gramsci's early writings on the factory councils, has sprung up in Italy in the wake of the Chinese cultural revolution which was widely seen on the left as re-posing the problem of the "capitalist forces of production" as well as the relations of production. Adriano Sofri of Lotta Continua analyses Gramsci's error of understanding in this context.

"The workers at the factory are producers in as far as they co-operate; they are organized for the preparation of the product according to a method/mode exactly determined by the industrial technique, which is, in a certain measure, independent of the mode of appropriation of the values produced". 17)

He comments that this amounts to a notion of "capitalism without the capitalists" and

"based on this conception, councils adhere organically to the factory, overcoming by the sheer fact of their existence, the limits imposed by the persistence of the class system, whilst the party and unions are excluded because they are relevant only to a class divided society". 18)

Such an analysis, Sofri maintains, led to a virtual abolition of political organization and political rupture.

Before the defeat of the council movement in April 1920, Gramsci is certainly guilty of an underestimation of the forces of the State outside the factory. He counterposed the disciplined organization of the workers in the factory to the chaotic fragmentation of the State. Whilst the entrepreneur and "captain of industry" played a vital role in the production process of competitive capitalism, in the monopoly phase he was excluded from the factory:

"The working class has acquired the highest degree of autonomy in the field of production because the development of the industrial and commercial technique has suppressed all the useful functions inherent in property, in the person of the capitalist". 19).

Strangely enough, where Marx saw the reduction of autonomy of the worker as the production process was continually revolutionized, tending to make the worker subservient to his machine and reducing his skills, Gramsci thinks the opposite...

"technical innovations taken to their height by machines have changed his (the worker's) relations with the technician; the worker has less need than before of the technician, of the maestro d'arte, and has therefore acquired a greater autonomy, and can discipline himself by himself". 20)

Not only has the entrepreneur disappeared from the factory, but the technician, who was previously the disciplinarian of the capitalist, has become a producer "connected to the capitalist by the naked and crude relations of exploited and exploiter". Hence the technician's psychology too has lost its "petit bourgeoisie incrustations" and become fully

revolutionary. Meanwhile the capitalist becomes a "mere police agent" and puts his "rights" immediately into the hands of the State. By a sleight of hand, Gramsci then asserts that

"The state thus becomes the sole owner of the means of labour, assumes all the traditional functions of the owner, becomes the impersonal machine that buys and distributes raw materials, plans production and buys and distributes the products". 21)

The result is chaos because the State is made up of petty politicians, adventurers and good-for-nothings.

His identification of 'healthy' capitalism with its classic 19th century laissez faire form in which the entrepreneur is active in the production process means that he does not grasp the reality of capital in its increasingly abstract forms. The worker does not need the presence of the capitalist to make him work because the machine itself and related methods of payment do that job. The absence of the capitalist and the increasing domination of finance capital are therefore aspects of a higher stage of capitalist development which Gramsci can only analyse with moralism.

By effectively collapsing the domain of the State and the economy, describing not monopoly capitalism, but state monopoly capitalism, Gramsci brings the problem of politics back to the factory in itself which is now the unit of the whole of society. Conclusion:

"The factory council...is the solid basis of the process that must culminate in the dictatorship, in the conquest of the power of the state"... 22)

Gramsci's thinking is here characterized by the most extreme schematism and disregard for the specific historical conjuncture.

Gramsci's comments on the nature of the State have here reached the point of meaninglessness. It was impossible for him to retain such abstract notions in the conditions of daily revolutionary struggle, and his writings reveal an intimate relationship to the political conjunctures in which they were produced. In addition greater familiarity with Lenin's work stimulated reflection. Gramsci complained about the PSI failure to introduce its membership to the Marxism of the 3rd International, and strongly recommended

'State and Revolution' to his readers (in May 1920). His own analysis of the state was indeed based on the 3rd International's characterization the epoch as the imperialist monopoly stage of capitalism, its highest and therefore final stage of development. The form of State corresponding to this economic stage was conceived as a concentration and centralization of the repressive military and bureaucratic apparatuses. It was not a

question of any particular State being highly industrialized but of the overall balance of forces in the world:

"Italy has not reached the fullness of development of capitalism in the sense that the production of goods is not intensely industrialized. But the fact that the world is subjected to a monopoly of economic exploitation and to an uncontested political and military predominance has determined that in Italy also the same rigid conditions of life exist. The Italian situation is thus peculiarly revolutionary for being backward and poor in its economic structure. Italy today can be compared to the Russia of Kerensky". 23)

Gramsci pressed this parallel between Russia and Italy in his fight against the determinist conceptions of the 2nd. International which locates the likelihood of revolution only in the capitalist metropolis where the economic conditions were most fully developed. These conceptions were still strong in the PSI, and also in the 3rd. International itself which waited eagerly for the outbreak of revolution in Germany:

"The reformists and the whole band of opportunists, are right when they say that in Italy the objective conditions for revolution don't exist: they are right in as far as they think and speak as nationalists in as far as they conceive of Italy as an organism which is independent of the rest of the world, and of Italian capitalism as a purely Italian phenomenon. But they don't have any idea of internationalism as a living reality in history as much for capitalism as for the proletariat". 24)

In other words, Gramsci is saying that the possibility for revolution did not exist taking Italy as a self-contained unit, but only in as far as it was part of a world capitalism in crisis.

In assimilating the Russian and Italian situations, Gramsci went overboard to the point of eliminating the points of difference. Hence the Italian parliamentary tradition, which in fact took root after the Risorgimento, and had its origins in the French revolutionary tradition, is treated as a less authentic than the Russian Duma.

"The judiciary does not exist in Italy as an independent power; the repressive apparatus is not under the control of the judiciary; parliamentary power does not exist, and legislation is trickery. In reality and in terms of rights, there is only one power - that of the executive and of the propertied class that wants to be defended at all costs". 25)

Since the reformists in the PSI based their strategy on an Italian road to socialism via parliament, Gramsci went to extremes in his polemics against their 'nationalism' and in one article in Ordine Nuovo, proposed that the Italian State itself was 'dead' and was merely a "sphere of influence, a monopoly in the hands of foreigners".

"The whole world is a trust in the hands of a few dozen Anglo-Saxon bankers, shopowners and industrialists. The conditions for international communism are totally realized". 26)

Gramsci was not one to go half-way in his arguments.

For all this abstract internationalism, Gramsci was sensitive to the peculiarities of the Italian situation. He had an intimate knowledge of the comings and goings of the politicians and the class fractions they represented in their politicking.

Whilst international capital appeared to be all-embracing and unified, the nation-state was threatened by fragmentation. Whilst the government in Rome represented servitude to the international capital, the bourgeoisie was split so that

"each act of bourgeois indiscipline.. of "reactionary" insurrection against the actual government finds adherents" 27)

According to Gramsci, Giolitti, was the "only individual capable of taking up the interests and aspirations of the entire property-owning class", and his success depended on the special conditions that the war had destroyed. His method of government was based on the extra parliamentary organizations of the bourgeoisie "the system of subterranean forces that really dominate the country outside and against parliament" - the banks, Freemasonry, the 'stato maggiore', the church hierarchy, the Neapolitan 'camorra', the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro - and operated through agreements with the hierarchy of the workers' movement. The economic crisis removed the basis of the Labour aristocracy which formed the lynch-pin of Giolitti's system. Gramsci concluded that reformism no longer had any basis for existence and hence the crisis which divided the ruling classes would unite the working class. Again Gramsci's analysis was formal and deterministic, - reformism was reduced to a mere epiphenomenon emitting from material benefits; but in this he shared the company of the 3rd. International leadership, which later judged this analysis to be ultra-left and proposed the 'united front' strategy of a return to mass work as a means of combatting reformism as an organized form of ideology that was widely accepted in the European working class.

Gramsci pointed to the role of the State in articulating this reform only in a contemptuous passing comment -

"the multiplicity of States constituted by all the capitalist factories are united in the bourgeois State, which maintains discipline and obedience from the have-nots, giving them the fiction of power and calling upon the people every 5 or 7 years to nominate deputies for Parliament". 28)

This fiction, he claimed, had been destroyed by the factory councils.

References in Gramsci's writings on the State in the 1919-20 period frequently speak of its dissolution, and the moral and political bankruptcy of the bourgeois class. The class which founded the Italian State for the purposes of forming a united market is portrayed as destroying that unity in the pursuit of egotistic gain. Articles regularly conclude on a fanfare to the proletariat's national mission. "Only the working class, the proletarian dictatorship, can today arrest the process of dissolution of national unity..". This triumphalism certainly did not arm the workers mentally for what turned into a disastrous defeat for the Turin working class at the hands of the army. However, Gramsci was alive to two crucial developments in the Italian State: the organization of "reaction" outside of the formal democratic apparatuses, and the deepening of the economic, social and political division between North and South.

In an article in Avanti in October 1920, in the wake of the defeat of the Turin occupations, Gramsci pointed to the danger of 'La Reazione'. He did not locate the threat in any class or fraction, but rather in the 'nature' of the system of private property. Yet this 'reaction' is seen by him not only to be aided and abetted by the State, but to contain the possibility for a coup d'etat. :

"In the present period, terrorism wants to pass from the private to the public arena. No longer satisfied with the impunity granted by the State, it wants to become the State". 29)

Whereas previously Gramsci assumed the inevitability of revolution in the proximate future, the change in the balance of class forces made him pose the alternatives - revolution, or the barbarism of national war and repression. The specific features of the fascist movement were barely discernable at this stage, but he was the first to see them, and it is extraordinary that he should already have understood it as a force that aimed at state power.

The other of Gramsci's major insights into the Italian State came in his analysis of the relationship of the South and North. The Northern bourgeoisie, in his eyes, had organized the systematic exploitation of the peasants of the

South by making an alliance with the Southern middle class, who were thereby able to maintain their position of feudal domination vis a vis the peasantry. The South was a colony in relation to the Northern capital. 30) Already before the formation of the PCI, Gramsci and the 'Ordine Nuovo' group insisted on the need for a worker-peasant alliance to combat the oppressive bloc, whereas the Bordighists were preoccupied with establishing a purely proletarian party, and the PSI largely ignored the peasantry. 31) Gramsci's analysis of the bourgeois State, and specifically the Italian State, was narrowly confined to its repressive aspect, for all his insights. In contrast to this, his conception of the formation of the workers' State concentrated, not on its task of smashing the State, but the necessity of erecting a proletarian hegemony. Some of the shortcomings of his approach have already been pointed out but justice must be done to the originality of his contribution.

What the theory and practice of the councils movement did was challenge the central tenet of the politics of the 2nd International - the division between economic and political activity. This tradition continued in the PSI, for all its adherence to the 3rd International, and during the factory occupations of Turin it was ratified in a pact between the CG.L and PSI. For Gramsci, the factory was not simply a unit of production and hence the region for limited economic struggle, for trade unionism, but also a structure that undertook the reproduction of the social conditions of production, where a set of ideological and political relations of domination and subordination were active as in the "superstructure".

If Gramsci misconceived the relation between the factory and the State by tending to reduce the latter to the former in his early writings, he had made the vital advance of understanding the factory in itself as a form of government that had to be totally transformed along with the State. In the chapter in Marx's Capital, 'Machinery and Modern Industry', there are numerous passages on the operation of discipline and control in the production process. For example, he writes that in factory regulations 'capital formulates, like a private legislator, and at his own good will, his autocracy over his workpeople' 32); and it is this understanding of the factory that Gramsci grasps. He likens the forms of organization of army and factory :

'In the capitalist army there is the same form of organization as in the capitalist factory, where the property-owning class... has the function of despotic rule, where the proletariat is the passive mass of infantrymen, and where the petit bourgeoisie has the role of subaltern command'. 33)

The capitalist's authoritarian regime is necessary in the factory because it is the point at which the workers potentially have the most power. In the process of increasing exploitation the capitalist organizes, disciplines and unites a great mass of workers. What Gramsci proposes for the foundation of the socialist State is to make the factory the centre of social and political, as well as economic life, and thereby to destroy capitalist relations of production at their roots. He envisages the construction of a new order that recomposes society in the single unity of the citizen-producer, and that opens the way for the realization of man's creative potentialities. In this vision he was close in spirit to Marx who above all saw human liberation in the act of unalienated work. The image of unity of the single producer is the very antithesis of the worker under capitalism, who is a slave at work and yet, as a citizen, is formally equal to his capitalist neighbour.

However, Gramsci breaks with the old socialist concept of politics that combined an everyday economic realism based on a minimal programme with the vision of a promised land of equality and plenty. He stresses the necessity for the acquisition of 'practical' and 'critical' skills by the working class that will enable it to think as a ruling class. 34) The capacity of the working class to take power is, therefore, not political in the narrow sense, but involves extensive cultural preparation that starts from a detailed understanding of the production process itself. When Gramsci writes that the 'conquest of social power' can only be conceived as 'the dialectical process in which political power makes possible industrial power and vice versa' 35) he intends it in this sense. Gramsci noted himself in 1926, the 'Turin communists had concretely posed the question of proletarian hegemony, that is the social base of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the workers' State'. The notion of 'hegemony' as inclusive of a whole cultural dimension of class struggle that is elaborated in the Notebooks was already pre-sent in the Ordine Nuovo writings in relation to the tasks of the worker's vanguard.

Just as it is necessary to trace back Gramsci's conception of hegemony to his formulations on the factory council, it is equally true that his ideas on 'corporate' or 'hegemonized' consciousness need to be related to his analyses of trade unions. In a certain sense, in 1919-20 Gramsci identifies the unions as the major obstacle to revolution. The power of the ruling class in terms of the State is reduced to a technical problem of physical force. It is an external constraint. The unions, on the other hand, provide the critical bridge between the interests of labour and capital. The unions are a constituent part of the capitalist system because they are based on the logic of the market; they represent workers as the sellers of labour power not as

the 'producers of wealth'. Whatever its political colouring the union is objectively subordinate to capital in that its very existence is predicated on the wage relationship that is also bound into the legal system. Moreover, the union mediates workers' interests through its structures. The bureaucracy's very raison d'être is based on making agreements, and the officials have an interest in the steady, regular functioning of negotiations which makes them the upholders of industrial legality. All these characteristics that Gramsci identifies in the union makes it the bulwark of the system and negation of proletarian hegemony to which the councils aspire. When Tasca proposed to base the councils on the union structures, Gramsci savaged him in the following polemic :

'With the gloss of revolutionary and communist phrasology, he has come to the aid of the opportunists and reformists who have always tried to emasculate the factory council, which has tended to carry the class struggle beyond the terrain of industrial legality, by calling for bureaucratic 'discipline', that is, acting as the guardians of an industrial legality that means the codification in the factory of the relations of exploiter and exploited'. 37)

However, history was on Tasca's side. The councils vanished and the unions survived. The councils were the first victims of the defeat of 1920. If the unions themselves played an important role in undermining them first by refusing to generalize the workers' struggles beyond Turin and by sabotaging council initiatives, the army did the rest. The councils also disappeared from Gramsci's writings. In his article entitled 'The Communist Party', published in September, the party assumes in full the function of realising class autonomy.

"This is the miracle of the worker who daily conquers his own spiritual autonomy and his own liberty to build in the realm of ideas, struggling against the weariness, the boredom, the physical monotony which tends to mechanize and even kill his inner life, this miracle organizes itself in the communist party". 38)

This disappearance of the councils that followed a series of workers' defeats internationally was registered in the reinforcement of 'centralist' elements in communist organization and political theory. Gramsci's own development towards a party-centred view of revolutionary strategy and organization was common to a whole second generation of revolutionaries. Whereas Lenin revised his rigid conception of the party and class consciousness of 'What is to be

done' under the impact of the 1905 experience, his successors increasingly relegated the significance of the soviets and factory councils. In Gramsci's case the council remained as a political proposal in an emasculated form. Rethinking the Turin experience led him to conceive a more complex idea of the party in relation to the class rather than to a reconsideration of the specific role of the council and the various relations of the organs of class struggle. Objectively the conditions for the creation of councils and soviets did not exist in Italy in the '20's and '30's, but the failure to keep alive this vital aspect of the first wave of communist struggles was a serious one that was not recuperated until 1968. Stefano Merli polemically takes Gramsci to task for his responsibility in this respect:

'Of the experience of the factory councils he remembers and values the rank and file only as the mass base of the party and not the concept of the council-soviet.... The institutions of Gramscian politics...had only to fulfil the function of the mass base for the slogans of the Anti-parliament and the Constituent Assembly, that is, the means for pressing for legalistic ends, elements of a political game that had their objectives outside and distinct from working class autonomy'. 39)

When Gramsci refers to the factory council experience in the Notebooks, it is in connection with the problem of 'spontaneity' and 'leadership' and the need for the party to establish a correct relation between the two.

WRITINGS ON FASCISM AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In the period of the "biennio rosse" Gramsci was more pre-occupied with the nature and formation of the workers' State than that of the bourgeois one. The defeats of the Italian proletariat, and of the soviets in Germany and Hungary, changed his perspective. Problems which Gramsci began to look at in the summer of 1920 - the relationships of the working class and the party, of fascism to the State and the Southern peasantry to the Northern workers - were to figure centrally in his writings as a member of the PCI. His treatment of them differed not only from Bordigas, but from the dominant theses of the 3rd International after Lenin's death. The key concepts, like "hegemony", and analyses of the specific national/social formation are outlined, prefiguring their elaboration in the Prison Notebooks.

Gramsci's achievement as a theoretician of the communist movement cannot be fully grasped unless it is understood as a continuous contestation with the Marxism of the 2nd International. Lenin had fought a similar battle, but Gramsci was to fight it within the 3rd International itself, and nowhere was this more urgent than in relation to fascism.

Analyses of fascism began in the 3rd International with its IV congress, in the light of theories of capitalist collapse, which reduced the conjunctures of class conflict to epiphenomena of the 'economic' crisis. Theories of the crisis turned what Marx understood as "tendencies" into laws: hence the fall in the rate of profit was seen as irreversible, rather than a tendency that was subject to counter-tendencies, such as an increase in the rate of exploitation. There was therefore no comprehension of the way politics could act back on the "economic", how the relations of production could be re-constructed by a 'revolution' within regime of the factory (Fordism) or by the state 'nationalizing' the workforce to sell to the capitalists (fascism). The operation of this law was within the overarching contradiction that developed between the forces of and relations to production. At the IV congress of the International the 'Resolution on Tactics' contained this statement:

"...Capitalism, having accomplished its mission of developing the productive forces, has fallen into contradiction with the needs of historical evolution... The collapse of capitalism is inevitable". 40)

And when the 3rd International revised its analysis to account for an intermediate periodization of the crisis it was in the notion of "stabilization", understood in a limited economic sense; this was the case at the IV congress.

This deterministic analysis of the crisis of capitalism entailed a series

of erroneous analyses of fascism. Fascism was initially underestimated
cf. - the Rome theses of 1922 which referred to it as

"in reality, a result of the
ineluctable development of the
capitalist regime",

and then Bordiga at the V congress, as simply

"a change of the government
personnel of the bourgeoisie". 41)

Poulantzas proposes that the 3rd International's analyses stemmed from a
linear/evolutionist conception of history which prevented it from understanding
conjunctures and hence 'periodizing', except in terms of stages. The variant
theses on fascism as the phenomenon generated by the big landowners in
'backward' countries, and fascism as the 'last card' of 'advanced' monopoly
capital both derive from this conception.

In the PCI, the first thesis, launched by Zinoviev at the 4th congress, was
initially adopted by Gramsci, whilst the latter thesis, which subsequently
dominated the Comintern, was held by Bordiga and the majority of the PCI.
However, the inadequacy of both positions lay in their failure to grasp the
specific and mobile set of relations between the two fundamental classes,
their class fractions and the intermediate strata as a contradictory unity.
The fascist State was seen as the 'instrument' of monopoly capital, and only
in its restricted function as an arm of violent repression (Bordiga
assimilated this violent aspect of fascism to the 'white guards' of earlier
years in Russia and Germany).

Gramsci's writings on fascism sometimes show affinities with the dominant
interpretations of the 3rd International. From the founding of the PCI he
did not disagree with Bordiga until late 1923. 42) In April 1921 Gramsci
wrote in Rassegna Comunista

'If the bourgeoisie goes to the limits
and through the white reaction destroys
social democracy, it will be preparing...
the best conditions of its rapid defeat
by the revolution...perhaps when the
fascist gladiator will have just felled
his adversary, his patron, the
bourgeois State, will stop the delivery
of the coup de grace with a nod, and
extend a hand to the fallen...'

Spriano calls this the classic formulation of the theory of fascism :
fascism as the inevitable prelude to revolution and as the mere instrument
in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Again in a letter to Zino Zini from
Vienna in April 1924 -

'Fascism has truly created a permanently
revolutionary situation as Tsarism did
in Russia'.

If this is a crude and early example of Gramsci's 'determinism', it is also found in his analyses of fascism after the Matteotti affair when he was leader of the PCI. In his 'Examination of the Italian Situation' 43) given to the Central Committee in early August 1926, Gramsci suggests that another economic crisis is more than likely to bring a democratic republican coalition to power. Given that the Matteotti crisis had put Mussolini on the spot, Gramsci's analysis is understandable. However, his examination refers to the contradictions developing in the Farinacci wing of fascism between the petty bourgeoisie and the agrarian/industrial bloc purely in economic terms, and tends to assume that the political developments will be a reflex of this. Hence, Gramsci foresees either an immediate passage to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or, more likely, a democratic phase, and not the possibility of the strengthening of the State through an intensified ideological and political offensive on the part of monopoly capital.

In conditions of massive repression revolutionary militants tended towards what Gramsci spoke of as the religious appropriation of Marxism, and Gramsci himself was not immune to that belief that history was on the side of the revolution. (He wrote later in the Prison Notebooks: 'When you don't have the initiative in the struggle, and the struggle itself becomes identified with a series of defeats, mechanical determinism becomes a tremendous force of moral resistance'.) However Gramsci did not get into a rut, unlike Bordiga who clung to his original thesis that fascism represented a simple continuity with previous bourgeois governments. At the Congress of Lyons Bordiga maintained:

'...in Fascism and in today's general bourgeois counter-offensive we don't see a break in the politics of the Italian State, but the natural continuation of a method that was applied before and after the war - that of 'democracy'. We don't believe in the antithesis between democracy and fascism any more than we have believed in the antithesis between democracy and militarism'.

Gramsci contested this reductionist view with a mind to the dialectical relation of theory and practice and to future political strategy: he replied that fascism imposed a situation in which the Party had to organize itself, whereas democracy allowed the Party to organize the masses for insurrection.

Gramsci's analyses of fascism developed in relation to the movement itself. His caricature of it as the revelation of the 'cruelty and absence of human feeling of the Italian people' 44) in April 1921 was a polemical response which saw only mindless violence. By the summer he pointed to two fascisms

in an article with that title - an urban fascism based on the petty bourgeoisie and ex-combattents with a parliamentary leadership, and a rural fascism consisting of the armed gangs of the latifundists. 45) The parallel he drew was with the Kapp putsch and the Hungarian reaction, respectively the movements of ex-soldiers and the peasantry. 46) It was his idea of the dominance of the rural interests that brought him close to Zinoviev's analyses, but by 1926 Gramsci gave equal weight to industrial capital. What emerges from all these analyses is that for Gramsci fascism could not be understood as bearing a one-to-one relationship with a class or with the State. As a movement it had formed autonomously from the State, and its activists were not agents of monopoly capital, but petty bourgeois elements who pressed for their own specific interests, whilst objectively creating the conditions for the expansion of big capital by subjugating the working class. 47) Gramsci recognized the especial importance of the petty bourgeoisie in fascism without falling into the social democratic theories which made it the "third class". The characteristic fact of fascism consists of having succeeded in constituting a mass organization of the petty bourgeoisie. "The originality of fascism consists in having found the form of organization adequate for a social class that has always been incapable of having a framework and military ideology - this form is the militia". 48) Gramsci mocks the ideology that the petty bourgeois did have as a farcical version of French romanticism. 49)

Once installed in power, wrote Gramsci, fascism "actuates the programme of the plutocracy" and the contradictions within the regime are progressively heightened. 50)

Although Gramsci differentiated fascism from previous programmes of conservatism because of its "diverse mode of conceiving the process of the unification of reactionary forces" through the formation of "organic unity of all the forces of the bourgeoisie" which organized the party, government and State as a single centralized unit in the place of "tactical agreements and compromises", all too little is said in his writings about the coherence of the forces in operation. Gramsci tended to refer to the State as about to collapse because of internal economic contradictions, and the forces of the working class and the peasantry about to combine because of the hegemonic politics of the PCI. The State and hegemony are thought separately. It is not until the Prison Notebooks that the two are thought together as integral to the relation of the two classes and their class fractions.

Whilst an implicit notion of the conquest of "hegemony" appears in the Ordine Nuovo writings as realizable through the councils, subsequently its realization was assigned to the political party (initially the 'reformed'

PSI and then the PCI). This change was not purely organizational. It represented a reassessment of the whole experience of the Russian revolution which was formalized in the 21 conditions of membership to the 3rd International in 1921; it also represented Gramsci's initial subordination to Bordiga's particular interpretation of the Bolshevik model. But the problem of winning hegemony was compounded, not resolved, by the founding of the politics of the PCI. The winning over of the maximalists was postponed for several years and the politics of the PCI were based on continuous differentiation from the left of the PSI, who were regarded by Bordiga as greater enemies than the fascists 51). When Gramsci began to organize an alternative leadership within the PCI it was on the basis of Lenin's united front tactic which the PCI under Bordiga had continually opposed. It was from the conceptions behind the united front tactic that Gramsci later developed his concept of hegemony. In the Prison Notebooks Gramsci acknowledges his debt

"it is here (in the "theoretical-practical principle of hegemony") that Ilich's greatest theoretical contribution to the philosophy of praxis should be sought". 52)

Underlying Gramsci's adoption of the 'united front' was Lenin's understanding of the non-reflexive relationship of the economic and ideological levels, and hence the need for long-term work by revolutionaries in winning away the masses from social-democracy. Gramsci accused Bordiga of making a false distinction between the Russian and European situations:

"in these latter countries the historical mechanism functions according to all the Marxist rules, whereas the determinism is lacking in Russia, and hence the pressing task must be to organize a party in itself and for itself",

and proposed an alternative analysis. In this he wrote that the development of capitalism in the West had enabled the formation of a labour aristocracy, TU bureaucracy and social democratic parties that had never really occurred in Russia, and that the tactic of the united front was a crucial way of breaking the hold of reformism. 53)

Moreover Gramsci held to Lenin's conception of the united front as combining economic and political struggles under the command of politics. The Comintern broke from this conception by returning to the same organizational structures as social democracy - that is to the party (the political organization) and the TU (the economic organization of the masses), - and attempting to give the party a 'mass base' through in the unions (ie. 'mass work' = economic) either via party fractions or, post 1928, via Red Unions 54)

Bordiga also adhered to this radical distinction between the fields of political and economic intervention, as he had done during the 'biennio rosso'; and the PCI consequently refused to participate in the formation of the Arditi del Popolo 55), the only viable means of counter-attack, which was formed by ex-combattants of the Left. He rejected participation in any military organization that was not controlled by the PCI. The one aspect of the united front that Bordiga was prepared to accept was in economic struggles where Party members worked with the rank and file members of the PSI, but his conception of that work was limited to the economic, to trade union activity.

Gramsci's own leadership of the Party, although based on the united front tactic, showed some confusion. At the height of the Matteotti crisis, the PCI programme for common action with the parties of the Aventine opposition contained a call for the formation of a constituent assembly based on committees of workers and peasants. As Trotsky pointed out at the time, this implied the subordination of workers' organizations to a bourgeois institution on the fall of the fascist regime, instead of the autonomous organization of the working class through its own organs. However his strategy as leader of the PCI is certainly not assimilable to the Popular Fronts' of the 1930's when alliances with bourgeois democratic parties prevented the development of an autonomous revolutionary politics that worked for hegemony over the anti-fascist movement. He opposed working with the Liberal Party in an article in *Unità* in October 1926 on the grounds that class struggle should not deviate from the struggle against capitalism in order to purge Italian society of its 'secondary' contradictions, its *vecchiumi*'. 56)

The problem of the relationship between the working class and the poor peasantry was crucial to Gramsci's thinking on the united front, and in his essay 'On the Southern Question' of 1926 he goes into a discussion of the formation of intellectuals and the dissemination of ideology among these classes. The outline of Gramsci's future elaboration of the concept of hegemony as the class rising out of its sectional and corporate consciousness to lead the peasant masses is visible. 57) The essay challenges the adequacy of the term 'alliance' to account for the hierarchy of relations between classes; because of its everyday use as the joining of material interests (in the 'dirty Jewish' sense), and stresses the power of ideology in cementing the social system. It is here that Gramsci introduces the 'intellectual' 58) as the creator and reproducer of ideologies. Prior to this, Gramsci had thought the problem of 'intellectuals' in a prescriptive way, in *Ordine Nuovo* and then in the PCI education programme; (59)

and he was concerned to create a nucleus of workers with the skills of a ruling class. Now, Gramsci retains this prescription, but goes on to develop a concept of the intellectual in the whole field of class relations with extensive and perceptive reference to the intellectuals of different strata and classes. Gramsci then posed a strategy for the Party that aimed not only at winning the leadership of the peasantry, but of the intellectuals that helped keep it in subjection;

'(The Party) will succeed to a more or less large extent in this obligatory task (of destroying the agrarian bloc) according to its capacity to break up the intellectual bloc which forms the flexible but resistant armour of the agrarian bloc'. 60)

Unfortunately Gramsci never completed this piece of writing; nevertheless it marks a shift in his thinking towards a reassessment of the problem of ideologies.

Not only did the poor peasantry pre-occupy Gramsci's thinking because of its seeming impenetrability to a new ideology, reinforced by its incapability of producing its own 'intellectuals'. In the Notebooks Gramsci begins to tackle this problem in his analyses of commonsense which use material largely relating to the rural world.

STATE AND HEGEMONY IN THE PRISON NOTEBOOKS

It is quite right to point out, as John Merrington does, that the Prison Notebooks should not be divided from Gramsci's earlier writings because he conceived of them as a continued engagement with problems of revolutionary practice. 61) This is perhaps manifested in the 'note form', indicating Gramsci's predominantly journalistic conciseness, and his love of polemical encounters with even the most bankrupt fascist reviews and mindless anthologies of "folklorists".

In the Notebooks Gramsci reconsiders the problems that faced him as a militant and leader of the PCd'I in the 1920's, but from the lonely vantage-point of defeat and isolation. He had now to explain the durability of bourgeois regimes that survived the economic crises that he had previously predicted would rupture the internal unity of the ruling bloc and destroy the material bases of reformism. The bourgeoisie had shown a remarkable ability to mobilise rapidly and reconsolidate their rule through the State structure, whilst the workers' movement vainly tried to emulate the October revolution in very different conditions. Through a series of discourses on the Italian historical experience and on the political theories of Machiavelli and Croce, Gramsci obliquely addressed himself anew to the debates of the Comintern.

The concept of the State as a military and bureaucratic apparatus, which he had shared with the other leaders of the 3rd International from Lenin to Stalin, was no longer sufficient to explain the continuity of bourgeois governments either in fascist Italy or in the liberal democracies. The concept of 'hegemony' was produced by Gramsci precisely to analyse this problem. It is not new to his own writings; it is implicit in his Ordine Nuovo writings and in a more developed form in his article on the 'Southern Question', and, as Anderson amply demonstrates, 'hegemony' was a key term in the theories of the revolutionary movement in Russia from the 1890's and in the 3rd International. 62) But in the Notebooks, Gramsci formulates 'hegemony' with bourgeois rule as its specific object, and, moreover, that rule understood in the broadest sense of cultural and ideological rather than narrowly political sense.

The most significant continuity in Gramsci's application of hegemony is in relation to the creation of workers' power. The idea of the factory council as the 'school' for the training of the workers as the new ruling class is taken on by the revolutionary party, and the 'united front' theory of the 1920's, reappears in the Notebooks in the form of the Jacobin alliance of bourgeoisie and peasantry.

The interpretation of hegemony as working class dominance in civil society as the pre-condition to the 'seizure of power' (hegemony itself being the real seizure of power) has been a major source of reformist readings of Gramsci. Nowhere has this been more the case than inside the PCI. Luciano Gruppi, representative of the main stream of the party, interprets hegemony in the sense of the transformation of the State apparatus through parliament. According to him, Gramsci 'enriches the Leninist concept of the State insofar as the State is no longer considered only as a machine to be destroyed', and without this concept 'the Italian road to socialism would be inexplicable....In fact the whole strategy and tactics of alliance would collapse..' 63)

The space for this reformist reading of Gramsci is found in the texts. Gramsci tends to prescribe bourgeois models of hegemony for the working class. The Reformation and the Enlightenment are posited as classic examples of totalising intellectual and cultural movements that destroyed the dominant value systems of the old ruling class from within. They are paradigms of bourgeois achievement that the Italian bourgeoisie hopelessly fell short of, and of which only Marxism is capable of paralleling. Such a model, however, leads to a false analogy that is essentially idealist because the working class is deprived of economic power in the capitalist system, unlike the bourgeoisie within feudal society, and hence is incapable of imposing its

hegemony. Even after the seizure of political power, the hegemony of bourgeois ideology lives on and has to be systematically rooted out through a revolutionization of the culture itself.

Poulantzas counterposes the positions of Gramsci and Lenin on the question of hegemony :

"Lenin stressed the necessity for the autonomous ideological organization of the working class, but only as one of the aspects of its political organization. 1) ideological organization has nothing to do with the proletariat's conquest of ideological domination before the taking of power, and 2) ideological organization is even systematically conceived as being directed against the dominant ideology: even after the conquest of power this dominant ideology continues for a long time to remain bourgeois and petty bourgeois". 64)

However, the concept of hegemony in the Notebooks is used primarily to explain the ways in which the ruling bloc maintains its power. The concept of hegemony enables Gramsci to re-think the capitalist State in terms which break not only from many of his earlier formulations, but those of the 3rd International and of Lenin himself. These formulations centred on the State apparatuses of domination and repression, and tended to reduce the State to being an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie. For Gramsci this model only held for ancient and medieval forms of government which comprised of a mechanical bloc, whilst

"the modern State substitutes for the mechanical bloc of social groups their subordination to the active hegemony of the directive and dominant group". 65)

In the modern State the ruling classes exercise power through the combination of hegemony and dominance, and a typology of regimes can be constructed according to the relative use of hegemony or repression in the maintenance of power.

Hegemony, however, cannot now be equated with ideology, and with the propagation of ideas, as was the case in his essay 'Socialism and Culture'. Gramsci in the Notebooks includes the economic in the process of hegemonizing.

"Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes...that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic-corporate kind. But there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the

decisive nucleus of economic activity" 66)

Hegemony is precisely articulated through a combination of relations, economic, political and ideological, but it is characterized by the subordination of economic interests both on the part of the exploiters and the exploited. The hegemony of a class is maintained through constraining the dominated classes to sectional and corporate forms of consciousness based on immediate economic interests. 67) At the same time these forms of consciousness are not, therefore, purely illusory: they relate to a material relationship between the classes. But, of course, hegemony is exercised by the ruling bloc in accordance with "the essential", that is the reproduction and expansion of the capitalist mode of production.

The ideological component of hegemony is understood by Gramsci in an exacter sense than "world views" or 'systems of thought'. 'Systems of thought' structure the ideological domain, but they do so in a problematic relation both to the economic, which, following Engels, he sees as determinant only in the last instance, and to the level of ideologies where "men become conscious of conflicts in the world of the economy". 68)

Consciousness is not a simple reflex of the economic, for "popular beliefs" and similar ideas are themselves "material forces", and moreover, consciousness is by no means uniform. Gramsci accepts that the 'systems of thought' of the dominant class act on the subordinate class, but this is far from a process of saturation or monolithic control. 69) Rather hegemonic ideas set external limits to the bounds of popular thinking without controlling its internal elaborations -

"...limits the original thought of the popular masses in a negative direction, without having the positive effect of a vital ferment of interior transformation of what the masses think in an embryonic and chaotic form about the world".

Hegemony is nonetheless exercised because popular thought is restricted to forms that are equivalent to sectional and corporate consciousness in the economic field, in that they are partial and parochial. But whereas, sectional and corporate consciousness can be understood as representations of lived experience, as "men's real relation to their conditions of existence in the form of an imaginary relation" 70) many forms of popular consciousness (and here Gramsci is thinking particularly of folklore) include sedimentations of "prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level". This peculiar form of ideology is more like an imaginary relation to an imaginary world of the past; it is "fossilized and anachronistic". 71)

Gramsci conceives of ideologies not as ideas interacting autonomously, nor

as simple expressions of social classes, but as organized and reproduced by various agencies and institutions, with varying degrees of relative autonomy from the classes; his premise for this is that 'every man is a philosopher'; even in Fordized factories the worker cannot be reduced to a "gorilla" whatever the phantasies of Frederick Taylor. However, Gramsci rejects out of hand the classical economists' idea of individuality and freedom of thought:

"In acquiring one's conception of the world one always belongs to a particular grouping which is that of all social elements which share the same mode of thinking and acting. We are all conformists of some conformism or other". 72)

What interests him is the process of organization and dissemination of ideas, and how precisely ideas become material forces. The cellular concepts Gramsci introduces to analyse these movements of ideologies are the "traditional" and 'organic intellectual', which he relates to the organizations of the party, church, State and so on. The two types of intellectual are well defined by Gramsci's English translators -

"In the first place there are the 'traditional' professional intellectuals, literary, scientific and so on, whose position in the interests of society has a certain inter-class aura about it but derives ultimately from past and present class relations and conceals an attachment to various historical class formations. Secondly, there are the 'organic' intellectuals the thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class. These are, distinguished less by their profession, which may be any activity characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong". 73)

Out of the Prison Notebooks it is possible to construct sets of relations between groupings of 'traditional' or 'organic' intellectuals and the classes of society. Gramsci writes specifically of the idealist philosophers, the Catholic Church, the revolutionary party, and the State, and their role in the maintenance of creation of hegemony over the classes.

On idealist philosophers Gramsci's formulations are somewhat contradictory, he describes Benedetto Croce as

"a kind of lay pope and an extremely efficient instrument of hegemony, even if at times he may find himself in disagreement with one government or another". 74)

Yet elsewhere he says the ideas of Croce have probably never been heard of by the mass of the population, let alone understood by it, 75) and that this failure to create a national-popular ideology is characteristic of Italian bourgeoisie from the Renaissance onwards. Perhaps this disparity can be resolved by proposing that the hegemony of Croce was in relation to the other philosophies current among the class fractions of the ruling bloc, but Gramsci does not do so. The important point is that idealistic philosophy is propagated by 'Traditional' intellectuals who sustain the illusion that ideas are completely autonomous from class practices, and that both its strength and extreme limitations flow from this conception. More interesting is Gramsci's analysis of the ideological functioning of the Catholic Church. The church is a sort of collective 'traditional' intellectual, and yet it exercises a hegemony over the masses. It does this not because of its power to constitute and develop an intellectual order; on the contrary it does so because religion is 'an element of fragmented common sense', 76) and the organization of religion holds back both its intellectuals (priests, theologians) and its congregations from philosophical enquiry. Gramsci writes:

"The strength of religions, and of the Catholic church in particular, has lain, and still lies, in the fact that they feel very strongly the need for the doctrinal unity of the whole mass of the faithful and strive to ensure that the higher intellectual stratum does not get separated from the lower". 77)

The church maintains hegemony by fostering disfunctional modes of thought, and keeping commonsense in its state as an aggregate collection of ideas. It deliberately blocks the potential within commonsense to raise to levels of ordered thought and self-activity by sustaining a fatalistic conception of the world, which is implicit in a consciousness that is haunted by the dead 'knowledges' of the past. And more than this, the Church structures a whole world of practices; it forms religion as a 'cultural movement', an ideology which "is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life". 78) Gramsci's conception of ideology here included not only the everyday thinking but the complex of feelings and sentiments, which the Church mobilizes through the use of liturgy and the cults, and despite his insistence on the superior power of 'systems of thought', he still concludes that "in the masses as such, philosophy can only be experienced as faith". 79)

In considering the role of the revolutionary party, the collective 'organic' intellectual, the 'philosophy of praxis' (Marxism), as a creator of hegemony,

Gramsci compares its functioning to the Church. Religion, for him stands as the paradigm of a hegemonic form of ideology, and the achievements of the 'new order' have to be measured against it. Socialism can be formed as a total social system if the superstructures are entirely reformed, and if religion and the Church are abolished (that is rooted from men's minds). Whereas the Church serves to 'cement and unify' the ideological unity of the social bloc by preventing the masses from achieving systematised thought, the 'philosophy of praxis' opens the proletarian road to 'critical' understanding.

'The philosophy of praxis does not tend to leave the 'simple' in their primitive philosophy of common sense, but rather to lead them to higher conceptions of life.' 80)

The 'philosophy of praxis', however, is not totally antithetical to common sense, because commonsense is itself contradictory. It is true that common sense as a progressive force (as in the 17th and 18th centuries when it was part of the philosophical battle against 'metaphysical mumbo-jumbo') is seen by Gramsci to have exhausted most of its subversive potential, yet within the fragmentary consciousness are found elements of 'good sense. The starting point for the 'Philosophy of praxis' is precisely from within commonsense:

'It is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's lives, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity'. 81)

The 'making critical' for Gramsci means developing an historical class consciousness. In opposition to commonsense that is characterized by total subjection to history, to fatalism and to a notion of the social order as 'natural', 'critical' consciousness understands society as itself a product of history, the sum of individual human activities, and hence as open to further transformations, Gramsci radically interprets 'historical materialism' as an 'absolute historicism' :

'It has been forgotten that in the case of a very common expression one should put the accent on the first term, 'historical', and not on the second, which is of metaphysical origin'. 82)

Yet Gramsci is never in doubt about the severe limitations of commonsense. His respect for Sancho Panza is mixed with the scepticism of an intellectual who thought in international terms. A primary stage in the creation of hegemony by the revolutionary party is seen to be the 'nationalization' of

culture, the teaching of a national language in place of the dialect, which forms the linguistic base for the politics of 'campanilismo'. In effect the scepticism goes further. Gramsci even doubts whether the masses are capable of determining their activity through rational choices. The Party has to shift faith away from the Church towards the social class by exercising its moral authority, and by appealing to class solidarity. Meanwhile the Party itself contains an intellectual elite that must develop the theoretical knowledge that is the prerequisite for correct political action, and which cannot spring from the masses. Within the Party itself, then, there is ideological hegemony being exercised. The necessity for this is indicated by the capacity of commonsense to suck Marxism into its boggy depths.

Gramsci points out:

'the philosophy of praxis has itself become 'prejudice' and 'superstition' as it is assimilated to popular notions of materialism'. 83)

Gramsci's analysis of the function of the Marxist party in the transformation of working class consciousness has, therefore, a certain ambiguity. It breaks from the early Leninist model in which revolutionary theory and practice are embodied in the party. Theory consciousness is injected from outside the class by the intelligentsia. The notion of 'good sense' as the spontaneously revolutionary thinking of the proletariat is profoundly democratic to the point of dissolving Marxism as a science and making it the systematiser of class consciousness. On the other hand, Gramsci continually reaffirms the leadership role of the party which involves a charismatic function of winning the loyalty and faith of the masses. His regular use of military metaphors and his insistence on discipline and organization reveal a preoccupation with unity and centralization. These democratic and centralist tendencies do not need to be in contradiction, but there are extreme dangers in a lack of clarity on the issue. The problem needs to be articulated in the relations of party, mass working class organizations and the working class and poor peasantry so that democracy is not an abstraction. Gramsci largely fails to come to terms with the problem. As a revolutionary leader in the 1920's he oscillated between emotional sympathy for the Left Opposition based on a recognition of its past contribution to the revolutionary movement, and an acceptance of the majority Stalinist line of the Comintern. In practice he opted for a conception of unity and discipline which identified the interests of the Soviet State and the 3rd International, and actively repressed the Bordigist opposition within the PCd'I as 'nationalist' and 'factionalist' 84) What this entailed was the exclusion of dissent from within the party. It could

be said that in his political isolation in prison Gramsci was the victim of his own politics.

Gramsci's politics in the 1920's cannot, of course, be automatically projected forward to the Notebooks as an explanatory key. However the problem of the relations between party and membership and party and class is not tackled adequately, because they are not clearly distinguished.

The consequence of the elision is that the form of democratic centralism which involves rights of internal opposition, full political discussion before decision-making etc., is not present in the Notebooks.

In the Prison Notebooks, it is in relation to the State rather than to the revolutionary party that Gramsci develops his concept of hegemony. It is through the State and political parties and press in civil society, that the ruling class in capitalist society organizes its hegemony. The Church is but one of the organs of civil society used towards this end, and one which figures less in the Notebooks than those created in the process of the bourgeois revolution.

The Church's propagation of religious ideology is largely negative vis a vis the masses since it attempts to keep their minds stagnant, and as such its operations conform better to a feudal order even though it remains a vital ideological force. Although the capitalist State can take advantage of the fatalism of commonsense thinking, on the other hand, it also has a positive, dynamic conception of hegemony in that it works at all levels to bring the masses into conformity with the needs of expanding forces of production. 85) It is primarily in this field that Gramsci formulates the concept of hegemony.

A key passage in the Notebooks highlights the role of apparatuses of the State in organising hegemony:

'Every State is ethical in as much as as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense : but in reality, a multitude of other so-called "private" initiatives and activities tend to the same end - initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes' 86)

Here Gramsci's analysis of the State makes an important shift away from the

current Marxist tradition which identified the State with the military-bureaucratic apparatuses, and examines the 'normal' functioning of the State as the means of organization and diffusion of the dominant ideology. In doing so he does not produce a simple binary model, repressive and ideological apparatuses, but carefully notes the ideological functions of the repressive organs. Moreover, he distinguishes between the State itself and private bodies, whilst recognising that the bourgeoisie operates through both 'towards the same ends'.

At the same time, Gramsci calls into question classical political economy's distinction between the spheres of 'State' and 'civil society'. The pregnant 'so-called' indicates that Gramsci saw the division as real, since the different organs of State and civil society corresponded to specific modes of hegemonic activity (these are developed by him with particular reference to intellectuals); but that both are fundamentally united in their function of maintaining class rule, and that the abstraction of civil society as an aggregate of individuals disguises the class structure of society. Elsewhere in the Notebooks the separation of State and civil society is openly rejected :

'It is asserted that economic activity belongs to civil society, and that the State must not intervene to regulate it. But since in actual reality civil society and the State are one and the same, it must be clear that laissez-faire itself is a form of State regulation, introduced and maintained by legislative means'. 87)

However, as Anderson has demonstrated with great lucidity, the Notebooks include a variety of contradictory formulations both on the relations of State and civil society and of the terms themselves. Despite Gramsci's polemical refutations of the concept of civil society, Anderson maintains that the dominant tendency is for its retention, but that three different models of State-civil society can be constructed out of Gramsci : 88)

- a) The predominance of civil society and the virtual marginalization of the State
- b) An equilibrium between State and civil society
- c) State as enveloping and absorbing civil society.

However, in Gramsci's analyses rather than in his explicit formulations, the distinction State-civil society is always held. This enables him to distinguish regimes of the capitalist form of State.

Whereas Bordiga assimilated the fascist and democratic regimes, content to describe them as capitalist, and the social democrats saw the regimes as polar opposites in every sense, Gramsci developed the means for analysing the specific articulation not only of the fundamental classes but their

fractions that gave rise to the different regimes. Within the authoritarian type of State he distinguishes Bonapartism from fascism as a 'catastrophic equilibrium' between class fractions as opposed to between fundamental classes as in the latter. Each regime is characterized by a different relation between the State and civil society; for example, the fascist regime by the massive intervention of the State that attempts to eliminate civil society as a relatively autonomous sphere, and the democratic State that at any rate formally respects the freedom of movement of private bodies in civil society.

Gramsci points out that the class nature of a State is never simply deducible from the class composition of its functionaries, but via an analysis of the relation of class forces within the State itself and between the State and civil society. Thus the fascist regime owes its shape to the direct political intervention of the petit bourgeoisie, but it functions according to the interests of the 'agrarian - industrial' bloc. In the case of 19th century England, the aristocratic 'caste' held the key posts in the army and civil society. 89)

The balance of forces between the classes and class fractions is established throughout the mechanisms of domination and hegemony through the State and civil society. Gramsci generally couples domination with the State apparatuses and hegemony with the organs of civil society, but never in any absolute sense. The methods of class rule have always to be verified according to the specific historical situation. The normal means with which the bourgeoisie organizes its rule are the educational and legal apparatuses and private bodies in civil society, but they are ultimately backed by the coercive power of the State. In moments of crisis it is the coercive apparatuses that predominate :

'These situations of conflict between 'represented and representatives' reverberate out from the terrain of the parties (the party organizations properly speaking, the parliamentary electoral field, newspapers) throughout the State organism, reinforcing the relative power of the bureaucracy (civil and military)and generally all bodies relatively independent of the fluctuations of public opinion.' 90)

Hegemony is not uniform within the State itself. 91) Whilst the coercive apparatuses and the bureaucracy are firmly under the control and supervision of the bourgeoisie, and the least open to outside intervention (the permanent structures with their own esprit de corps), parliament itself has essentially the hegemonic functions of articulating consensus, and is therefore more sensitive to the effects of class struggle. This very persistence of

contradictory elements within the State allows for a political strategy designed to heighten the contradictions, and make parliament itself a part of the battleground, but always as the platform for the struggles in the workplace and civil society. Gramsci's perspective was the overthrow of the institutions of bourgeois democracy because he understood them to be irrevocably part of the capitalist order. For him, unlike his latter-day followers in the European Communist Parties, the idea of the working class taking over the existing structures was the fundamental characteristic of the social-democratic parties that had made it necessary in the first place to form communist parties in the West as in the East. 92)

CONCLUSION

The development of Gramsci's thinking on the problems of the State and hegemony is in no sense a unilinear progression. It is a process involving not only the acquisition of new insights and the production of new concepts, but the loss of certain critical elements. A reassessment of Gramsci's contribution to Marxism must re-establish the place of the factory councils in the politico-theoretical heritage of the revolutionary workers' movement in the light of their defeat. Clearly the limitations of the Ordine Nuovo conception of the councils lay in a schematic and teleological idea of class consciousness that identified the factory as the determinant area of class struggle, and hence treated the State as an epiphenomenon of this reality. However, the shift of Gramsci's attention to the problem of bourgeois class rule through the State and to the party as the form of working class organization for the political overthrow of that rule meant that he ceased to see the need for a specific organ of class struggle capable of destroying and replacing the economic and political hegemony of the capitalists in the factory.

However, the experience of defeat that led most of Gramsci's generation to find refuge in myths and dogma, and to develop elitist ideas of the revolutionary party that showed a loss of faith in the possibility of winning the masses to socialism, led Gramsci himself to a profound reconsideration of the mechanisms of class rule. In the place of the various theories that explained the continued survival of the bourgeoisie in terms of their control of the bureaucratic/military apparatuses and of their deceptive cunning (bribery and corruption of a section of the working class), he reinterpreted these elements of analysis in the concepts of domination and hegemony. They ceased to be 'instrumental' and became operable according to the specific relation of class forces. Moreover, Gramsci reworked the global terms of Marxist analysis that had become

hackneyed jargon and introduced his own elaboration of them. Class, ideology and the State, to take three, were considered in all their complexity of stratification and articulation. The concept of hegemony itself was produced by Gramsci to conceive class relations as an ensemble of mechanisms of economic, ideological and political domination and subordination, that, taken independently, had led to the crudely idealist or determinist thinking that he himself had been responsible for in the past. An examination of Gramsci's ideas over the timespan of 33 years reveals the way in which at an early date they were full of important insights that he worked up later into theoretical concepts, but it also shows the radical nature of his break with his own past and with the dominant thinking in the contemporary communist movement.

COMMENTS ON ANDERSON'S 'THE ANTINOMIES OF ANTONIO GRAMSCI'

After the publication of NLR 100 any readings of Gramsci on the problems of State and Hegemony have to confront the seminal contribution of Perry Anderson's 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci'. Anderson's piece combines extensive scholarship with a precise political intervention. He locates Gramsci's Notebooks in the debates of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals (from the exchanges of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks through to the struggle of the Trotskyist and Bordigist oppositions), thereby stripping bare the myths of 'originality' that have enclosed his writings. The ciphers and blurred imprints of the historical moment are decoded in masterly fashion to reveal the meaning of Gramsci's reflections in his own time. Anderson has carefully followed his own dictum 'a scientific solution.. is only possible through historical enquiry'. But Anderson locates Gramsci's work historically in order to critically reappropriate its insights for contemporary political analysis.

'The Antinomies' is directed against reformist readings propagated by Eurocommunist intellectuals. It is not, however, a counter-reading that unearths appropriately revolutionary statements made by Gramsci to prove that he believed in revolutionary insurrection. Anderson registers two vital responses to the Eurocommunist interpretation of Gramsci. Firstly that the texts themselves leave openings for a reformist interpretation. For example, Gramsci's formulation of the predominance of civil society in the West over the State is cited as the inspiration of the 'Illusions of Left Social Democracy' (the illusion that the central problem was the 'conditioning' of the masses before the elections, and hence that the adequate strategy was winning hegemony in civil society by de-conditioning educative activity). 93). Secondly, Anderson recognizes in the spread and resilience of democratic

ideology espoused by the European Communist Parties the overarching function of parliamentary democracy itself in the maintenance of bourgeois hegemony. In other words, Anderson proposes a reading of Gramsci as a starting point for a re-examination of the problem of parliamentary democracy as the paradigmatic form of bourgeois rule in advanced capitalist countries not as an academic exercise, but because the mass adhesion to the Eurocommunist parties has made it a key problem for Marxists. Those parties gain their strength through their capacity to interpret the working class's self-recognition in the structures of the capitalist State. That democratic structure is not limited to parliament itself, writes Anderson, but 'the parliamentary state...constitutes the formal framework of all other ideological mechanisms of the ruling class. It provides the general code in which every specific message is transmitted'. Moreover 'the code is all the more powerful because the judicial rights of citizenship are not a mere mirage: on the contrary, the civic freedoms and suffrages of bourgeois democracy are a tangible reality, whose completion was in part the work of the Labour movement itself, and whose loss would be a momentous defeat for the working class.' 94)

Gramsci, according to Anderson, did not grasp the key structuring role of parliamentary democracy, and his analyses of the capitalist state concentrate on its educational and legal institutions.

This assessment is a valid one. When Gramsci examines parliamentary democracy it is in its moment of crisis when the represented no longer recognize the representatives (ie of the crisis of 1919-1921 in Italy after which the parliamentary regime was replaced by the fascist State). The political parties have a much more important role than parliament as organizations that win voluntary support and consensus in Gramsci's writings. It is the moment of the foundation of the State when the party is the formative institution that preoccupies him.

There are, however, inadequacies in Anderson's thesis on the centrality of parliamentary democracy to the construction of consensus in advanced capitalist countries. When he writes of parliament as 'a once great - still potent - historical achievement, the triumph of the ideals of the bourgeois revolution', there is a hint that the 'real attributes of debate and decision' of the political structure have been severely diminished. 95) But Anderson does not suggest how this can be compatible with what he takes to be the durability of popular beliefs in the power of parliament. It is true that Anderson refers such a project to 'historical enquiry', but in his dismissal of Mandel's, admittedly crude, notion of the centrality of technocratic ideology, he reveals a somewhat idealist tendency to fix

parliamentary democracy as the all-embracing representative form of advanced capitalist ideology and institutions. Other ideological formations are treated as secondary anachronisms :

"Naturally, the active ideology of bourgeois ideology coexists and combines in a wide number of fixed forms with much older and less articulated ideological habits and traditions - in particular those of passive resignation to the way of the world and diffidence in any possibility in changing it, generated by differential knowledge and confidence characteristic of any class society'. - 96)

He goes on to argue that these sub-ideologies only have a continued efficacy in as far as they are inserted into an ideology of representative democracy that overarches them.

This analysis has as its axiom that parliamentary democracy is the typical form of capitalist state because it 'presents to men and women their unequal positions in civil society as if they were equal in the State', whereas in all States of prior social formations, political inequality formally affirmed inequality in civil society.

Anderson's thesis is extremely fruitful because it opens up a line of inquiry into the articulation of the mechanisms of bourgeois rule at a series of levels. He does not explicitly refer to Gramsci's fleeting passages on 'commonsense', but clearly his formation 'old and less articulated ideological habits and traditions' is of Gramscian inspiration. Whereas in Gramsci they remain isolated fragments that seek to explain nodes of consciousness of a rural world and their relation to an older form of ecclesiastical domination, Anderson brings them into the orbit of a fully capitalist hegemony. Starting from his formulation, it is possible, for example, to analyse the way in which parliamentary democracy induces passivity, a passivity that is reinforced by the technicization of the functions of the representative.

The problems of Anderson's analysis are twofold. Firstly in his assumption that the ideology of dominance and subordination is a continuity of an essentially non-capitalist ideology, and secondly, in his insistence that democratic ideology is formed through parliament, he ignores the contractual wage relation, the originating point of the myths of equality and freedom.

Starting with the first, Anderson's assertion that the ideology justifying/rationalizing the relation of domination and subordination is essentially pre-capitalist does not deter from the fact that it is also an active

ingredient of bourgeois ideology. As such, it is not simply a hang-over from the past that has been given a pseudo-scientific form, but an intrinsic part of an ideology rooted in capitalist relations of production. One of the characteristics of Political Economy revealed by Marx is its use of 'naturalizing' and 'de-historicizing' categories. The eternalization of categories was also typical of feudal thought in which the hierarchy of social relations was God-given, but Marx does not suggest that bourgeois political economists extended feudal categories. From the 18th to 20th century, civic rights were increasingly dissociated from their basis in property, per se, but the property rights themselves remained as the foundation of the legal system. In feudal law, property was a conditional right, whilst in bourgeois law it is an inalienable right. Ownership of the means of production entails the crucial right of control of labour power. The form of that control was changed from direct political control typical of feudal society to control sanctioned by contract. The labourer has the right of sale of labour power, but once bought, he loses his right of ownership for the given period of the working day.

Anderson's frame of reference is entirely on the contractual nature of that relationship. He ignores the other aspect of that contractual relationship that is under the surface and takes place in the 'hidden abode of production', namely the loss of freedom.

When Marx comments in Capital - 'The leadership of industry is an attribute of capital, just as in feudal times the functions of general and judge, were the attributes of landed property', 97) Anderson's argument seems to be vindicated. However, the colourful images of the capitalist as despot were used by Marx in his polemic against bourgeois hypocrisy, and to describe forms of direct control that were essentially realised in the exquisitely capitalist moment of the real subsumption of labour power in modern industry which abolished the hybrid formations of formal (ie essentially political) control necessary in manufacture.

Machinofacture marks the achievement of fully capitalist relations of production and the take-off point for the ever greater articulation of the division of labour. Marx did not develop an analysis of the ideological effects of the division of labour, but he was clearly aware of its continuous formative and structuring function. He writes :

'It is not the place here, to go on to show how the division of labour seizes upon, not only the economic, but every sphere of society, and everywhere lays the foundations of that all-engrossing system of specializing and sorting men, that development in man of a single faculty at the expense of all other faculties.' 98)

It is true that the dominant political ideology in the West has not been corporatist (ie. the ideology that formalizes the division of labour in terms of political rights of command), and that parliamentary democracy is paradigmatic. However, the ideology of control within the factory is fundamentally capitalist, and has a formidable strength, which is revealed in its tenacity when proposals are made to extend the rights of citizenship into the factory. It is not a residue of former ideologies, but the 'hidden' and necessary complement of parliamentary democracy, and rooted in the ideology of property rights.

The second inadequacy of Anderson's analysis is related to his failure to relate his discourse on parliamentary democracy to its elementary constituent as the typical form of bourgeois rule - the wage contract. 99) As a consequence reformism as trade unionism is grossly underestimated. He gives his reasons for this:

"By comparison (with parliamentary democracy), the economic improvements won by reforms within the framework of the representative State - apparently more material - have typically left less ideological mark on the masses of the West." 100)

He goes on to explain this as the result of the inherent instability of economic improvements: 'its very dynamism is thus potentially destabilising and capable of provoking crises when growth fluctuates and stalls.' By contrast the parliamentary State is more stable.

Anderson is right to attack the determinist notions current on the Left which predict a mortal crisis in reformism as an automatic effect of material cuts in the standard of living. But by simplifying and making a comparison of explanations of reformism (the 'ideological' and the 'material'), Anderson misses the intermediary mechanism of the articulation of reformism at its political and economic levels. Moreover, the 'material component' of which he writes is not just higher wages or social benefits, but the specific forms of class organization and ideology created in the struggle for them. The 'material component' might be an unstable element, but the significance of the trade union as a potent vehicle of class consciousness has an everyday reality which is often highlighted in moments of economic crisis when the material efficacy of the representative party and therefore of parliament as a means of securing economic and even civil rights objectives is also in crisis. The greater responsiveness of the trade union to its membership and its structural position on the boundary of production and the market, places it at the nodal point of the capitalist system. The trade union is at once the interpreter, arbiter and legitimator of the wage relationship which is the defining relationship of capital itself.

The problem, therefore, is to analyse the articulation of parliamentary democracy as the characteristic form of bourgeois hegemony keeping in mind the structures consequent to the decisive division of the economic and the juridico-political which includes the trade union, political parties and parliament. When Anderson footnotes that the completion of bourgeois democracy was 'historically in part the work of the labour movement itself', he gives an indication of the necessity of capturing the nexus of relations, but his own one-sided analysis makes for a fatal weakness vis a vis his reading of Gramsci in the perspective of re-posing the 'united front' as the revolutionary strategy appropriate in the contemporary West. The 'united front' was developed by Lenin, Trotsky and then by Gramsci precisely as the means of overcoming the 2nd International's structure and strategy which remained dominant in the interwar period (and subsequently), namely the division of competences between party and trade union, and the division of corresponding maximal and minimal programmes. Gramsci in Ordine Nuovo and then in the Notebooks wrestled with the problem of breaking with this tradition that he analyses as functional to capital.

Any reconsideration of the 'united front' today has to come to terms with the very same problems that are rearticulated in present day capitalist society. Only a concrete historical materialist analysis will produce a scientific understanding of the contemporary conjuncture, but a starting point is the contradictory relation of the 'stable' ideological and parliament-centred element and the 'unstable material component' of parliamentary democracy. In Britain the current crisis between and within the Labour Party and the trade unions is the terrain on which the 'united front' has to be worked out in theory and practice.

FOOTNOTES

1. In the NLR debate centred on the 'Origins of the Present Crisis' (NLR 23, Jan-Feb 1964), the use of Gramsci has been justly accused of schematism (see E P Thompson's 'Peculiarities of the English', The Socialist Register 1965; and recently Richard Johnson 'Barrington Moore, Perry Anderson and English Social Development', Cultural Studies n9, Birmingham Spring 1976); Anderson refers to E Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital, London 1975, pp 249-50, and E P Thompson, Whigs and Hunters, London 1975, as good examples of a developed use of Gramsci's concepts. A case of a more direct confrontation of the problem of power and culture is Thompson's 'Patrician Society, Plebian Culture' Journal of Social History 1974.

The other side of the coin is the mechanical mobilization of the terms 'corporate and hegemonic' in Martin Jacques' essay, Consequences of the General Strike, ed. J Skelly, London 1976. A brief comparison would be revealing of the way in which the latter author tends to take the passages where Gramsci is most explicit and least subtle. Instead of exploring the complexities of, say, 'corporate culture', it is reduced to Lenin's concept of 'Trade union consciousness'. (Martin Jacques, in fact, writes about "these stages(of consciousness)" as a "useful framework". (pp 375-6))

2. In Italy the debate on Gramsci has a much longer history, but it is a history that reveals more about the politics of Gramsci's interpreters than about Gramsci's theoretical contribution. From the time of Bordiga's opposition to the Leadership of the PCd'I, and Gramsci's postwar canonisation by Togliatti, the Ordine Nuovo writings and Notebooks have been raided and reconstructed from all sides. The dominant interpretation has remained that of the intellectuals of the PCI, and the historiography of the modern period is choked by re-elaborations of Gramsci's schemes. Tendencies in Gramsci's own work, "over-politicization" resulting from a history of parties and a failure to articulate analysis of the 'superstructure' with a structural and conjunctural analysis of the economy, are painfully reproduced. But whereas Gramsci was aware of the limitations imposed on him by imprisonment, his followers accentuate "Jacobinical" traits to write bureaucratic histories.

The anti-Gramscian current originating in Della Volpe's work has probably been more fruitful both in the field of history and

philosophy, and in the political terrain. This current consciously returned to Marx's Capital in an attempt to exorcise the Crocean tradition and to enter European debate from which the "Gramscians" were out of in a provincial limbo. Raniero Panzieri and the collective of 'Quaderni Rossi' "discovered" Marx's Grundrisse and the chapter of Capital on Machinery and Modern Industry, thereby finding a path through theory which combined with a realisation that the whole structure of class composition in Italy was being transformed. In this way, the Gramsci of notes on 'Americanism and Fordism' sprung to life. In the 60's the Ordine Nuovo writings also took on a new significance as the affirmation of workers' autonomy from below.

The renewed interest in early Gramsci was reflected within the Communist Party itself where the left wing represented by figures like Ingrao and Bruno Trentin took up the theme of conciliarism. The debate on Gramsci then saw a series of interpretations which 'proved' the 'continuity' or 'rupture' between Ordine Nuovo and the Notebooks (see M Salvadori 'Gramsci e il PCI : due concezioni di egemonia', Mondo Operaio, Nov. 1976). From a position of total hostility towards Gramsci, the 'New Left', in the process of massive diversification, developed a whole series of analyses varying from Manifesto's championing of Gramsci to continued critical hostility on the part of the founders of Rivista Storica del Socialismo to iconization by some M-L groups. Today the situation is as confused as ever on the New Left, and significantly the open forum issue of Quotidiano Dei Lavoratori (paper of Avanguardia Operaia and PDUP) on 40th anniversary of Gramsci's death, produced a series of conflicting viewpoints. A reading has still to be made that recognised the contradictions within Gramsci instead of simply instrumentalizing his ideas.

3. A Gramsci, 'La Rivoluzione contro il 'Capitale' ', Scritti Politici (Turin 1973) p.131
4. A. Gramsci, 'Socialismo e Cultura', *ibid* pp.68-9
5. A. Gramsci, 'Marinetti rivoluzionario?', Socialismo e Fascismo
6. A. Davidson, 'Gramsci and Lenin, 1917-22', Socialist Register 1974 p.127
7. Gramsci, 'La conquista dello Stato', L'Ordine Nuovo, 12 luglio 1919 (L'Ordine Nuovo, Turin 1955. Henceforth referred to as ON)

8. Gramsci, ON 3rd July 1920 (quoted G Williams, *Proletarian Order*, London 1975 p225)
 9. ON, 'Uno sfacelo ed una genesi', 1 maggio 1919 (ON,1955) p218
 10. Avanti, 29 novembre 1919 (ON) p54
 11. ON, 'Lo sviluppo della rivoluzione', 13 settembre 1919 (ON) p30
 12. ON, 'Sindicalismo e consigli', 8 novembre 1919 (ON) p46
 13. ON, 'Tradizione monarchica', 21 febbraio 1919 (ON) p327
 14. ON, 'ai commissari di reparto delle officine Fiat Centro e Brévetti', 13 settembre 1919 (ON) p34
 15. M Salvadori, 'Gramsci e il Problema Storica della Democrazia', Einaudi, Torino 1970, pp59-60.
 16. V Castronovo, 'Agnelli', Torino 1970, Chapter 3.
 17. A Sofri, 'On workers' delegates (trans)', *Les Temps Modernes* no 335, June 1974
 18. Ibid
 19. ON, 'Lo strumento di lavoro', 14 febbraio 1920 (ON) p83
 20. ON, ibid, p81. Before unqualifiedly casting Gramsci in the role of Dr Ure, it should be made clear that Marx himself in 'Capital' saw not only the destructive and de-humanizing force of technological development, but also its liberatory potential. Gramsci does tend to stress the latter aspect and to attribute the modernization of the labour process to the workers themselves. Thus, in his essay 'Americanism and Fordism', Gramsci writes: 'A careful analysis of Italian history before 1922, or even up to 1926,...must objectively come to the conclusion that it was the workers in fact who brought into being newer and more modern industrial requirements and, in their way, upheld these strenuously'. (Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, London 1971,p292) However, in the same essay, Gramsci is acutely aware of the process of 'breaking up the old psycho-physical nexus of the qualified professional worker' as a brutal transformation.
- A very different perspective on the relationship of the working class to changes in the labour process comes from the work of Italian Marxists like Sergio Bologna. In his view, it is the organized resistance of the workers that the capitalists seek to destroy by re-organizing the labour process; ie. technological

'advances' are carried through in the face of workers' opposition in defence of their skills and the particular labour processes that require them. Bologna has interpreted the council movement in post-First World War Germany in this light (S Bologna : 'Class Composition and the theory of the party at the origins of the council movement'; CSE Pamphlet 1, 1976). It would be very interesting to see a similar analysis made of the council movement in Italy. Unfortunately Gramsci seems to overlook the particular sectional differences in the working class, and perhaps underestimates the artisanal nature of the engineering industry in this period.

21. ON, 'Lo strumento di lavoro', 14 febbraio 1920 (ON) p83.
22. ON, *ibid*; p84
23. ON, 'Ritorno all liberta', 26 giugno 1919 (ON) p252
24. ON, 'I rivoluzionari e le elezioni', 15 novembre 1919 (ON) p308
25. ON, 'Lo stato italiano', 7 febbraio 1920 (ON) p74
26. ON, 'L'unita del mondo', 15 maggio 1919 (ON) pp227-8
27. ON, 'L'unita nazionale', 4 ottobre 1919 (ON) p277
28. ON 'Domenica rossa', 15 settembre 1920 (ON) p164
29. Avanti, 'La reazione', 17 ottobre 1920 (ON) p351
30. Avanti, 'La tradizione monarchica', 14 marzo 1920 (ON) p329
31. G Williams, Proletarian Order; p30
32. K Marx, Capital, London 1970. p524
33. M Salvadori, *op cit* p94
34. ON, 'Partito di governo e classe di governo', 28 febbraio 1920 (ON) p95 and ON, 'Cronache dell'Ordine Nuovo, 12 luglio 1919 (ON) pp446-7
35. ON, 'Due rivoluzioni', 31 luglio 1920 (ON) p139
36. See G Williams, Proletarian Order, pp116-120; pp216-219.
37. ON, *op cit* p131, quoted M Salvadori, *op cit* p138-9
38. G Williams, *op cit* p 228
39. S Merli, Gramsci, Giovane Critica, autunno 1967
40. Poulantzas, Fascisme et Dictature, pp247-9
41. *Ibid* p45

42. Spriano dates the first sign of Gramsci's disagreement with Bordiga's leadership from a letter to the Executive of the PCI sent from Moscow on 12th September 1923.
43. Gramsci, 'Un esame della situazione italiana', La Costruzione del Partito Comunista (Turin, 1974) pp116-120
44. ON, 'Forze elementari', 25 aprile 1921, Socialismo e Fascismo, p151
45. ON, 'I due fascismi', 25 Agosto 1921, Ibid, pp297-9
46. ON, 'Colpo di Stato', 27 luglio 1921, Ibid, pp157-9
47. ON, 'La caduta del fascismo', 15 novembre 1924, Costruzione del PC, p209. Gramsci wrote : 'At the basis of everything is the same problem of fascism, a movement which the bourgeoisie held to be a simple 'instrument' of reaction in its hands, and which, instead, once evoked and released, is worse than the devil. It no longer allows itself to be dominated, but goes forward on its own behalf.'
48. ON, 'La crisi italiana', 1 settembre 1924, La Costruzione p28
49. L'unita, 'Giuda o del romanticismo', 28 febbraio 1924, La Costruzione, p367
50. Congresso di Lione, La Costruzione p497
51. Bordiga wrote in Il Soviet, 15th May 1921 : 'The fact that fascism and social democracy take converging routes today may seem a paradox to many...but it will be confirmed in the future... Fascism and social democracy are two aspects of the same enemy of tomorrow. (Quoted by Poulantzas, Fascisme p245
52. A Gramsci, Prison Notebooks (London; 1971) p365 (The Prison Notebooks are hereafter referred to as PN)
53. Spriano Gramsci's of February 9th 1924 from Togliatti's 'La Formazione del PCI' p196
54. Poulantzas, Fascisme p250
55. See Spriano, Storia del PCI Chap.9
56. Gramsci, 'Noi e la Concentrazione Repubblicana', Unita, 13 ottobre 1926, La Costruzione p349
Gramsci did foresee the probability of the fascist regime giving way to a bourgeois democratic one rather than immediately to a socialist state. However he rejected an alliance with the Aventine parties, that is he rejected unity at the leadership level based on a strategy of restoring the democratic status quo in favour of unity at the base on a revolutionary programme.

Interpretations of Gramsci that regard him as the theoretician of the alliance of 'progressive forces' (including sections of the bourgeoisie) against the latifundists do have some openings provided in his texts; for example Gramsci talks of the alliance of the industrialists and big landowners of the feudal South as the co-existence of separate economic structures (See Il Congresso di Lione, La Costruzione p491) His failure to grasp the relationship as unequal, as structured in dominance by monopoly capital opened the way for reformist readings of Gramsci, which theorise a strategy based on separate 'stages' in the revolutionary process - the democratic revolution against 'feudalism', followed by the socialist. Gramsci himself, however, never deviated from the strategy of building a worker-peasant alliance against the entire agrarian-industrial bloc. For Gramsci's relation to the Popular Fronts, see Lucio Colletti's 'Gramsci and the Italian Revolution' New Left Review 1971

57. 'They (joiners, builders etc) must think as members of a class which alone aims at leading the peasants and intellectuals, of a class which can conquer and building socialism only if aided and followed by the great majority of these social strata, who in Italy represent the majority of the population. If it does not do this, the proletariat does not become a leading class, and these strata remain under bourgeois leadership.' (A Gramsci, The Modern Prince and Other Writings (NY, 1970) p36.
58. 'The Italian situation is characterized by the fact that the bourgeoisie is organically weaker than in other countries and maintains itself in power only in as far as it succeeds in controlling and dominating the peasants. The proletariat must struggle to break the peasants from the influence of the bourgeoisie and put it under its own political leadership. This is the pivot of the political problems that the party must resolve in the near future.' (Ibid.p51)
59. 'One cannot expect every worker to have a complete awareness of the whole complex of functions that his class must develop in the process of the development of humanity; but that must be asked of every member of the party' (La Costruzione p53-4) 'Introduzione al primo corso della scuola internadel partito, aprile-maggio 1926.
60. A Gramsci, The modern Prince and Other Writings, p51.
61. J Merrington, 'Theory and Practice in Gramsci's Marxism' Socialist Register 1968
62. P Anderson, 'Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', New Left Review 100 Jan 1977.

63. L Gruppi, 'Il Concetto di Egemonia', in ASVV, Prassi Rivoluzionaria e Storie in Gramsci, Critica Marxista (Quaderni) n3, 1967 cited by M Salvadori in 'Gramsci e il PCI : due concezioni dell'egemonia', Mondo Operaio nov 1976 p61
64. Poulantzas, Political Power p205
65. PN p54
66. PN p161
67. PN p181-2
68. PN p162
69. Many commentators on Gramsci have, albeit unconsciously, assimilated his concept to a Marcusean model of one-dimensionality. For example, Gwyn Williams writes : '...one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs..' (G Williams, 'Gramsci's concept of hegemony', Journal of the History of Ideas, 1960)
70. Poulantzas, Political Power p207
71. PN p324-5
72. PN p324
73. Introduction to Prison Notebooks by Q Hoare and G Noel Smith p3
74. PN p56
75. PN p329
76. PN p325
77. PN p328
78. PN p328
79. PN p339
80. PN p332
81. PN p330-1
82. PN p465 Althusser in 'Reading Capital' discusses Gramsci's 'historicism' as a polemical means of insisting on Marxism as a lived intervention in history, and also as inadequate theoretically. His primary objection to 'historicism' is that it collapses the levels of the superstructure;
83. PN p396
84. Gramsci wrote: 'In the ideology and in the practice of the opposition bloc, the whole socialdemocratic and syndicalist tradition that has prevented the Western proletarian revolution is reborn'; see M Salvadori, Gramsci e il Problema Storico della Democrazia, op cit p38. Salvadori gives one of the clearest expositions of Gramsci's relation to the political struggles within the 3rd International. He points out the way in which Gramsci writes of ideology and theory

as interchangeable. Whilst disagreeing with Althusser's conception of theoretical practice as undertaken outside the superstructures, it is right to say that Gramsci fails to grasp the theoretical break between Marx and previous thinkers because he sees Marx as the last of the great political economists, different from his predecessors chiefly in his idea that capitalist society was itself a historical stage and not the final and 'natural' form of society.

85. In 'Americanism and Fordism' Gramsci writes about the creation of a new form of hegemony within the capitalist mode of production; the new hegemony is 'born in the factory', that is to say, social customs and ways of life, including sexual practices are forced to conform to the needs of production in a more direct form. This is done at the level of the enterprise (Ford's instillation of production-line discipline) and through the State (Prohibition legislation). Fordism is described by Gramsci as but the latest episode in the 'continual struggle against the element of 'animality' in man', in which coercion is succeeded by interiorisation of norms as new forms of behaviour become 'second nature' (See PN p298). Here the hegemony of one class over another is shown to reach down to the fundamentals of human existence, and to those areas deemed most 'private' by bourgeois political theory - the sacred preserves of the individual where the State must not tread.

Unfortunately Gramsci does not include workers' reactions to Fordism within the scope of his analysis, except in as far as they become more 'disciplined'. Yet Gramsci regards the new form of hegemony as reproducing not only the conditions for expanded production, but also the contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production. The hegemony is never complete because it is externally imposed:

'Puritanical' initiatives simply have the purpose of preserving, outside of work, a certain psycho-social equilibrium which prevents the physiological collapse of the worker, exhausted by the new method of production. This equilibrium can only be something purely external and mechanical, but it can become internalized if it is proposed by a new form of society, with appropriate and original methods!. That hegemony is further weakened when it ceases to be the lived ideology of the ruling classes; Gramsci suggests that in America this breakdown between the dominant ideology of Puritanism and the practice of its propagators had been initiated by the petty bourgeoisie, fractions of the ruling class and among the womenfolk of even the sternest pioneering capitalists, and that this was likely to have serious consequences for the maintenance of working class subordination; 'These phenomena proper to the ruling classes will make

more difficult any coercion on the working masses to make them conform to the needs of the new industry.

It should be noted that Gramsci is returning to preoccupation in the Ordine Nuovo period with the increasing irrelevance of the bourgeoisie to the production process and the acceleration of its moral depravities in conformity with its role of financial parasitism. However, in the Notebooks, Gramsci grounds his analyses in empirical observations rather than in the rhetoric of denunciation, and examines the processes whereby the working class is 'hegemonised' rather than simply provided with the objective conditions for its subjective leap to revolutionary consciousness.

86. PN p258
87. PN p160
88. P Anderson, op cit, The whole article revolves around the analysis of these terms.
89. PN p83 and p115
90. PN p210.
91. '...however much the ruling class may affirm to the contrary, the State, as such, does not have a unitary, coherent and homogenous conception, with the result that intellectual groups are scattered between one stratum and the next, or within a single stratum.' (PN p342)
92. MA Macciocchi takes Luciano Gruppi to task (quite rightly) for acting as an intellectual apologist for the contemporary PCI. She writes that his understanding of hegemony as including the concept of domination is open to the same attack as Gramsci made on Croce for 'putting stress only on the aspect of consensus', and that it leads to his conclusion that 'the State can no longer be conceived only as an instrument of oppression that one must smash' and that therefore it must be reformed. (MA Macciocchi, Pour Gramsci,
If the reformist reading of Gramsci finds some footholds in his writings, they do so through their narrow partiality and blindness to the passages that contradict their preconceptions. In fact the gap between the ideology of the PCI and Gramsci's theories have appeared so glaring that 'revisions' are taking place. The incompatibility of Gramsci's ideas on the party with democratic pluralism has meant that some are now considered to be 'dated'. However, the following passage in the Notebooks remains holy writ :
'A social group is dominant over enemy groups which it tends to 'liquidate' or subject with armed force, and is directive over affinal or allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, be directive before the conquering of government power (this is one of the many

conditions for the conquest of power itself); afterwards, when it exercises power and keeps it firmly in its grasp, it becomes dominant, but also continues to be "directive".

Anderson offers a reading that turns a reformist reading on its head: 'Gramsci here carefully distinguishes the necessity for coercion of enemy classes, and consensual direction of allied classes. The 'hegemonic activity' which 'can and must be exercised before the assumption of power' is related in this context only to the problem of the alliance of the working class with other exploited and oppressed groups; it is not a claim to hegemony over the whole of society..'

93. P. Anderson, op cit. pp27-29.
94. Ibid, p.28
95. Ibid, p.28 footnote
96. Ibid, p.30
97. Marx, op cit, p.424
98. Ibid, p.354
99. For a discussion of the significance of the wage relation in the construction of bourgeois ideology, see Hall, Lumley and McLennan, "Politics and Ideology in Gramsci". Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1976 10, Birmingham
100. P. Anderson, op cit, p.29.

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