

which this country must now struggle to extricate itself and which it must replace with another way of thinking, the indispensable basis for another way of acting, if we are to cope with our mounting problems and our increasingly antagonistic relations with one another, and if we are to rejoin and enrich the mainstream of advancing humanity.

## 6 DIALECTICS AND REVOLUTION

Down through the many thousands of years of our continuing evolution as human beings, men and women have thought in many different ways about themselves and about the world in which they lived. Until a few hundred years ago, most people had no concept of change as development, principally because there was really very little progress in their lives from which to derive such a concept. Year after year, decade after decade, generation after generation, they did the same things in the same way. They hunted the same game or tilled the same soil, ate the same food, were born, gave birth, and died in the same way as their ancestors had done. During their lifetimes they were subject to the same kind of arbitrary rule by tribal chiefs, feudal lords, or kings. Under these unchanging circumstances, their concept of change could only be based on their perception of such phenomena as constant repetition of the seasons, the agricultural cycle of sowing, planting, and harvesting, or the human cycle of birth, growth, reproduction, and death. So their concept of change was a cyclical concept: the more things change, the more they return to the beginning and start all over again.

At a certain point in our evolution our ancestors developed the

concept of gods, seeking to create some entities more powerful and more exalted than their human rulers, entities to whom they could look for ethical and moral standards. They themselves were not yet ready to accept the responsibility for creating and enforcing moral and ethical standards. Since their rulers came and went, and most of them were hardly representative of the standards which every society needs to govern the relations between people, man/woman created gods to embody and validate these values.

These gods were mythical creatures. But having invested these gods with such authority, man/woman began to look to them to fix all kinds of earthly problems, to deliver them from pain and suffering, from toil and misery, or to reward them in heaven for their hardships on earth. This kind of thinking is idealism, i.e., it is the kind of wishful or subjective thinking by which people create an ideal in the form of a person or a state of being and then begin to believe in its independent reality and rely on it to "fix" things up for them.

Idealistic thinking became very deeply entrenched in the thinking of the great masses of the people because they did not believe that they could change anything in reality. Only the chief, the lord, or the king had the power to bring about changes in reality, and these changes rarely benefited anybody except the chief, the lord, or the king. Therefore the masses' only hope of change for the better was in a mythical realm. In this way, until a few hundred years ago, the great masses of people accepted their lot, their place, as subjects.

About twenty-five hundred years ago philosophy began in both the East and the West when a few men began to wonder about the contradiction between what actually existed, the real, and what should exist, the ideal. But these philosophers did not see any real possibility of changing reality for the better. They had no idea that the great masses of the people might be organized and mobilized into a social force for progress. This very advanced idea or concept did not emerge until after the French Revolution, two hundred years ago. Therefore, the only progress that philosophers, particularly in the West, could envisage was ideal progress, i.e., progress towards the ideal in the minds of individual philosophers.

It is important to realize that men and women thought this way for many thousands and thousands of years if we are to appreciate the great leap forward, the revolution in human thinking two hundred

years ago, and the ever greater leap forward in thinking which we have to make today.

Some indication of the long historical process by which man/womankind has developed can be obtained by watching the development of the individual from infancy through childhood and youth to adulthood and advanced years, since the historical development of the species is to some degree recapitulated in the development of the individual. However, we also know that simply advancing in age does not mean a development in social thinking. Many who reach chronological maturity still do not ask themselves the kind of fundamental questions or are not prepared for the kind of critical thinking and struggles which are essential to the development of the social thought process. Most people spend their whole lifetime just being utilitarian or materialist, preoccupied only with questions of physical survival and comforts. They do only what they have to do in their own self-interest and/or what they are told to do. They accept whatever occurs in society as beyond their control, as being fixed by others.

There are others who begin to wonder. But most of these are not ready to go to the organized effort necessary to put their visions into practice. Therefore, if any good comes out of what they think or envisage, it is purely accidental. In this sense most people have a philosophy or a set of assumptions and convictions by which they live, but few become philosophers. A philosopher, believing that ideas do matter, organizes his/her assumptions and convictions into a body of ideas. Still, most philosophers only contemplate these ideas. They do not progress to the next stage, the stage of politics. That is, they do not try to find a way by which they can propagate their convictions to people and especially to the masses of the people and attempt to organize these people to struggle to make these convictions real. This is what revolutionists do, because revolutionists are profoundly convinced that the society in which they live must be changed, and that the ideas which they have developed are advanced ideas, i.e., ideas for advancing society. They are profoundly convinced that until the great masses of the people at the bottom of a society acquire the motivation and the determination to change their society, there can be at best some improvements or reforms in a society, and more likely only an exchange of positions by those at the

top. For a fundamental reorganization of any society to take place, the eyes and hearts of those at the bottom must be opened to a new, more advanced way of human beings living together. Only then will they be able to exercise their previously unused initiative and creativity to bring about those many changes in oppressive relations which are visible only to those who see them from below. That is why revolutionists devote so much effort first, to exploring and creating advanced ideas, and then, to finding the ways by which these advanced ideas can be grasped by the masses of the people and thus transformed into a material force to change themselves and society. It is in this very important sense that revolutionists are neither idealists, i.e., concerned only with ideas or ideals, nor materialists, i.e., concerned only with matters of economic survival. On the contrary, their lives are devoted to the struggle to establish a new unity between advanced ideas and the great masses of the people, a unity which is neither idealism nor materialism, but the truth uniting both.

We are at the stage today where we are seeking to discover the next step in the evolution of man/womankind. Therefore, what matters to us is that, regardless of the differences which have separated human beings from one another down through the ages (differences of sex, of caste and class, of tribe or nation, of race or religion), men and women in the course of our three thousand generations of evolution have become more profoundly and uniquely human insofar as they have sought more profound, more enlarged concepts of what it means to be human. Because what makes men and women distinctively human is not how well or how badly they behave, how meek or aggressive their temperaments, how moderate or militant their actions, or how skillful or clumsy their practices. What distinguishes man/woman as human and differentiates us from all other living things is our ability to reflect upon our past and present experiences and to project visions and programs for human struggle to create a new future. It is in this sense that those individuals who have assumed the responsibility for creating and projecting to the great masses of people an enlarged vision of their humanity play such an important role in the advancement of humankind.

Less than two hundred years ago the poor of Paris, rising out of the gutters, sewers, and cellars, created by their actions the basis for the

new idea that oppressed people can change their lives. In the French Revolution the masses, by their actions, created the concept of citizenship for poor people where previously the world had only known the relationship of ruler and subject. If today we can talk about, wonder about, define a social revolution as a profoundly new and profoundly original transformation in man/woman's concept of self, in their conditions of life, and in their relations with other classes, races, nations, and cultures, it is because the epoch of social revolution was initiated by the poor people of Paris in the French Revolution.

The French Revolution brought onto the political stage great masses of ordinary people, ready to clash with their oppressors in order to transform reality in the name of reason and of the advanced ideas of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity which the intellectuals had been talking about. Through their actions the French masses overthrew the feudal aristocracy, which had been acting as a fetter or brake on the development of the productive forces, and made it possible for the Industrial Revolution, already under way in England, to get under way in France.

The French Revolution opened the minds of the Western world to the possibilities within existing reality for sudden and rapid developments toward an ideal. It thus weakened the concept of reality as static and unchanging, and began to replace it with a concept of reality as evolving and dynamic. The French Revolution also made apparent the existence of opposing classes and interests both within society and within a revolutionary movement that at the beginning or on its surface had appeared as a unity. It thus weakened the idea of reality as basically homogeneous and harmonious and suggested a new idea of reality as inherently contradictory, or as containing duality within unity.

In the wake of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution began a rapid transformation of the physical environment of people from one dependent on natural forces (weather, seasons, soil) to one that was man-made (cities, factories, machines). Theoretically a man-made environment should have increased human freedom, but the money economy and increasingly oppressive relations within the factory subjected growing numbers of people to new and terrible bondage. Thus, what had been created in the name of human freedom was in turn becoming a fetter on human freedom. The

resolution of one set of contradictions had led to the creation of others.

The French Revolution began in 1789 and kept Europe in turmoil throughout most of the nineteenth century. The early years of the century were years of evaluation much like our present period, during which thinking people were striving to make some sense of the world-shaking events through which they were living and which they were aware had destroyed the old values and the old society.

It was not difficult to see that what was happening had both a positive and a negative side. On the one hand, the French Revolution had obviously meant progress in human dignity and identity in the sense that it had made Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity a part of the normal outlook of millions. It had led to a much broader and deeper participation of the population in the shaping of their destiny, and, after the rebellion of the Parisian masses in 1792 and 1793, it had even led to government acceptance of greater responsibility for economic justice. On the other hand, the Reign of Terror under the Jacobins and the Napoleonic dictatorship, both of which had been supported by the masses, aroused widespread fear as to what would happen if the masses really had their way.

The same negative and positive features characterized the Industrial Revolution. On the one hand, by destroying superstition and promoting scientific thinking, the Industrial Revolution promised miracles not only in production but in more reasonable relations between people. On the other hand, it also brought about the concentration of former peasants in city slums, where men, women, and children were forced to sell their labor power as a commodity simply in order to live. As a result, the traditional skills of the craftsman were destroyed, as were all relations between people not based on money.

Confronted with this situation, most people didn't know what to think. Some said that so many bad things had come out of the Industrial and French Revolutions that society ought to go back to the past. So there were constant attempts at restoration of the old regime, attempts to push the clock back. Others, and particularly the new capitalist class, were very satisfied with the new situation and made glowing promises of the abundant future it offered for everybody.

The French and the Industrial revolutions had made clear that

man/woman's consciousness does not only reflect the world; it also creates, determines the world. But the negative consequences of the French and Industrial revolutions also suggested that man/woman's struggle to create a new human world was bound to be a protracted one, involving the successive overcoming of ever deepening contradictions. Thus, together, the French and the Industrial revolutions created the need and the basis for a new way of thinking.

It was within this historical situation that Hegel, a German philosopher who as a student in Germany had hailed the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789, began to formulate the philosophy of dialectical thinking. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that Hegel's philosophy arose out of a historical situation, a historical need on the part of thinking people for a systematic way to reflect about what was happening in relation to the past and the future. Because we, too, are living in a period of great historical transition and confusion, it should not be too difficult for us to understand the importance of the three basic principles of dialectical thinking as formulated by Hegel.

In the first place, Hegel said, social reality, and indeed all reality, is constantly developing, constantly evolving from a lower to a higher form.

Second, the basic reason or cause for this continuing evolution is internal, not external. It stems from the drive within everything to achieve its highest potential, a drive which creates a continuing contradiction within things and the internal necessity to negate what they are in order to arrive at what they can be.

Third, it is through conflict and contradiction that progress to a new positive takes place. This is what is known as negation of the negation.

This dialectical concept of change as development was a sharp break away from the old concept of change as cyclical, i.e., the idea that things just continue to go around until they return to where they started, or in its more modern formulation, "it has always been this way and it will always be this way." The concept of change from internal causes also differs sharply from the widespread concept of change as dependent upon external causes which most social scientists have borrowed from the physical sciences. The external cause concept is a mechanical way of thinking which attributes change only to others or to outside forces. Applied to human beings,

it acts as a barrier to revolutionary thinking because it leads the oppressed to depend on others or on changes in external conditions to make changes in and for them. The dialectical thinker, on the other hand, recognizes that external causes contribute to change but they are not the primary cause. Temperature conditions help the egg develop into a chicken, but temperature could not possibly bring about the development of a chicken from a stone. Foxes don't act like chickens nor do foxes come from chickens.

Using the dialectical concept of internal causes, we can see how the drive within anything to achieve its own potential creates a conflict with its present state of reality which has become a fetter upon its continuing evolution. In order to resolve this contradiction, a struggle must take place. Out of the resolution comes a new unity. But this new unity in turn is only temporary, since within it a new duality or a new contradiction between the actual and the potential is emerging, creating the basis for further struggle towards a still higher form of existence. This concept, usually called the unity of opposites, also makes clear why progress or development never takes place in a straight line or just by quantitative increase or decrease. In other words, progressive development is never just evolutionary; it requires great and sudden leaps, drastic changes in direction. But neither does it take place, as Hegel puts it, "like a shot out of a pistol." Maturation through the overcoming of one contradiction after another, or what Hegel calls "the labor, patience and suffering of the negative" is continually necessary. There is no "final struggle," no ultimate unity, no "promised land" in which we just sit back and reap the benefits of past struggles.

The concept of negation of the negation makes clear that in every struggle to change an existing reality, we must keep clearly in mind the new positive or the new unity which we are trying to create. Negating the present reality is never just to create chaos or uncertainty; it is always to create a new positive. Negation is not just for the sake of negation; it should always have definite goals.

The dialectical method of thinking is in essence critical and revolutionary. Using this method of thinking, an individual will refuse to admit the authority or permanence of an existing state of reality. He/she will be confident that within any particular reality there are internal contradictions which are the basis for negating this reality. He/she will constantly seek to find and hold fast the new

positive or the new and higher unity which can emerge out of the resolution of these contradictions. The creation of this advanced way of thinking was therefore an indispensable step on the road to revolutionary thinking and practice.

Revolutionists seek to change reality, to make it better. Therefore, revolutionists not only need the revolutionary philosophy of dialectics. They need a revolutionary ideology, i.e., a body of ideas based on analyzing the main contradiction of the particular society which they are trying to change, projecting a vision of a higher form of reality in which this contradiction would be resolved, and relating this resolution to a social force or forces responsible for and capable of achieving it. It is only after you have arrived at a correct ideology that it makes sense to develop your revolutionary politics, i.e., the programs necessary to mobilize and organize the revolutionary social forces. If your ideology is wrong, i.e., misdirected or limited, then all the most brilliant programs for militant activity by the masses will be of no avail. Every revolutionist must be absolutely clear about this sequence—from revolutionary *philosophy*, to revolutionary *ideology*, to revolutionary *politics*.

Karl Marx, born in 1818, was the first person in history to develop a revolutionary ideology. While his fellow students were using the ideas of Hegel for intellectual gymnastics (Marx ridiculed them as "The Holy Family"), Marx set himself the task of changing the Europe in which he was living, a Europe torn by struggles between the aristocracy seeking to restore the feudal past and the capitalists seeking to build their own power through exploitation of the new freedoms created by the French Revolution. Looking beyond the obvious struggle between the restorationists and the capitalists, Marx saw the new antagonisms which were developing within the process of production between the capitalists and the workers. This was the main contradiction of bourgeois society, Marx said, and out of it would inevitably grow an increasingly powerful social force to build a new socialist society, the social force of the working class, organized and disciplined by the process of production itself.

Together with Friedrich Engels, who was to become his lifelong collaborator, Marx created the foundations of an ideology for European revolution in the *Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848, a year of ferment in Western Europe much like the 1960s in the United States. Since few people paid any attention to the bold new

ideas which the youthful Marx was advancing, he devoted the major part of his remaining years to theoretical work in the form of systematic analyses of the contradictions in capitalist production and historical interpretations of the class struggles and civil wars of his time. Hence he did not make the transition to revolutionary politics, which involves continuing contact with the revolutionary social forces defined in your ideology.

As we have seen, the first man to practice and in fact to create the practice of revolutionary politics was Lenin. While a young man in his twenties, Lenin had come to the conclusion, based on his studies of Marx and Engels, that the chief task of the Russian people was to get rid of the autocratic regime controlled by the landlords and the capitalists; and that the Russian working class was the chief social force to lead the great masses of the Russian people in this task. He then devoted the remainder of his life to creating the disciplined organization, called the vanguard party, which could lead the working class to power.

A vanguard party is the instrument by means of which the militancy and the rebellion of the revolutionary social forces can be transformed from purely reflexive, trial-and-error reactions into purposeful, planned, and programmatic struggles for power. The vanguard party thus increases not only the political awareness or consciousness of the revolutionary social forces but also their self-consciousness, i.e., their capacity to reflect upon and learn from past experiences and practices and out of these reflections to develop programs and plans for the future.

Lenin's concept of the vanguard party was not created overnight or easily "like a shot out of a pistol." Just as Marx had arrived at his revolutionary ideology out of his political determination to shape the course of nineteenth-century Europe, Lenin arrived at his concept of the vanguard party out of his political determination to make the revolution in Russia. This led him into ideological struggle with other socialists who also claimed to be Marxists but who insisted that Marxism meant that socialism in Russia could be achieved through the spontaneous rebellion of the workers (the Economists) or through the gradual development of the contradictions within Russian capitalism (the Mensheviks). In line with their evolutionary concept of socialist development, the Mensheviks argued against a disciplined vanguard party and for a mass party; thereby, in Lenin's words,

leaving "the door wide open for every kind of opportunist and stretching the boundaries of the party till they become quite blurred."

In October 1917 the Russian workers and peasants, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, seized power. To many revolutionists, from one end of the world to the other, the ideology and the organization which had achieved the Russian Revolution appeared to be the final solution to the contradiction between ideas and reality.

Meanwhile, however, Lenin himself, at the head of the Bolshevik Party and of the Workers' Government, was discovering the new dualities within the new unity which had been established by the revolution.

Lenin recognized, and struggled tirelessly to make his colleagues and the Russian people understand, that only the first task of negating or destroying feudalism and capitalism had been achieved by the October Revolution. There still remained the much more difficult and protracted task of creating the new positive of a new social system. Such a social system would be superior to capitalism only if it involved the great masses of the people in continuing, creative, cooperative, self-critical, and self-disciplined practical and productive activity, only if the people themselves were transformed so that they would naturally and unhesitatingly assume responsibility for decision-making and control over the economic and political development of the country.

In his efforts to lead the Russian people in this practical activity of creating a new positive, Lenin, until his death in 1924, had to carry on a fierce struggle against two sets of opponents. On the one hand, there were those who idealized or romanticized the masses (Anarchists), denying the need for leadership and calling for the dictatorship of the masses against the dictatorship of the party. Lenin accused these people of revolutionary rhetoric and of infantile leftism because of their refusal to take into consideration the individualism which the masses had inherited from the past.

On the other hand, there were those who were concerned only with rapid economic and industrial development, insisting that this material development would automatically bring in its wake the political development of the masses. Lenin accused these people of putting economics in command of politics and warned that their policies would lead to state capitalism, to the domination of experts

and technicians, and to the eventual isolation of the government and the party from the people.

Thus, out of the Russian Revolution, a new set of contradictions had been born. This new set of contradictions centered chiefly around:

1. the relation of leaders to masses (Is leadership necessary?);
2. the relation of economic development to political development (Does the improvement in material conditions necessarily bring about the political development of the masses or does it sometimes bring about the opposite?); and
3. the contradiction between the "abruptness" of revolution (to use Lenin's word) and the protracted period required for the cultural revolutionizing of the masses.

For the last fifty years Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, in their determination to make a revolution in China, have also been creating new answers to these questions which are critical to every revolution.

The Chinese Communists have only been able to create these answers because they have constantly borne in mind and constantly deepened through practical struggles the dialectical conception of reality as inherently and increasingly contradictory (one always divides into two) and the revolutionists' goal of making the most advanced ideas a practical part of the lives of the masses so that they can transcend the limitations which have been imposed upon them by class society. The great historical contribution of Mao is that he has demystified the fundamental laws of dialectics to the point where they can be consciously applied by hundreds of millions of peasants and workers to the most elementary as well as the most complex questions of production and politics.

The Chinese Communists anticipate and utilize contradictions as a powerful catalyst to further development. Thus, instead of rejecting the concept of leadership altogether because of the obvious potential within it for bureaucratic domination, the Chinese Communists welcome the tensions implicit within the relations between leaders and masses, or between central committees and local committees, as a means of arriving at more correct, more vital, and richer ideas on both sides. Only through a true dialogue between those who are more developed, or who have more overall responsibility, and those who are less developed, or who have more particular responsibilities,

can reciprocal education, and therefore change and development, take place. This tension suffuses the famous passage defining the role of leadership. Leadership must "take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital, and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge."

The same appreciation of the reality of contradiction underlies the concept of criticism and self-criticism. Criticism and self-criticism is the way in which individuals who are united by common goals can consciously utilize their differences and their limitations, i.e., the negative, in order to accelerate their positive advance. The popular formulation for this process is "changing a bad thing into a good thing." Hence the Chinese Communists emphasize, first, the need to prevent mistakes (through the most thorough discussion and preparation of all involved); second, the need to recognize, admit, and correct (rather than cover up) mistakes; third, the need to pin down exact responsibility for mistakes. This is not for the purpose of placing blame on an individual but to enable the individual and others to learn the appropriate lessons from the mistake and thus avoid repetition. Failure to pin down responsibility (liberalism) for fear of offending the individual or on the basis that "it's not their fault" actually retards individual development because it leads people to make fewer demands on themselves to develop. Often the reason for a mistake is not just technical but social, e.g., stemming from an attitude of individualism or élitism, or of arrogance or complacency, or from disregard of other's opinions, or from fear of making mistakes. Self-criticism, as distinguished from criticism, stems from the individual acknowledging that there is a continuing contradiction within him/herself between a social or socialist outlook and an individualist or bourgeois outlook, and therefore the continuing need to remold his/her outlook.

From the Yen-an days to the present, the Chinese have been

conscious of the trap of vulgar materialism, or economism, which gives priority to the development of productive forces and material incentives. To avoid this trap they have insisted that the essential aim of revolution is the most rapid possible development of the human potential within the masses for political consciousness and social responsibility. Mao launched the struggle against the vulgar materialist tendency within the party as early as 1937. To have built the party on the basis of vulgar materialism would have meant certain failure, since semi-colonial China was too undeveloped economically to have produced a proletariat. In 1966, when liberated China was undergoing rapid economic development, the economist tendency again emerged in Liu Shao-ch'i, one of Mao's closest comrades. That tendency posed such a threat to the Chinese Revolution that Mao risked the turbulence of a revolutionary struggle within the party and in the whole society in order to crush it. It is obvious therefore that the economist or vulgar materialist concept of human development as dependent upon economic development, is a tendency with deep roots in the Marxist movement and in all industrializing or industrialized societies. Lenin fought against it, Mao continues to fight against it, the present conflict between China and the Soviet Union is based on this duality within Marxist theory. In one form or another, every vanguard party must carry on a continuing theoretical and practical struggle against the vulgar materialist tendency in the pre-revolutionary as well as the post-revolutionary period.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution shows revolutionists everywhere that dialectical materialism, as opposed to vulgar materialism and idealism, means the continuing struggle to make the most advanced ideas the property of the masses so that they can turn them into a material force to change society and the world.

With this enriched understanding of dialectical materialism, it becomes possible to give a more meaningful answer to the third question which we have been bequeathed by the Russian Revolution. Beginning with the Chinese revolution, all the great revolutions of our time have reversed the process by which Lenin and the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia. They have consciously and deliberately postponed the confrontation with the regime and the seizure of state power until after there has been a protracted struggle to unite and transform the masses economically, politically, and socially. Acutely aware of the bureaucratic degeneration and depol-

iticization of Soviet Russia, they have concentrated on a protracted struggle to develop self-reliance and responsibility in the masses as well as the basic social and political structures necessary for the formation of a new government and a new society. Confident that time will only deepen and widen the contradictions on the side of the enemy, and taking seriously the post-revolutionary reflections of Lenin, they have concluded that if the masses have not begun to develop a sense of social responsibility before the seizure of power, the new revolutionary government will, sooner rather than later, find itself confronting disappointed and hostile masses who expect miracles from the new government, and are much less patient with it than they ever were with the gods.

The practice of these advanced ideas in the Chinese, the Guinea-Bissau, and the Vietnamese revolutions has disclosed political consciousness and social responsibility to be a necessary ingredient of human dignity and human identity.

It must never be forgotten that the Chinese, the Vietnamese, and the people of Guinea-Bissau could never have achieved this advance in revolutionary politics had it not been for the leap made by Lenin in the Russian Revolution, and the new contradictions which this leap created. Analogously, Lenin's revolutionary politics, and the Russian Revolution, developed from the revolutionary ideology which Marx and Engels created. Finally, Marx and Engels could never have created their revolutionary ideology had it not been for the dialectical philosophy which Hegel formulated, and which, in turn, came out of the French and Industrial revolutions.

For revolutionists, it is much more important to appreciate the successive struggles which have made possible this historical development from dialectical philosophy to revolutionary ideology to revolutionary politics than it is to know in detail the scenario of every revolution, much less to get involved in second-guessing what should have been done or should not have been done in each revolution. It is obvious also that the ideas and the initial leadership in most revolutions have come from intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin. Whether or not they remain petty-bourgeois intellectuals depends on the depth of their conviction and their readiness to devote their lives to a protracted struggle to make their advanced ideas the property of the masses. Marx and Engels, his collaborator; Lenin; Mao; Castro; Nkrumah; Ho—none of these was a poor peasant or worker.



Toussaint L'Ouverture was what we would today call a "house nigger." Cabral was an engineer. Each grappled with the contradictions of his particular society at a particular time in order to change that society. Each had to transcend the limitations in the thinking of his predecessors and contemporaries and boldly create a new set of advanced ideas before that society could make a great leap forward into the future.

The most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary theoretician is not the external enemy but the potential within all theory, and especially the boldest theories, to become dogma. The more a revolutionary thinker is isolated from systematic dialogue and practical interaction with revolutionary social forces, the greater this danger.

In the one hundred and twenty-five years since the *Communist Manifesto*, we have witnessed the emergence of many new contradictions: contradictions between rival imperialisms in two world wars, between the socialist camp and the capitalist camp in the wake of the Russian Revolution, between the imperialist powers and the colonized peoples, within the socialist camp between Russia and China, as well as within individuals between the bourgeois and the socialist outlook. The revolutionist utilizes all these contradictions and anticipates that there will be even more in the future.

Marx did not call for a separate Communist Party to lead the workers. The Communists, he said explicitly in the *Manifesto*, do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. "They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement."

More than a generation later, Lenin, also an intellectual, created the new idea of a party to lead the workers. It is important to realize the very advanced stage of reflection and responsibility on the part of human beings which the vanguard party represents. Most people use the term "vanguard" today to apply to the most militant, the most rebellious, the most oppressed, the most ready for confrontations with the enemy, regardless of whether that person has a body of ideas or is responsible to a body of people who have themselves accepted continuing responsibility. Lenin created the vanguard party precisely to combat that kind of reactive politics. He realized that merely to react to this or that issue is to say, in essence, that the people in power ought to change the way things are, whereas the aim of a vanguard party is to replace those in power with a social force

which will change the way things are to the way they ought to be.

With Lenin the party is no longer the representative of the needs and interests of the working class, as it was for Marx. With Lenin the party has become a transmission belt taking from the masses their issues and grievances, organizing these into programs, and then taking these programs back to the masses to raise them to a higher level of struggle and of consciousness as to what must be done and what must not be done.

Lenin was the first to appreciate the importance of what few so-called Marxists in the advanced countries have gotten around to recognizing, i.e., that the laws of dialectics which govern the development of the revolutionary social forces also govern the development of the capitalist counter-revolutionary forces. If the revolutionary social forces antagonized by capitalism do not develop the revolutionary power to overthrow capitalism, capitalism will continue to develop dialectically to a new stage or new stages, and thereby acquire the means to incorporate sections of the revolutionary social forces within itself.

That is what has happened with imperialism, which is a new stage of capitalism. Other economists, prior to Lenin, had recognized how the relatively primitive industrial capitalism of Marx's day had been transformed into large-scale monopoly and finance capitalism in the advanced countries, and how these countries were dividing Africa, Asia, and Latin America among themselves, maintaining the peoples of these continents in a state of systematic underdevelopment so that they could continue to serve as sources of raw materials, as markets, and as spheres of influence. Other economists had described this new stage of development of capitalism as imperialism. Lenin's specific contribution was to recognize the new duality within this new stage of capitalism. This new stage of capitalism had not only made it possible for the capitalists to corrupt a substantial section of the working class inside the advanced countries; it had also created a new revolutionary social force inside the systematically undeveloped countries which would be striving for national liberation.

Lenin saw that imperialism, which he called a new stage of capitalism, had set into motion a process both for the continued advance of capitalism and for the regression of the workers inside the imperialist countries, because it set these workers into an antagonistic relationship with the masses of the colonial countries still trying to

set themselves free from feudalism while fighting the new enemy of imperialism. How important the dialectical way of thinking was to Lenin's analysis of imperialism can be seen from his spirited comments on Hegel's writings, which he studied, for the first time, in 1915.

What has been taking place in China for the last few decades is the result of Mao's reflections not only on the contradictions of Chinese society but also on the problems that the Russian Revolution raised and failed to resolve.

Just as we can say that the Chinese revolution is the granddaddy of revolutions today in the Third World, we can also say that the United States is the granddaddy of advanced capitalism, the most highly developed capitalism, with the most highly advanced technology that the world has ever known. We must pioneer in creating a model of socialist revolution for the advanced capitalist countries.

This fact alone presents us with the dilemma that there is not, there cannot be any historical model for a revolution in this country. There has never been a revolution in an advanced country from which we can learn. We recommend that our readers compare the *Communist Manifesto* with the *Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party*, which we published in 1969. This will help them appreciate what has happened in one hundred and twenty years. The working class of the United States, whose development we have traced in *The American Revolution*, is not the one Marx knew in nineteenth-century England. A revolutionary ideology for the United States must be based on the development of the revolutionary forces in this country. All we can take from Marx is his method of dialectical analysis.

The 1926 General Strike in England showed that the workers in an advanced country can close down the country by striking all the plants, but it takes more to make a revolution than the power of the workers to paralyze production. A revolution requires a revolutionary political apparatus which will enable the great majority of the people to defeat the power of the state and reorganize all its institutions. France in 1968 came closer than any advanced country has come to the transfer of power in the last hundred years. Yet with power lying in the streets, there was no revolutionary organization in France that wanted power or that was prepared for power, because

there was no revolutionary organization with any vision of what it would do with that power.

To conclude, let us state categorically some of the things that the United States revolution in the twentieth century is *not* going to be for.

1. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* going to be for Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. That was the goal of the French Revolution, in order to get rid of feudalism.

2. The revolution to be made in the United States cannot be for socialism as defined by Marx. Capitalism has already developed productive forces to the point where material needs can be satisfied. This is one of the great contradictions facing a Marxist movement which has put economics rather than politics in command of its thinking.

3. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* for civil rights. Civil rights are what any society gives to every individual in that society if it treasures its legitimacy or its right to exist. The kind of rights that will exist in a new society will be qualitatively different from the rights in this society. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* to increase the freedom of individual choice. Rather it is to increase the collective consciousness of how to choose, how to grasp both ends in order to pull forward the middle.

4. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* for majority rule. Our society is the final proof that majority rule is not the most advanced form of human rule. Counting noses cannot be the fundamental way for determining political direction or for making political choices and political judgments.

5. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* just to give to the poor the same rights and privileges that the rich have had. It is *not* to spread the wealth, *not* to give the poor an equal right to be as materialistic and as opportunistic as the rich. It is *not* just to end poverty or to bring peace so that those in power can concentrate on the reforms that will pacify the masses. The question to be answered by a revolution in an advanced country like the United States is whether man/woman's wants are going to be allowed to dominate and define man/woman's needs as human beings.

6. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* just to have population control. The Chinese have three times the population of the United States in approximately the same area, and they

are much healthier because they make socially conscious choices between what people want and what people need.

7. The revolution to be made in the United States is *not* for "Peace, Bread, and Land" as it was in Russia in 1917. It is for total political power to make decisions as to what should be done and what should not be done with land.

Only when we understand what the revolution to be made in the United States will *not* be for, can we begin to reflect on what it will be for. For if we approach an American revolution with the lack of clarity with which the Civil War was fought, then we might wind up with power—although that is doubtful—and then repeat the tragic errors of the post-Civil-War period. At that time, in order to fit the economic aspirations of some of the people, the black masses were forced back into a state of servitude worse than that of slavery itself, by the 1877 Compromise. Every successive generation has suffered the social consequences of this failure to develop a clear idea of the awesome responsibilities of power. Our generation has the opportunity to make a fresh start.

The revolution to be made in the United States will be the first revolution in history to require the masses to make material sacrifices rather than to acquire more material things. We must give up many of the things which this country has enjoyed at the expense of damning over one-third of the world into a state of underdevelopment, ignorance, disease, and early death. Until the revolutionary forces come to power here, this country will not be safe for the world and revolutionary warfare on an international scale against the United States will remain the wave of the present—unless all of humanity goes up in one big puff.

It is obviously going to take a tremendous transformation to prepare the people of the United States for these new social goals. But potential revolutionaries can only become true revolutionaries if they take the side of those who believe that humanity can be transformed. Those who have already given up on America, those who have condemned it as hopelessly racist and fascist, will never make an American revolution. If this book, and particularly this chapter, accomplishes its purpose, it will help readers to appreciate that this country is only two hundred years old, and, by comparison with most of the countries of the world, in its infancy. The people of this country have lived together continuously a much shorter time

than any of the peoples whose revolutions we have studied. The ancestors of most of us were not among those who founded this country only two hundred years ago and established the political, economic, and social patterns by which it has developed to its present state. The American people have never really engaged in the revolutionary struggles by which any great nation is created. That great humanizing experience still lies before them.

Only with this sense of historical perspective, historical duration, and historical proportion can we undertake the task before us of revolutionizing this country. Objectively the task is colossal.

The United States is the citadel of world capitalism. Capitalism in the United States has gone a long way beyond the primitive capitalism, the manufacturing capitalism, and the industrial capitalism of Marx's day, to embrace imperialism and colonialism, neocolonialism, multinational capitalism, and the military-industrial complex with its client states all over the world.

Capitalism has developed to the point where money-lending itself is an industry. The banking industry makes more profit, exploiting all of us through its savings and lending mechanisms, than old private capitalists exploiting the workers in production. Banks have become as common as filling stations.

U.S. capitalism has brought together an unholy alliance of the old bourgeoisie, the new managers of industry, the ex-generals and the existing generals, scientists and technicians from Germany and the United States multi-university, war workers, mercenaries from all classes, and particularly the "lumpen"—double agents and agents-provocateurs, media manipulators, cost accountants, and petty careerists from one end of the world to the other. All these are supported and subsidized by the American taxpayer. So that when we talk about the bourgeoisie today, we have to be very scientific. Are we so naive as to think we are talking only about America's sixty families—or are we ready to include millions of people, of divergent social types and origins, whom we are all supporting and subsidizing by our taxes without any kind of representation except that which is achieved through a national or local lottery, called voting, every two or three years?

Many people recognize that technological man/woman has outstripped ethical or politically conscious and socially responsible man/woman. This too is the result of dialectical development.

Technological man/woman developed because human beings had to discover how to keep warm, how to make fire, how to grow food, how to build dams, how to dig wells. Therefore human beings were compelled to manifest their humanity in their technological capacity, to discover the power within them to invent tools and techniques which would extend their material powers. We have concentrated our powers on making things to the point that we have intensified our greed for more things, and lost the understanding of why this productivity was originally pursued. The result is that the mind of man/woman is now totally out of balance, totally out of proportion.

That is what production for the sake of production has done to modern man/woman. That is the basic contradiction confronting everyone who has lived and developed inside the United States. That is the contradiction which neither the U.S. government nor any social force in the United States up to now has been willing to face, because the underlying philosophy of this country, from top to bottom, remains the philosophy that economic development can and will resolve all political and social problems.

## 7

# REDISCOVERING THE AMERICAN PAST

Every revolution is a struggle to resolve the particular contradictions which have evolved out of a particular past. Every country's past is particular, but America's past is so particular that it almost seems to have evolved on another planet. Except for the native Americans, whom Europeans named Indians, everyone in this country is a descendant of someone who came here from another continent and another culture less than four hundred years ago—in most cases, much less. The economic, social, and political institutions of this country have been shaped by the struggles of very real and very different people, mostly of humble origin and all seeking to make a new and prosperous life for themselves here, on this earth, as quickly as possible, regardless of the cost to other peoples, especially to those of different ethnic backgrounds, and to future generations. They have thus made it inevitable that at some future time the American people would be compelled to face with sober senses the real, i.e., historical, conditions of their lives and their relations with their kind.

As the Indians were meeting in the eleventh century, somewhere near Ticonderoga, to reconcile the territorial claims of different tribes, they had no idea that technical advances in navigation and