

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**MARXISM AND NATIONALISM: THE MISLEADING
EUROPEAN HERITAGE**

**being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in the University of Hull

by

EPHRAIM JOSEPH NIMNI, BA (Hebrew), MA (Essex)

APRIL 1987

18 MAY 1961

Summary of Thesis submitted for Ph.D. degree

by Ephraim J. Nimni

on

Marxism and Nationalism: The Misleading European Heritage

The aim of the present study on the classical Marxist European Heritage on the national question is to establish the causes for the recurrent intellectual and political inability of this tradition to conceptualise and explain the nature of the national phenomenon.

The main hypothesis of this thesis is that there is a recurrent thematic unity between the different European schools of Marxism, despite the considerable intellectual and political differences between the different European Marxist traditions.

This thematic unity is called the Marxist parameters of analysis of the national phenomenon, and it consists of the theory of the universal evolution of the forces of production, the theory of Economic reductionism, and the Eurocentric bias in the discussion of the universal process of change.

The works on the national question of Marx and Engels, Luxemburg, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lenin, Stalin, Gramsci and Bauer are evaluated in this work to show how this thematic unity operates in the various competing Marxist approaches.

The theories of Antonio Gramsci and Otto Bauer were found to be more sensitive to the multifarious nature of the national phenomenon because they are less bound to the above-mentioned parameters of analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1:	
The Marxist Parameters on the Analysis of the National Phenomenon	10
The Marxist Theory of Evolution	13
The Question of Economic Determination	25
The Question of Eurocentrism	40
CHAPTER 2:	
Marx, Engels and the National Question	47
The Pattern: "State - Language - Nation"	49
The Terminological Ambiguity	60
The Theory of the Nations "Without History"	66
Rosdolsky's Critique of the Concept of "Non-Historical Nations"	88
CHAPTER 3:	
The Second International and the National Question	97
The Ephinomenalist Analysis of the National Question: Kautsky and Luxemburg	99
The National Question on Kautsky's Work	102
The Rejection of the Nation: The Work of Rosa Luxemburg	108
Revisionism and the National Question	120
Bernstein's Critique of Classical Marxism	123
Bernstein and the National Question	131

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

	Page
CHAPTER 4:	
Marxism - Leninism and the National Question	144
The Emphasis on the Political Dimension: the Organisational Question	147
The Conceptualisation of the Revolution	152
Imperialism and the Notion of "Uneven Development"	157
The Marxist Leninist Theory of the National Question	167
Stalin and the National Question	193
CHAPTER 5:	
Gramsci and the National Question	202
Hegemony in the Gramscian Tradition	207
The Gramscian Conceptualisation of the National Question	225
CHAPTER 6:	
The Background to Bauer's Theory: Austria and the National Question	249
The Nationalities Problem in the Twilight of Austro-Hungary	250
The Specificity of Austrian Socialism	261
The Theoretical Impact of Austro-Marxism	273
The Neo-Kantian Critique of Marxism and Adler's Response	278
CHAPTER 7:	
Otto Bauer and the National Question	291
The Context of Bauer's Work	292
The Conceptualisation of Nations in Bauer's Work	297
Bauer's Theory of National Evolution	332
CONCLUSION	356
BIBLIOGRAPHY	370

Introduction

The conceptualisation of the national phenomena presents a series of difficulties and contradictions for modern social theories. Since the emergence of both Marxism and Sociology the concern of theory has been to explain social phenomena by constantly refining a universal logic. Slowly but surely, the apparent mystery of specificities and localisms was to be unraveled by the penetrating forces of logically refined and empirically tested theories. Their task was supposed to enhance human perceptions of social realities - much in the same way as the theory of gravity and the theory of relativity were supposed to enhance the understanding of the way in which the universe works. The Tower of Pisa and the Newtonian Apple were no longer self contained phenomena, but the result of the laws of gravity, an aprioristic condition that transcended the immediate existence of the tower and the apple. Thus, the modern concept of causality emerged in Physics as the at times empirical, at times theoretical, ascertainable combination of conditions which is usually followed by a predictable occurrence which constitutes its effect.¹

This analytical logic has exercised a profound impact in social theory. Sociology and Marxism were (and are) unmistakably shaped by this form of analysis, the aim of which is to explain specific and localised problems in terms of an overall developmental logic. Specificities and localisms are both anomalies to account for, and stumbling blocks for the efficient performance of those theories. It is, then, no coincidence that Sociology and Marxism have little sympathy for any social phenomenon that resists being subsumed by an all-inclusive logic of analysis.

1. "Evolution", in C. D. Renning (ed) Encyclopaedia of Marxism, Communism and Western Society, New York, Herder & Herder, 1972-73. p.241

The resilience of the multi-faceted national phenomenon is perhaps one of the most obstinate forms of social relativism: nationalism preaches the importance of the specific over the general. It provides lengthy justifications for why the national movement is "unique", and why it should be considered a special case. At the same time, attempts to explain the nature of the national phenomenon in universal terms have clashed with a diverse reality that resists such monocausal explanations. As in the case of classical sociology, it is, then, no coincidence that classical Marxism was logically poised to reject the claims to specificity and uniqueness of nationalist ideologies.

The "national question", did not disappear because "classical Marxism" wished it to. What really happened was the opening of an amazing theoretical gap in the Marxist tradition, a gap that was often covered up by invoking insensitive and stereotypical formulations that had more to do with a religious dogma than with a tradition that claims to "understand" -let alone "transform" - the social arena. Marxist discussions of nationalism were, with few and relatively unknown exceptions, clouded in epiphenomenological terminology. Concrète cases of nationalist agitation were to to be explained in terms of the class struggle or of a pervasive "false consciousness" that distracted the workers from their real aim: the destruction of the bourgeois order.

The purpose of this work is to try to understand and evaluate the failures of European Marxism to come to grips with the national phenomenon. That the European Marxist tradition flourished and developed outside the area of influence of European culture, is evident for all to see. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the generalisation and universalisation of a developmental logic that has its historical origins in the European continent is one of the key components of the Marxist failure in conceptualising the multifarious forms of the national

phenomenon. It is, therefore essential to understand the European Marxist tradition in detail, not in order to ascertain its general validity, but on the contrary, to discover its historical specificity, so that the widespread and pernicious error of generalising on the basis of the European experience is successfully avoided.

The failure of European Marxism to adequately understand and conceptualise the national phenomenon is acknowledged by most contemporary writers on the subject. The constant repetition of stereotyped formulas, and the impossibility of providing an adequate conceptual and theoretical analysis of the problem, moved Tom Nairn to open the theoretical section of his thought provoking book The Break up of Britain, with a statement of despair:

The theory of Nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure. It may have others as well, and some of these have been more debated: Marxism's shortcomings over imperialism, the state, the falling rate of profit and the immiseration of the masses are certainly old battlefields. Yet none of these is as important, as fundamental, as the problem of nationalism, either in theory or in political practice.²

Nairn goes on to argue that this failure was inevitable, but that we are now in a position to understand it. However, there is nothing inevitable about it - unless the paradigms of Eurocentric evolutionism and economic reductionism become the uncontested features of Marxist discourse.

Another widespread and not less influential Marxist argument

2. T. Nairn, The Break up of Britain, New Left Books, London 1977, second expanded edition, 1981, p. 329

attempts to show the impossibility of a specific analysis of the national question. According to this position, every national formation would have its own internal logic which is not translatable to other situations. The essence of the argument is that there is no "National Question" but "national questions". The apparent plural relativism of this interpretation is paradoxically the result of the deterministic unity of the main theme of classical Marxism. This is the depressing argument that *social classes are the sole and unique agents of social transformation*, and consequently, the diversity of national question is the expression of the impact of this unique and privileged agency in a plurality of conjunctural situations. Thus, the impossibility of theorizing on the national phenomenon stems from the assertion that, ultimately, the national phenomenon has no logic of its own, but its transformations are only the reflection of the laws of motion of political economy. The superficial plurality and flexibility of this analysis appears to be a convenient way of hiding and excusing the dogmatic unity of the theoretical stance that sustains it.

The purpose of this work will be to establish that this interpretation was both intellectually abortive and politically disastrous. It caused a theoretical blindness within the main stream Marxist tradition that was responsible for many important defeats of Marxism in the West. The importance of the national question for the socialist movement is dramatically exemplified by the fact that the contemporary success of every Marxist movement in the non European world - and outside the area of influence of the Red Army - took place when Marxism operated in conjunction with powerful national sentiments and movements.

In trying to evaluate the significance of Marxism's European heritage on the national question, it will first be argued that the most influential European discussions on the national phenomenon show a recurrent "thematic unity" and a relative cohesive line of argument despite important political and intel-

lectual differences between them. The theoretical and epistemological basis of this thematic unity will be called the Marxist Parameters of Analysis of the National Question. These parameters are the theory of the universal evolution of the forces on production, the theory of economic reductionism, and the Eurocentric bias in concrete discussions of the universal process of change.

Following an account of these parameters, the work of Marx and Engels on the national question will be then analysed. Contrary to the generalised opinion that the positions of the founding fathers of historical materialism on the national question were informed by circumstantial events, it will be argued that their positions, contained within the above mentioned parameters, exhibit a good deal of coherence and unity. This is so despite the fact that their positions were never comprehensively stated in any single work or sustained argument.

The work on the national question of the most influential figures of the Second International will be evaluated. Contrary to the assertion that at the time of the Second International, Marxist theory was not codified as a rigid orthodoxy, it will be argued that the main works of the different and conflicting traditions were, in various degrees, influenced by the above mentioned parameters of analysis. In all cases they failed to adequately conceptualise the national phenomenon. Marxism-Leninism had to break with the distortive rigidities of the Second International in order to make sense of the diverse Russian reality. It will be argued that this partial break sensitized this tradition to the political dimension of the national phenomenon. Marxism-Leninism nevertheless retained a class reductionist perspective that severely limited its analytical and political ability to come to grips with all aspects of the national arena. The work of Antonio Gramsci provided a partial, but important break with the parameters of analysis of classical Marxism. Gramsci's conceptualisation of important aspects of the

political arena outside the paradigmatic field of class determination constitutes a definitive improvement in the ability of the Marxist tradition to conceptualise multifarious forms of the national existence. But Gramsci remained insensitive to the plurality of the national arena, and particularly to the existence and development of different ethno-national communities within the framework of the same state. Gramsci took for granted that states are "national", concealing in this way the problematic relation between national community and state.

But above all, the work of Otto Bauer will be considered as providing the most important breakthrough in developing categories of analysis located outside the restrictive influence of the limiting parameters of analysis of classical Marxism. Notions such as "the community of fate" and the "national character", appear to be useful categories of analysis when stripped off from the essentialism of the nationalist discourse. However, some important aspects of Bauer's work remain trapped in the straitjacket of economic reductionism. The class reductionism of his historical case studies appears to contradict the richness and multidimensionality of his theoretical analysis. In this sense "two different Bauers" appear to be writing on the "Nationalitätenfrage". The first, the Austro-Marxist intellectual, fresh out of the environment of fin-de-siècle Vienna, writes with brilliant and innovative ideas matured through his debate with Max Adler against the neo-Kantians and classical Marxism. The second, the party man, is loyal to the dogmas of economistic Marxism and is severely restrained by the need to demonstrate allegiance to the doctrinal teachings of Marx and Engels.

The terminology used in the Marxist tradition to refer to the "national arena" belongs to a highly contested field. It is, therefore, important to clarify the meaning of certain key terms used in this work. The term Classical Marxism is used to define a tradition which sees social classes as protagonists of the

process of social transformation. It also refers to "original" theoretical statements of historical materialism. Classical Marxists referred to the National Question as the totality of political, cultural, ideological, economic and legal relations within and between national communities. I see no reason not to continue using this term, which is interchangeable with national phenomenon. Nations are for classical Marxists fully formed national communities, usually in possession of a national state. Nationalities are national communities not fully developed as nations. The distinction between these two concepts is ambiguous and unclear, so the term national communities will be used instead to cover both cases. This term also highlights the cultural and communitarian aspects of the national phenomenon. A national state is the ideal and usually unobtainable synthesis between a complete national community and a state. Whenever the term "nation" is used it will denote a closer connection with the national state rather than with the national community. Nationalism is a political and ideological movement whose main concern is the well-being of the national community - be it real or fictitious. Sometimes nationalisms "make" national communities. Nationalism was unanimously defined by classical Marxists as a bourgeois phenomenon alien to Marxism.

Many people have helped and supported me during the long and drawn-out process of writing this thesis. I am grateful to the University of Hull and to the department of Sociology & Social Anthropology for granting me the postgraduate scholarship that made this thesis possible. My foremost obligations are to my teachers. My supervisor Dr. Ivar P. Oxaal who over the last six years has provided the right mix of license and discipline, friendship and the warmth of his happy family home, combined with intellectual rigor and stimulating discussions. Dr. Anthony D. Smith first introduced me as an undergraduate student at the Hebrew University - by the way of a thought provoking seminar - to the paradoxes of the national phenomenon, allowing me to translate into sociological concepts deep rooted existential ex-

periences. At Essex Dr. Maxine Molyneux, having taught me as a post-graduate, encouraged the development of my thoughts on the national question. I have had the good fortune of being taught by one of the outstanding and original intellectual thinkers of contemporary Marxism, Dr. Ernesto Laclau -el maestro- who had profound and lasting influence in my intellectual development. At Hull, Dr. Talal Asad guided me through the rigors of theoretical analysis with his insightful and constructive criticism. His tuition and friendship - as that of Dr. Tania Baker - were a constant source of encouragement. I am grateful to Martin Shaw's illuminating criticism and patient help (as the editor of Marxist Sociology Revisited), in transforming a collection of earlier versions of chapters of this thesis into a coherent article.

The hazards of contemporary academic life pushed me into academic nomadism, in the course of which I meet many people who have encouraged me to persist in the existential and intellectual endeavor of unraveling the problems of the national question. I am grateful for the support of my colleague and friend Dr. Aziz Heidar, with whom I share, right from the days of our common undergraduate experiences at the Hebrew University, an existential and intellectual interest in the national question. I am also grateful for the stimulating discussions on Austro-Marxism with my friends Gregoris Ananiadis and Blanca Mufiz, and the invaluable help of with the German texts of Dr. Gabrielle Mikoleit. I wish to express my gratitude to the Dr. Karl-Renner Institut in Vienna and to Professor Gerhard Botz of Salzburg University for giving me the opportunity to read a paper on the conference on the occasion of the centenary of Otto Bauer's birth, on which I received interesting and useful comments of particular relevance to the thesis, particularly from Genosse Manfred Ackerman. At Keele University Professor Emeritus Ronald J. Frankenberg, Dr. John Law, Dr. Athar Hussain, Dr. Ursula Sharma and Mr. Gordon Fife provided me with stimulating feedbacks over parts of this thesis. I am grateful for the friendship and support of the Head of the Sociology division at Thames Polytechnic, Dr. Philip

Schlesinger with whom I had long and stimulating discussions on the national question, as well as for the thought provoking debates with Dr. Nira Yuval Davis - friend, colleague and comrade - with whom I share the dearest dream of a Palestine where Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs exercise their national rights in peace freedom and equality. I wish also to thank Professor Bill Brugger head of the Discipline of Politics at the Flinders University of South Australia, for his helpful and stimulating comments on various chapters of this thesis. I also have a debt of gratitude to Mr. Norman Wintrop, who carefully read an earlier draft of this thesis and made perceptive and insightful suggestions. I am also grateful for the caring support of my friends Professor Bryan S. Turner (D.Litt) and Dr. Karen Lane during the last and crucial moments of writing this thesis. I am grateful to Peter Vintila for his help with German texts and for translating parts of this thesis into acceptable English. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Inter Library Loans staff at Flinders University who had uncomplainingly and efficiently pursued my idiosyncratic requests for references in German, Spanish, Italian and French.

Typists usually get a brief mention in a works acknowledgment. It is perhaps a symptomatic expression of the period in which we live that my gratitude is to my Personal Computer and Word Processor, without which the task of writing up this thesis would have been an immensely long and drawn out exercise. It is also perhaps an expression of unfixed and contradictory tendencies of contemporary post industrial capitalism that I have great reservations on the political wisdom of the use of new technology. I thank Professor Brugger for introducing me to this revolutionary form of writing.

Adelaide, South Australia, April 1987

Chapter 1 : The Marxist Parameters on the Analysis of the National Phenomenon

A social order never perishes before all the productive forces for which it is broadly sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the womb of the old society.¹

Before attempting to assess the failures and successes of the Marxist tradition in evaluating the nature of the national phenomenon, a point of departure of the theoretical discussion must be established. In proposing that there is a paradigm that gives a degree logical coherence and sense of purpose to the various Marxist analyses of the national phenomenon, it becomes imperative to try and establish the theoretical basis for this argument. The paradigm that shapes the analytical premises of the Marxist theory of the national phenomenon will be called **parameters for the analysis of the national phenomenon**. The aim of this chapter will be to identify and describe these parameters and to delimit their influence on the discussions to be reviewed in the following chapters.

The parameters for the discussion of the Marxist theory of the National Question, refer to three areas of analysis that are widely considered crucial for the nature of Historical Materialism: The theory of Evolution, the Theory of The Economic Determination of the Forces of Production and a derivative

1. K. Marx, A contribution to a Critique of Political Economy, various editions, published in London in 1859, the same year and place where C. Darwin published "The Origin of the Species.

category of both, the Eurocentric bias in the analysis of concrete case studies.

The theory of Evolution, within Marxism refers to an understanding of social transformation as a process which can be grasped in universal laws of historical development. History is understood as a progressive series of transformations through universal and hierarchically defined stages. These stages of transformation lead to the classless society of the future. There are many variations of this theory, but in broad terms, it is accepted by the vast majority of schools that constitute the Marxist tradition.

The second parameter is the theory of the economic determination of the forces of production. This theory is a form of economic reductionism, because it declares that all meaningful changes within the social arena take place in the sphere of economic (class) relations. Marx himself expressed this theory in terms of his well known metaphoric distinction between base and superstructure. The "base" referred to the sphere of economic relations that constituted social classes; the "superstructure" designated a residual topographical area in which all other (non-class) social processes occurred. According to this theory, the "superstructure" is shaped and determined, after various stages of more or less complex mediations, by the activities and processes of change that occur at the level of the "base". This conceptualisation of relations of causality has been expressed in a variety of ways by different Marxist traditions, and its most influential version is the so-called theory of "determination in the last instance". A critical review of this theory drawing on the seminal works of A. Cutler, B. Hindess, P. Hirst, A. Hussain, E. Laclau and C. Mouffe² follows.

2. Marx "Capital" and Capitalism Today, Vol II, Routledge and Kegan, London 1978. Mode of Production and Social Formations, London MacMillan 1977, Politics and Ideology in the Marxist

The third parameter, the Eurocentric bias in concrete case studies is, strictly speaking, derived from the two previously discussed parameters. It is not a separate analytical category, and cannot be understood without reference to economic reductionism or the theory of evolution. It warrants separate consideration however, because of its important methodological consequences when the Marxist analysis of the national phenomenon is applied to the non European world. It will be argued that the Marxist tradition is trapped in the paradoxical situation of claiming to be a universal theory of social emancipation, while it uses an ethnocentric methodology to conceptualise social formations located outside the area of Western culture.

Eurocentrism, then, refers to the construction of a model of development which universalises empirically observed European categories of development: the process of social transformation in different societies is understood and conceptualised in terms of the Western developmental rationale; the more "advanced" industrial society shows to the less developed "The Image of its own future".³

In the balance of this chapter, this paradigm will be described and evaluated so that the subsequent discussion of the Marxist Theories of the National Question could be located in the context of the parameters that constitute this paradigm.

Theory, New Left Books, London 1977, Gramsci & Marxist Theory Routledge and Kegan 1977 and Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Verso 1985.

3. K. Marx, Capital, preface to the first German edition, vol 1. p. 19, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1977

The Marxist Theory of Evolution

The concept of "evolution" in the abstract sense is one of those rarities in the history of ideas which both, made an enormous and lasting impact in the different branches of the social sciences, and at the same time provided a very plausible and not less influential paradigm in the natural sciences. At first sight it seems that the logic that lies behind this widely current concept, realised the long cherished dream of many philosophers and scientists to find the organising principle that rules both the natural and social worlds.

Karl Marx was determined to establish that "scientific" and "objective" laws of motion were equally applicable to the social and natural worlds. He found in the success of the theory of evolution in the natural sciences of his days a tangible and a "valuable" source of encouragement to his belief that an objective and scientific analysis of the process of social transformation was both possible and desirable. In considering the framework of the process of social transformation, Marx reasoned as follows:

...it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformations of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of the natural sciences, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic, in short ideological forms...⁴

Consequently, if the process of social transformation could be explained and predicted with "the rigor and precision of the natural sciences", an overall law of these general process is not -----

4. K. Marx, Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, various editions and publishers

only a theoretical possibility but a methodological necessity to legitimise the Marxian claim to scientificity. Subjective or "individual" explanations are not very important because human beings are not always aware of the teleological nature of historical development. Conjunctural explanations have to be deduced from the general model to gain "scientific validity":

...just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such an epoch of transformations by its consciousness, but on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between social forces of production and the relations of production.⁵

If this is the case, then the crucial factor in explaining social change is not a heuristic "self explanation" of social developments, but the overall universal mechanism that made possible the process of social transformation. For Marx, as for various subsequent generations of Marxists, the relationship "humanity- nature", is at the same time the "natural" history of humanity and the very place where "human essence" is constituted through the process of labour and production. Consequently there is only one universal history, that of human beings in relation to nature. This relation constitutes the locus of the history of production, of industry and of science.⁶

For classical Marxism then, the process of human transformation neither operates in a vacuum nor it is a random event. It conforms to a certain universal logic, and the center of this

5. *ibid.*

6. L. Krader, "The Theory of Evolution" in E. Hobsbawm (ed.) History of Marxism, London 1982 p. 192. English translation of vol. 1 of *op. cit.* Storia del Marxismo

logic is located in the dialectical relation humanity-nature. This results in a transformative synthesis which is at the very heart of the form and direction of the process of change of the productive forces. Why are the productive forces given such a privileged position?. this is the theme of the next section of this chapter. For the moment it will be sufficient to note that this constant process of transformation of the productive forces is the causal factor, the "engine" of social change. This general process of transformation of the productive forces has a universal character, and determines the content of what appears to be a conjunctural format. Thus, human history is for classical Marxism, a process of hierarchical evolution strictus sensus. The contradictions of endogenous forces lead humanity from one stage of development to another, creating in this way an unbroken hierarchical connection from one level to the next.⁷

For classical Marxism, the history of humanity is developmental by definition owing to two crucial considerations:

- a) human beings emerged out the animal-nature stage of history, because of their ability to transform nature through labour.
- b) The process of human labour and the mode of appropriation of nature causes the evolution of human history via the process of development of the productive forces.

This notion of development as an evolutionary sequence from a lower to a higher stage is not only expressed in the abstract prose of Marx's Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, but also finds concrete expression in the works of Marx on the European as well as the non-European world. It is present in the works of Engels and, as will be shown in the following chapters, it is the basis for Kautsky's, Luxemburg's

7. *ibid.* p. 194

and Bernstein's discussions of both, the general analysis of social change, and the more concrete discussion of the national phenomenon. It was so entrenched in the thoughts of turn of the century Marxists and it became the axiomatic point of departure of the mechanistic Marxism of the Second International and the focus for the theoretical debates between the Second and Third international. The works of Marx and Engels show clear examples of this analytical logic, which are of great relevance to the ongoing discussion on the national phenomenon. Thus, in the introduction to the first volume of Capital one reads:

In this work I have to examine the Capitalist Mode of Production and the conditions of production and exchange corresponding to that mode. Up to the present time, their classic ground is England.... If, however, the German reader shrugs his shoulders at the condition of the English industrial and agricultural labourers, or in optimistic fashion comforts himself with the thought that in Germany things are not nearly so bad; I must plainly tell him, "De te fabula narratur" (it is a tale told for you). Intrinsically, it is not a question of the higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms that result from the natural laws of capitalist production. It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies working with iron necessity towards inevitable results. The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future (emphasis added).⁸

Also, in that same introduction, in the section in which Marx explains the scope and aims of his monumental work he returns to the same theme - this time in way that is directly related to the ongoing discussion on the national question:

8. K. Marx, Capital, Vol 1, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1977, p 19.

One nation can and should learn from others. And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement- and it is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society- it can neither clear by bold leaps nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs.(emphasis added)⁹

The theory of progress and linear development explicitly presented in both the above quotations does not leave any doubt as to the meaning and direction of the process of social evolution in the work of Marx. This may also explain the sympathy that classical Marxists had for Darwin's theories of natural evolution. Marx wrote that Darwin provides a "natural scientific" basis for the class struggle in history, dealing a "death blow" to teleology in natural sciences.¹⁰ From Darwin's work, extracted the crucial premise for his own theory of social evolution: the unity of natural and human history. In this sense, the work of Marx and that of Darwin appear to abide by the same methodological principles: it is the universal and orderly transformation from one stage to another that defines the coherence of the process of evolution. But this should not mean Marx's theory of evolution, and Darwin's theory of the evolution of the species are reducible to each other. This would be a simplification of both influential paradigms. It is important to note in relation to the ongoing discussion on the Marxist conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, however, that Marx and Darwin shared a set of epistemological premises which provided the rationale for a similar methodology, but also that the

9. *ibid.* p. 20

10. K. Marx in a letter to F. Lassalle, quoted in *op. cit.* L. Krader, "the theory of evolution", p. 196

theoretical similarities end there. Marx and classical Marxists believed that Darwin's theory gave strength to the historical-materialist case, because it used a methodology which at the time was considered the embodiment of scientificity in the Natural Sciences, and consequently, conferred upon the methodological premises of historical materialism a "scientific" and "objective" aura. Classical Marxists believed that the Marxist case was immensely strengthened by examples from outside the realm of social history, and by the works of thinkers, philosophers and natural scientists which, while not adhering to the social principles of historical materialism, provided scientific examples that justified the validity of the theory and method of Historical Materialism. Such was for Marx the importance of Darwin's work on the evolution of the species, and also, the validity of the work of Morgan, a politically conservative American ethnologist. Marx and Engels quoted Morgan's works on social evolution not because they shared in Morgan's ideological positions (which they did not), but because he conceptualised a theory of the evolution of societies which in their view, justified the central hypothesis of historical materialism. In the understanding of classical Marxism, Morgan had made an unintended contribution to the justification of the validity of the main premises of the Marxist theory of social evolution, by providing ethnological examples from the study of North American aboriginal societies that validated the historical materialist perception of the logic of historical evolution. In this sense, Morgan was an "involuntary and unconscious agent" in clarifying and understanding "the historical forces of change". England was in the same way, according to Marx, an "unconscious tool" in bringing about social transformation in significant areas of the non European world.

England it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them, but that is not the question. The question is can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of

Asia?. If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.¹¹

This notion of "unconscious and unwilling agents" in the process of social transformation denotes the other important influence in classical Marxism: the Hegelian theory of social evolution. It is worth noting that, the intellectual background against which Marx and Engels developed their theory of evolution was greatly influenced by the then fashionable Hegelian philosophy. The epistemological logic inherited by Marxist theory from Hegelian political philosophy defines social change as caused by a single and universal historical process -which in the Marxist case is the development of the forces of production. This process imposes its logic of change independently from the will of the participating subjects. For Hegel history is not a mere collection of random events. It is the process of development (unfolding) from a level of lesser freedom to a level of absolute freedom mediated through various intermediate stages which signify a relative improvement on previous levels of development. Since for Hegel history is not a mere recording of events, it is possible to read a certain "meaning" or "intention" in the unfolding of history. Thus, history is a coherent process of transformation and it invariably shows a "pattern" of change expressed in the "becoming" of the human agency denoted in a higher degree of freedom embodied in a more sophisticated state. In the Hegelian tradition the stages of evolution towards a higher level of freedom can be clearly indicated. Earlier or "less developed" civilisations must give way to more "advanced" forms of social organisation. The Hegelian agency in this process

11. K. Marx, "The parliamentary debate on India", published in the New York Daily Tribune on 25 June 1853, reprinted in S. Avineri (ed.) Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernisation, Anchor Books, London 1969, p.94

of unfolding is the *Volksgeist*, the "spirit" or "genius" of a national community. It is only in the context of an "organised community" that the higher levels of freedom are achieved. The state is the concrete expression of the *Volksgeist* at any particular conjuncture. For Hegel then, world history is a dialectical relation between "spirits of peoples" and it is objectivised in an orderly universal succession of cultures (*Welthistorische Volkgeister*). This conceptualisation provides the format for the Hegelian theory of evolution which implies an orderly and linear transformation of humanity from lower to higher stages of freedom. In terms of the Hegelian philosophy, the main stages of development are:

Oriental: A static social system epitomised by the absolute power of the monarch. The only "free" person is the Despot.

Greek: This is the model of city states in ancient Greece. Some people are free but others are not.

Roman: At this stage the Greek system is universalised through the Roman Empire.

Christianity: Human freedom is guaranteed by the emergence of subjective consciousness. From this point onwards a process of continuous "unfolding" towards the absolute realisation of the ethical idea of freedom follows.¹²

The influence of this analytical logic on Historical Materialism is clear. In classical Marxism, the metaphysical notions of "Volkgeist" and "unfolding of freedom" are replaced as

12. H. Raybourn, The Ethical Theory of Hegel, Claredon Press, 1967., p. 220 ff. and S. Avineri Hegel's Theory of the Modern State Cambridge 1972, Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.) The State & Civil Society, Cambridge 1984, "Introduction" p. 7 ff.

causal explanations for the process of social change, by the "materialist" notions of "class consciousness" and the "development of the productive forces", but the epistemological basis of the argument remains much the same. An ontologically privileged agency regulates and determines the process of change and no social element can escape this logic of social transformation. National communities as well as all other historical actors have to be temporally located in this universal continuum of social transformation. The classical Marxist assertion that the emergence of modern nations must be located within a concrete period of development of the productive forces is just one tangible expression of this linear conceptualisation of social change. As it will be shown in the following chapters, in classical Marxism the presence of "modern nations" is just a functional expression of the conjunctural stage in the process of development of the productive forces. In this sense, the temporal emergence of the "modern nation" is just one indicator of the level of development of the productive forces: it is the concrete expression of bourgeois hegemony over the political arena. Thus national communities and nationalist movements are evaluated not in their own specific configuration, but in terms of their capacity to "advance" or delay the process of development of the productive forces, or at least, the concrete political concrete expression of the latter.

To summarise the argument advanced so far: The classical Marxist evaluation of the process of evolution of the forces of production implies the following two contentions:

- 1) Social Evolution is cumulative and relatively linear.
- 2) The major stages of development of the productive forces are universal.

In view of the universality of this process, every concrete observable phenomena is required to "fit" within this paradigm-

matic framework. Thus, the classical Marxist explanation of concrete social phenomena implies a teleological bias, since the location of the event under consideration has been parametrically decided prior to the evaluation of the event under consideration by the universal laws of social transformation. This indeed, as it will be shown in the following chapters, has been the fate of most classical Marxist conceptualisations of the national arena. A discussion of the features of a concrete national community is in most cases translated in to the evaluation of the position of the concrete national community under consideration within the evolving process of transformation of the forces of production. This is the essence of the classical Marxist epistemological stance. A nation must be located within a developmental process and the connection between the concrete national community under consideration and the universal process of social transformation is never questioned at the level of the analysis of concrete national movements.

A second dimension of the evolutionist parameter relevant to the ongoing discussion on the national phenomena is that classical Marxism assumes the unity of humanity under a universal form of rationality. It implicitly rejects various forms of relativism and pluralism by taking for granted a universal form of human behaviour that results from the same material conditions of production. In other words there is here an underestimation of cultural factors since they cannot be easily derived from historical materialist categories of analysis. Classical Marxism takes for granted the transferability of technocratic rationality and institutional models of social organisation in similar material conditions. While differences and specificities are recognised, they are not considered essential if they cannot be derived in a relation of causality from the most meaningful factors that configure the material base.

The existence of a technological and organisational teleology in models of development is not confined to Marxism alone.

The theories of modernisation in sociology suffer from a similar bias in the analysis of social change. In this sense it is interesting to note the common ground of classical marxism and various theories of modernisation in conceptualising social evolution as universal, cumulative and relatively linear. This significant assumption is shared but not acknowledged by traditions that otherwise provide competing interpretations of the forms of social organisation. What is perplexing about this is that classical Marxism always claims awareness of the historical relativity of ideas, particularly those upheld by ruling classes. In this sense, classical Marxism will easily recognize the historical specificity and teleological bias of dominant ideas derived from competing traditions, while being blind to, and unaware of, the historical relativity of its own cultural and intellectual origins. Marxist epistemology prevents classical Marxism from engaging in a "Marxist analysis of Marxist consciousness". It prevents Marxism from locating and interpreting its own tradition within the cultural and intellectual rationale of a given historical period. Classical Marxism is blind to the possibility that its theory of cumulative, linear and universal evolution was the *Zeitgeist* of a certain historical period which witnessed both, the industrial revolution, and the colonial expansion of western political power - and their related forms of intellectual, cultural, and military domination. This acknowledgement would have necessitated the recognition of the ideological nature of historical materialism, an unthinkable event in the context of the epistemological logic of classical Marxism.

Classical Marxism equated both, its principles of social evolution and the principles of "natural" evolution with sound criteria of scientificity. Marx saw in the impressive advances of the natural science of his time a further justification for the logic of historical materialism. He borrowed from the later what he considered to be "scientific" criteria of objectivity. In this way, classical Marxism failed to understand the specificity and non reducibility of the realm of the social, preferring instead

to use a logic of analysis legitimised by the criterion of scientificity then prevalent in the natural sciences. Only those Marxist schools that seriously engaged in a debate with the neo-Kantian tradition or with this tradition's heirs in the social sciences developed some awareness of the problem of the specificity of the forms of the social. As will be shown in chapters 5 and 7, the Gramscian and Austro-Marxist traditions developed a broader sensitivity to the multifarious nature of the national phenomenon precisely because they were prepared to critically discuss the blind Marxist appropriation of the methodological principles of turn of the century natural sciences. Peter Worsley makes this point clear with his characteristically unambiguous style:

The rise of Modern Physics after Marx's death, gave rise to much more relativistic conceptions of law than those Marx used. And in the social sciences, the Neo Kantian school was to argue that social action in any case, was different in kind from what went on in nature, since people possessed consciousness, both individuals and groups reflected upon what they were doing and upon what was happening to them. Hence varying interpretations could be put upon the "same" situation, drawing upon different cultural resources (ideologies, utopias, theories of all kinds). Hence it was quite fundamental in analyzing social life, to understand these subjective ideas, the "meanings" that informed the behaviour of people, but which were problematic in studying Nature, since rocks do not think and electrons do not feel frustration.¹³

In subsequent chapters it will be shown how the classical Marxist understanding of social evolution in terms of a cumula-

13. P. Worsley, Marx and Marxism, Tavistock Publications, London 1982 p. 71

tive, linear and universal process of change, and the related need to locate every "superstructural" phenomena within this epistemological stance, desensitized the classical Marxist tradition to the multidimensionality of the national phenomenon. The classical Marxist perception of the linear evolution of the forces of production aborted any possibility of understanding the specificity of the national arena. The second parameter of analysis will be now discussed: Economic reductionism.

The Question of Economic Determination

Since the early seventies, a set of seminal works within the Marxist tradition have discussed the insurmountable theoretical problems that result from the classical Marxist conceptualisation of the primacy of the economy in a number of ways.¹⁴ Before this period, this argument was not considered problematic, with the possible exception of The Frankfurt School, The Austro-Marxist tradition, and up to a limited extent, the work of Gramsci. This absence of discussion seems bizarre today, particularly when the theoretical and methodological difficulties of classical Marxism in confronting complex social conjunctures - which defy monocausal explanations based on unilinear chains of relationships - are noted. One of these difficulties -perhaps the most complex- refers to the ability (or rather, the inability) of Marxism to explain the existence of Nationalist Movements. In view of the difficulties in explaining the existence and political activity of nationalist movements from the point of view of the rationale of the evolving forces of production, classical Marxist explanations were forced to use a battery of concepts and ideas that were at best ingenious theoretical contortions of perceptive insights - contorted to comply with the dogmatic dictum of the

14. I wish to express my intellectual indebtedness to the works of op. cit., Laclau, Mouffe, Hirst, Cutler et. al., all of whom influenced my critical stance on economism.



economic model.

While Marx and Engels were largely justified in criticising the idealist and metaphysical speculations of German Idealism, they did not build adequate safeguards into their theory to prevent their disciples falling into the mirror image metaphysical stance: the mechanistic and reductionist interpretation of the process of social change. As a result of this situation, in the period that followed the death of the founding fathers of Historical Materialism, the main-stream Marxist tradition tilted towards a rigid and mechanistic method of analysis, which reached its peak around the turn of the century. This was also the period in which the national question was of paramount importance for the then young European socialist movement. While the Bolshevik tradition offered a partial renovation by criticizing the worst excesses of the mechanistic Marxism of the Second International, the economic reductionist perspective remained in full swing within the confines of this tradition. This time it was elevated to a category of dogma by political movement that regarded itself as the *avant-garde* of the proletariat, and which dismissed criticism with an unique sense of self righteousness unknown before within the Marxist tradition. But if the end of Stalinism and the subsequent disenchantment with the Soviet system, coupled with the identity crisis of the European working class brought about more innovative and daring analytical approaches during the seventies and eighties, very little of this fruitful innovation has been used to revive the ailing Marxist analysis of the national question. Undoubtedly there are many reasons for this prolonged lack of analytical creativity, but it would not be an exaggeration to say that the dogma of economic reductionism has been one of the most powerful inhibiting factors in the development of a more imaginative analytical stance on the national question. The principal aim of this work will be to indicate the devastating effect of economism on a number of Marxist analysis of the national phenomenon. This is an essential first step for the development of a more sensitive theoretical understanding of

the multifarious phenomenon under consideration. But before this is done, it is essential to indicate what it is meant by the terms "Economism" and "Economic Reductionism".

The terms Economism and Economic Reductionism will be used in an interchangeable manner in the ongoing discussion of the national phenomenon indicate those aspects of the Marxist theory that assert that fundamental causal agencies in the process of social transformation are derived from the activities of classes and the resulting class relations. According to the economic argument, these class relations determine, through a more or less complex process of mediations the overall pattern and direction of the process of social change. This analytical mode is best exemplified in Marx's metaphorical division of the arena of the social between Base and Superstructure.

.. the general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows. In their social production of their existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation of which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, is their social being that determines their consciousness.¹⁵

15. K. Marx, Preface and Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, op. cit p. 3, various editions.

As Marx rightly asserts in the above citation, this thesis about the determination of the forces of production became a guiding principle not only of his own work, but of the mainstream Marxist tradition. Thus, the basic tenets of economic reductionism could perhaps be summarised in the following postulates:

- 1) The Base (e.i., the determinant element) can be successfully differentiated from the Superstructure (the determined element) in every social formation.
- 2) The essential features of the process of production are endogenous to the economy.
- 3) The economy exercises a relation of determination in the last instance over the non economic aspects of the social arena.¹⁶

Implicit in the notion of "determination in the last instance" is the idea that the economy can be surgically isolated from the rest of the social structure (otherwise it is impossible to know what determines what). Classical Marxism begins with the assertion that the satisfaction of basic physiological needs is the condition "sine qua non" for the existence of any form of social organisation. For classical Marxism, socialised human existence results from the resolution of the fundamental physiological needs for food and shelter, and this the "primary locus" of material determination. Different ways of organising production and their ensuing social formations represent different ways of solving the basic biological equation outlined above. The chain of causality from the satisfaction of material needs as sketched above, to the more "spiritual" aspects of social existence, is

16. op. cit. Hegemony and Socialist Strategy and Marx's "Capital" and Capitalism Today

best depicted by the other Marxian assertion that *being determines consciousness and not consciousness determines being*. Here it is possible to detect the boundary of the materialist discourse; the area of the "social" is constructed as a derivative residual category of the notion of "being" since the social arena is just securing the conditions of existence of the element "being". The basic one dimensional simplicity of this process of causality cannot be hidden by the construction of the most complex categories of mediation.¹⁷

The notion of economic determination has however a second dimension that completes the privileged position of the forces of production. This is the equation of "Material Existence" and the "Economy" via the concept of production. The Marxist notion of production encapsulates an axiomatic essentiality of human existence, the need to obtain food and shelter to secure the conditions of existence of physiological life. Material existence (being) and production are in this way logically unified in an indivisible field: "being" cannot exist without securing its conditions of existence (production) and it is absurd for something to secure the conditions of existence of what does not exist. If material existence compels production, this compulsion must be located outside the area of voluntary action, otherwise the "compulsion" does not compel. Thus the area of the economy emerges as the realm in which the "dull compulsion of material life", produces the laws of motion of material production independently of human will. This justifies for classical Marxism the primacy (in terms of existential causality) and the objectivity (in terms of its independence from human will) of the economic realm.

The abstract nature of the above discursive construction

17. Cutler et al. Marx "Capital" and Capitalism Today, Vol II, op. cit. p.207 ff.

permits a number of logical permutations, which are connected with some of the methodological disputes that plague the Marxist tradition. One of the most relevant disputes to the ongoing discussion on the national phenomenon is what Chantal Mouffe defined in a illuminating article as the difference between Epiphenomenality and Class Reductionism.¹⁸ Epiphenomenality and Class Reductionism refer to two positions that signify different attitudes towards the so called "superstructural" realm. Epiphenomenality refers to a situation in which every aspect of the so called "superstructural" phenomena is a mere reflection of the economic base. In this sense, a correct understanding of the dynamic of the economic base is a necessary and sufficient condition for a complete explanation of what occurs at the level of the superstructure. The transparent relation between the socio-political and economic spheres does not allow any form of autonomy of the former. Every movement of the "superstructure" is accounted for as a causal reaction to a change taking place at the level of the "base". Thus, the economic relations of production are the unique source of causality. A class reductionist approach represents an important shift of emphasis within the same conceptual framework. Social classes are considered the only possible historical subjects so that ideologies and other "superstructural" phenomena (such as nationalism and the national arena in general) "belong" to the paradigmatic area of influence of a class position. This does not prevent the "superstructural" phenomena to have a certain "relative" autonomy from the economy as a whole. While all type of contradictions are "ultimately" determined by economic (class) positions, they may not reflect transparently the positions of those classes at the economic level. Political and other activities may "advance" or "delay" (according to the circumstances) the outcome of the relations be-

18. C. Mouffe, "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci" in C. Mouffe (ed.) Gramsci and the Marxist Theory, Routledge and Kegan, London 1979, p. 168

tween classes (class struggle). The first form of economic reductionism, epiphenomenality, is best represented in the mechanistic and oversimplified perception of the works of Marx and Engels held mainly by the leading schools of the second international (with the exception of Austro-Marxism). This perception had a devastating effect on the Marxist analysis of the national question, as will be shown in chapter 3. The second position, class reductionism, allows for a limited flexibility in the evaluation of the role of the so called "superstructural" phenomena. It influenced the positions of the Bolsheviks and the Third International as it will be shown in Chapter 4.

The epiphenomenalist interpretation has deservedly lost most of its credibility today, given that the complexity and intricacies of contemporary societies defy the validity of analytical patterns based on relations of causality determined by immutable "iron laws". The epiphenomenalist model is also refuted by "invoking the authority" of the "founding fathers" published after the heyday of the Second International.

The class reductionist paradigm has proven to be more resilient; a number of contemporary Marxist discussion of the national question are still informed by the the class reductionist paradigm.¹⁹ in terms of the ongoing discussion on the Marxist conceptualisation of the national phenomenon the most resilient feature of class reductionism has been the concept of "determination in the last instance". The national phenomenon (as any other "superstructural" agent) cannot, according to this argument, be simply reduced to the effects of economic forces. A more or less complex system of intermediate stages defines the

19. see for example M. Lowy, "Marxism and the National Question", New Left Review, 96, 1976, pp.81-100, and T. Nairn, "The Modern Janus" in The Break Up of Britain, Verso, second edition London, 1981 pp. 327-363

influence of the economic over the cultural and political levels. This creates a "delaying effect", that gives to the so called "superstructure" a relatively autonomous existence. As will be shown in chapter 4, the class reductionist approach displays a limited sensitivity to the specificity and the differential development of various national formations. National communities are not directly subsumed into class ideologies, and may even pre-exist a given class configuration. But the social and behavioral functions must satisfy and secure the conditions of existence of the dominant mode of production. Nationalist movements may act as catalysts for changes that are about to take place or are taking place at the level of the forces of production. As Cutler et al argue with a different example, the non correspondence of the nationalist movement with the dominant forces in the process of production is self-correcting.²⁰ It either reflects a contradiction that cannot be solved at the present stage of development of the productive forces, or it reflects a change that has already taken place in the relations of production. In both cases it is self-correcting because it tends to bring the national dimension "into line" with the paradigmatic field of influence of the productive forces. The realm of the "superstructure" corresponds in the "last instance", with the essential features of the base. Within the Marxist - Leninist tradition, the political presence of a nationalist movement must represent one of the following situations:

- a) Transition to Capitalism: The bourgeoisie has not yet become the hegemonic class and the nationalist movement will assist by consolidating a national state.
- b) Mature Capitalism: The bourgeoisie has achieved its class hegemony and seeks to consolidate political power by strengthening the nationalist movement. In this way it con-

20. Cutler et al. op. cit. 207 ff.

trols the civil society and neutralises the working class.

- c) Colonial Situation: The nationalist movement helps the national bourgeoisie to consolidate power in its struggle against colonial domination.

In this situation the existence of a nationalist movement only indicates the presence of the bourgeoisie, but it does not identify in itself the conjunctural situation or the level achieved in the process of development of the productive forces. This difference is important because in terms of Marxist Leninist revolutionary politics, the stage of development of the productive forces indicated through the ability of the bourgeoisie to consolidate power signals to the working class and its political representatives whether or not the nationalist movement should be supported. Using the conceptual framework derived from Cutler et. al. it is possible to infer that the presence of the nationalist movements represents different positions of the bourgeoisie in the economic realm. Those different positions are important for "the angle of the working class" because they determine whether the nationalist movement should be supported or opposed. However, it is important to note that the two entities, the bourgeoisie and its representative, the nationalist movement, are not identical - otherwise there could not be a relation of representation. Given that these entities are not identical, they must be assumed to have a degree of autonomy from each other. The relative autonomy of the nationalist movement is epistemologically delimited by the parametrical area of influence of the bourgeoisie, and this is the meaning of the concept of "determination in the last instance".

Cutler et. al. rightly argue that the concept of "determination in the last instance", implies an insoluble contradiction, which in the example of the nationalist movement can be conceptualised in the following way:

- a) The nationalist movement represents the bourgeois class. In this case the nationalist movement must be autonomous, since the notion of representation suggests the presence of two separate entities (the representative and the represented).
- b) The nationalist movement is determined in the last instance by the position of the bourgeoisie. In this case the nationalist movement is not autonomous, for if it is autonomous it cannot be determined by an external entity.

Cutler et. al. correctly argue that this contradiction is irresoluble within the parameters of economic reductionism.²¹

The same applies to the concept of National Culture. If national culture is not determined by economic forces it could, under certain conditions, represent the ideas of the ruling class, but this representation is incompatible with the deterministic certainty of the concept of determination in the last instance. There cannot be an epistemological need for the national culture to be determined by the bourgeoisie if it is to represent the latter. But if it is accepted that under certain conditions the national culture represents the ideology of the bourgeoisie, it must be also accepted that there could be other conditions in which the national culture does not represent the ideology of the bourgeoisie, or indeed any class or economic force. This however breaks the epistemological constraints of economic reductionism; it implies a more fruitful way at looking at the national question. This point will be further discussed in the last chapter.

As was shown earlier, the process of production is seen in classical Marxism as the constituting element in the economic domain. All superstructural phenomena are seen as securing the

21. Cutler et. al., op. cit. Vol 2. p.234

conditions of existence of the dominant forces in the process of production. In this situation, the economy must be considered a separate realm that pre-exists the superstructure since the latter is just a supportive element that secures the conditions of existence of the productive forces. Given this conceptual construction, the presence of non economic elements will be always understood as securing the conditions of existence of the economic elements. For example, the state is perceived as securing the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie, etc. As a consequence, the analysis of the state is constrained by an *a priori* concept of the economy to which it has to "fit". An analysis of the state that is not conceptually linked to the need of the dominant forces in the process of production - to secure their conditions of existence - is, strictly speaking, unthinkable within the epistemological parameters of classical Marxism. This why Cutler et. al. define the epistemological discourse that dominates classical Marxism as "dogmatic" and "constraining".²² To make this constrain clear, it becomes necessary to clarify the concept of "epistemology" used in this context.

An epistemology is a form of theoretical discourse which posits both a distinction and a correlation between a realm of discourse on the one hand and a realm of objects specifiable in discourse on the other.²³

In other words, an epistemology creates the conditions for deducing from a relation between concepts a relation between objects. For example, in a functionalist epistemology every single element is conceptualised in terms of an hypothetical function so that it provides for the coherent functioning of the social totality. From here relations between concrete (*empirical*) so-

22. *ibid.* p.221

23. Cutler et al. *op. cit.*, Vol 1 p.211

cial objects are considered in terms of their functional contribution to the existence the social totality. Other considerations are defined as irrelevant. In the same way, a rationalist epistemology conceptually constructs a rational order and deduces from this conceptual construction relations between objects specified in discourse.²⁴ Following Cutler et. al. here, it is possible to say that the thesis on "the determination in the last instance" implies an epistemological stance that renders invalid the object of discourse which is not conceptually determined by a set of relations that do not give ultimate preponderance to the economy. The thesis on the determination in the last instance transposes a set of determinations that are established at the conceptual level into a set of objects specified in discourse, resulting in a situation in which the actual transference is immune to questioning. The conceptual relation between the economy (relations of production, i.e., the "base") and its conditions of existence (State, nation, national culture, etc. i.e. the "superstructure"), is transformed into a relation between objects specified in discourse. In the case of the national phenomenon, if the presence of a nationalist movement is conceptually defined as securing the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie as a class, every concrete nationalist movement must denote the presence of the bourgeoisie, even if this is not clear from the conjunctural situation. Once this conceptual relation is established, then every concrete nationalist movement is analysed in terms of that conceptual reference. Conceptualised in this way, the order of the discourse becomes the order of the "real"²⁵. It is in this way that Cutler et. al. argue that the concept of determination in "the last instance" transforms a relationship between concepts into a relationship between objects specified by those concepts. The conceptual construction is designed to

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*, p. 212-214

"match" an a-priori conceptual analysis with the behaviour of concrete cases. This is, perhaps, one of the most damaging aspects of the economistic model because it tends to define as unimportant all those features that cannot be conceptualised as deducible from the activity of the economic "base", even if this is done through a complex set of mediations. The dogmatic nature of this analysis becomes clear in a situation in which the realm of concepts establishes a relationship between itself and a realm of objects. This situation is then portrayed as a "given" and it becomes immune to further questioning. In the case of the national question, the concept of determination in the last instance obscures the multidimensionality of the national phenomenon by proposing a chain of causality equally applicable to all cases.

To affirm that all claims to knowledge must be measured against discourse of a particular form is in the same movement to render that form immune to further questioning. There can be no demonstration that such- and- such forms of discourse are indeed privileged except by means of forms of discourse that are themselves held to be privileged.²⁶

This is precisely what happens in the classical Marxist discourse of the national question. The discursive practice of economism assumes a set of conceptual relations which are derived from the the notion of the economy and imply that national culture and/or nationalist movements must play the role of securing the conditions of existence of the economic agents that they supposedly represent. The epistemological basis of this conceptualisation prevents any further questioning of the validity of the connection between the economy and the national phenomenon proposed by the the discourse of economic reductionism.

26. Cutler et. al. op. cit., Vol 1, p. 215

But even if classical Marxism sustains a dogmatic epistemological stance, this does not yet conclusively prove its falsity for the analysis of the national question. To show how economic reductionism obscures rather than illuminates an analysis of the national question, it will be assumed for the moment that the dominant economic forces determine the national dimension. If the economic level, which according to Laclau and Mouffe is just a "topographical" notion, is to play a significant role in constituting subjects in the national arena it must:

- a) Have its own strictly endogenous laws of motion that exclude all forms of indeterminacy resulting from political and cultural intervention.
- b) The unity and homogeneity that characterizes the economic level must result from the laws of motion of that level.
- c) The position of agents in relations of production must endow them with "historical interests", so that the presence of these agents must be ultimately explained in terms of economic interests.²⁷

The falsity of this position is almost self-evident, if this would have been the case then:

- a) Crucial agencies in the national arena should be clearly deducible from the the most meaningful economic forces;
- b) The national community would have been an homogeneous category replicating the dominant agency in the process of production;

27. E. Laclau & C. Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Verso 1985, p.76

and,

- c) The laws of motion of the economy would allow the prediction of the most meaningful movements taking place in the national arena.

Clearly the different expressions of the national phenomenon (national communities, nationalism, etc.) do not confirm this. To sustain these arguments is tantamount to sustaining the transparent and epiphenomenal concepts held by the leading figures of the Second International. Class reductionism results from the theoretical efforts of generations of Marxist thinkers to qualify and reform these untenable positions. They however, result in a discussion that does not tackle the crucial question of economic determination. The debate among the main-stream schools in the Marxist tradition have avoided the vexed question of economic determination, concentrating instead on the less important argument of what weight should be attached to the relative autonomy of the superstructures. This debate just went round in circles, ameliorating with often ingenious formulae the worst excesses of the epiphenomenalist stance, but without addressing the fundamental question of the determinant role of the economy. In the area of the national question, this issue stands behind the debate between the "center" and "left" of the Second International and, the subsequent dispute between Kautsky and Luxemburg and the Bolsheviks. This will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

The question of economic reductionism has haunted the Marxist tradition for generations, seriously undermining its ability to understand the nature of what it called "superstructural" phenomena. In subsequent chapters it will be seen how economic reductionism has affected the Marxian discussion of the national question. In order to overcome the damage inflicted by the recurrent use of these paradigms. A dramatic intellectual transformation is required to regenerate the vitality of the socialist

tradition. Within the Marxist tradition, the works of Cutler et al. and Laclau and Mouffe provide some critical formulations which are an important step towards a more sensitive understanding of the social arena. The purpose of this work is more limited. I hope to discuss the main corpus of the most influential European debates of classical Marxism on the national question, and to examine what elements could be freed from the paradigmatic trap of economism. The works of Bauer and Gramsci appear to have elements salvageable from the economistic dogma. Freed from their initial economistic configuration, they could become the first step for a more sensitive conceptualisation of the multifarious forms of national existence. If a more sensitive discussion of the national arena is to emerge within the Marxist tradition, it must start by completely demolishing the worn out building of economic reductionism - from its basic foundation to its "superstructure". This is not merely an intellectual exercise: crucial political decisions depend on it!

The Question of Eurocentrism

With the possible exception of the "Revisionist" tradition, no school of Marxism argued for the explicit superiority and hegemony of the European culture over the rest of the world. Indeed the notion of the cultural superiority of one society over another is clearly an anathema to the universalistic values of the Marxist tradition in general. Yet, in spite of its genuine universalistic aspirations, the conceptualisation of human development and the rationale for the emancipation of the human species was constructed by the most significant traditions in European Marxism, as a form of discursive rationality directly derived from the main themes of the European Enlightenment. This situation created an intriguing paradox which it is best summarised in the following way: Classical Marxism derived its evolutionary paradigm from its experience of European historical continuity. At the same time, it claimed that the process of evolutionary transition from one Mode of Production to another

was both universal and inescapable. Classical Marxists were not aware of the contradiction implied in this position, since claims to "scientificity" put Marxism above any suspicion of cultural relativism. A tradition that claimed to have discovered the laws of motion of human history and to understand the evolution of the forces of production with the precision of the natural sciences could hardly be aware of its cultural biases. But it was in Europe where the concepts of classical Marxism emerged: the notions of class, capitalism, feudalism and mode of production emerged as forms of analytical reflection on the history of European societies. And what is more important, they resulted from a discursive practice that has its origin in a form of rationality that is distinctly European:

Marxism is an intrinsically European current of thought, which unites several of the most characteristic traits of European civilisation as a whole: the sense of history inherent in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Promethean urge to transform nature that has manifested itself since the Renaissance and specially since the industrial revolution. Transplanted to Asia, to societies most of which did not have this sense of history, and none of which traditionally had such a vision of man as "maître et possesseur de la nature" (in Descartes's well-known phrase), it caused a profound shock. Nor did Marxism escape unchanged from the encounter.²⁸

Classical Marxism could have either maintained its claim to universality by putting its sense of European history in perspective and cater for a plural world, or alternatively, sustained a sense of European history and culture and abandoned claim to universality. But none of this has happened: classical Marxian

28. Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart Schram, Marxism in Asia, The Penguin Press, London 1969, p.4

notions of evolution invariably located the European west at the highest stages of historical development, subsuming the major stages of universal development into a European sense of historical continuity. Marx argued that industrialised nations (all of which were European) show to the less industrialised ones the image of their own future. The Epiphenomenal and Mechanistic Marxism of the Second International supported, as it will be shown in chapter 3, the "civilisatory mission" of some forms of "progressive colonialism". And even before this, Engels considered that the colonies best suited for independence were those populated by Europeans:

In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e., the countries occupied by a European population- Canada, the Cape, Australia- will become independent: on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated -India, Algeria, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions - must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence.²⁹

And even Lenin, while providing a novel and perceptive articulation between class and colonial struggles, still maintained that the highest stage of development of the productive forces and the more "advanced" social formations were located in industrial and capitalist Western Europe.

The notion that the ruling ideas of every society are the ideas of the ruling class is at the heart of the classical Marxist analysis of the arena of the social. Classical Marxists therefore had an acute awareness of the relativity of the claims to universalism of the dominant ideas in different historical

29. F. Engels to Kautsky, on September 12, 1882 in Marx and Engels on Colonialism, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974, p. 342

periods. Even in the case of the national question, the classical Marxist perception was a form of relativised historicism: The nation was conceived as a social formation that originated in the process of transition from feudalism to capitalism. It seems remarkable today, that classical Marxists were not aware of the relative historical location of their own works. Classical Marxists never developed a Marxist analyses of the Marxist discourse. For it is clear that the main corpus of Marxist literature emerged at a definite historical period and could not therefore escape the influence of the hegemonic ideas of its time. Not only did the Industrial Revolution provide the historical context for the emergence of Marxism, but also Marxist theory and practice emerged at a time when European colonialism was at its peak. If the same criteria used to evaluate other ideological practices had been used for the evaluation of Marxism, the Eurocentric bias would most certainly have been detected. But what happened was rather the opposite, as Anouar Abdel Malek perceptively explains:

The nation is conceived as the socio-economic formation with the state emerging from the disintegration of the feudal system in Western Europe; and it is seen concomitant with the emergence of the capitalist system. This definition, which belongs to classical historical sociology, was taken up again and refined by the Marxist theoreticians, notably Stalin. This tacit consensus expresses, of course, the unity of the socio-historical framework which gave rise to the notion. Thus the right to national existence of other social formations prior to the capitalist system will be challenged, even though they present the same features which were said to be constitutive of the modern nation: geographical unity, historical continuity, a single language, a single unified economic market and a unified cultural consciousness....the real problem is the ,extrapolation of European Experience- designated as normal, and thus given objective priority- to the experiences of other peoples.

The European origins of the social sciences lead to Eurocentrism - The world is conceived in Europe's image, invited to conform to it, and rejected, if it creates an exception.³⁰

The result of this situation was the emergence of comparative criteria for the evaluation of the non-European world, which responded to a continuum between "Progressive" and "Reactionary" poles. The more a social formation departed from the Western European models, the more reactionary it was. This form of ideological and political mapping resulted from the dogmatic epistemology that configures classical Marxist discourse, and which renders its own discursive practice immune from a critical evaluation. Classical Marxism gives ontological priority to the development of the forces of production, in an argument in which the mode of production and the social formation are defined as "objective realities", and therefore extra-discursive. The conceptualisation of an extra-discursive "universal reality" lies at the heart of Marxist dogmatism, and renders impossible the historical location of the Marxist discourse. The efforts of Marxist scholars with an interest in the the non European world to free classical Marxism from its Eurocentric bias becomes an impossible task if, at the same time, the ontological priorities and epistemological construct are not also criticised. Marxism cannot lead to a pluralist perception of humanity if it does not develop an understanding of itself as an historically located discursive practice.

The Eurocentrism of classical Marxism is thus the result of the overdetermination of the two parameters of Marxian analysis discussed in the first part of this chapter: a mechanistic and linear perception of historical evolution, and the ontological

30. Anouar Abdel-Malek, Nation and Revolution, vol. 2 of Social Dialectics, The MacMillan Press, London 1981, p. 15

privilege of the process of production in the form of an economic reductionism. This is the point at which many brave attempts to overcome the Eurocentric bias of classical Marxism fail. For there cannot be a criticism of the Eurocentric bias of classical Marxism if at the same time, a criticism of Marxist ontology and epistemology is not attempted. The Eurocentric bias results from the privilege given to the forces of production over other historical forces, and from a hierarchical sense of historical evolution which is in turn, derived from the observation of humanity from the privileged vantage point of the history of the European continent. In other words, the Eurocentric bias is a logical result of the hierarchical and universal categorisation of social evolution, and the economic reductionism of classical Marxism. It could only be corrected by rejecting the epistemological dogmatism of the classics. If this is not done, the Eurocentric analysis will continue to creep back into every form of anti-imperialist Marxist discourse, no matter how much it tries to free itself from a Eurocentric influence.

The purpose of this chapter was to critically identify the epistemological constraints that prevent classical Marxism from developing a multifarious understanding of that highly elusive phenomena called "the national question". In the following chapters it will be shown how the analytical paradigms discussed above crucially configured the most important aspects of the classical Marxist discussion of the National Question. This pattern of analysis created a paradigmatic straitjacket which obscured some of the more essential and meaningful aspects of the national phenomenon. This caused some of the most resounding political failures of classical Marxism. In Chapters 5 and 7 it will be argued that the works of Bauer and Gramsci provided a richer - but still limited - perception of the multifarious nature of the national phenomenon because of their ability to partially break from the epistemological traps of classical Marxism. Obviously, the purpose of this work cannot be to reformulate the Marxist theory of the national phenomenon. But it makes a first

step in this much needed reformulation by engaging in a conceptual critique of the most influential European discussions of the national phenomenon. It clears the ground for a more sensitive evaluation of that multidimensional and recurrent phenomenon called nationalism. This is a task that Marxist and Sociological discourse have so far eluded.

Chapter 2: Marx, Engels and the National Question¹

With the development of Capitalist production an average profile (durchschnittliches Niveau) of bourgeois societies comes into existence, and consequently, of the temperaments and inclinations of different peoples. As Christianity, this mode of production is essentially cosmopolitan.²

An important and influential group of scholars and historical analysts of the works of Marx and Engels, sustain, in a variety of influential works, that the latter had no theoretically coherent approach to the national phenomenon. This argument also sustains the idea that Marx and Engels related to every national movement on purely "ad hoc" basis and that their attitude was often dictated by circumstantial political events such as the concrete case of a democratic movement or the need to overthrow a despotic regime.³

1. I wish to thank Professor Bill Brugger for his useful comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this chapter.

2. K. Marx, Theories of Surplus Value, quoted by R. Rosdolsky, 'Friederich Engels und das Problem der "Geschichtslosen" Völker. (Die Nationalitätenfrage im Der Revolution 1848-1849 im lichte der "Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung")', Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, Vol IV, Hannover 1964 p. 242. for a spanish translation by C. Ceretti, see R. Rosdolsky F. Engels y el Problema de los Pueblos "Sin Historia", Series Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente número 88, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico 1980, p. 186

3. See for example, H. B. Davis, Socialism and Nationalism, Monthly Review Pres 1967, M. Lowy, "Marxists and the National Question", New Left Review, 96, p. 81, J. L. Talmon, The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution, University of California

The purpose of this chapter will be to show that this approach is incorrect insofar as the lack of theoretical coherence is considered to be the main characteristic of Marx and Engels' approach to the national question. With the help of the theoretical parameters discussed in the previous chapter, it will be argued that Marx and Engels had a coherent (but essentially mistaken) view of the national phenomenon, even if there is no single corpus of literature that directly presents their theories in an explicit way. The social- evolutionary and economic reductionist parameters of analysis provide the coherent basis for the formulation of a theory of the national question, which is compatible with the apparently contradictory positions that Marx and Engels held in relation to various movements of national emancipation. This largely unwritten, but not less real and influential perception of the national phenomenon, provided the intellectual basis for the way in which subsequent generations of Marxists understood the national question,⁴ as well as for some of contemporary widely held Marxist beliefs about the National

Press, Berkley, 1981, p. 38; Z. A. Pelczynski, "Nation, Civil Society, state: Hegelian sources of the Marxian non- theory of nationality" in Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.) The State and Civil Society, Cambridge University Press 1984, p. 262. G. Haupt, "Les Marxistes face à la question nationale: l'histoire du problème" in G. Haupt. M. Lowy and C. Weill, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, Maspero. Paris 1974, p. 13 ff. For refreshingly different and more interesting approach, see A. Walicki Philosophic and Romantic Nationalism: The case of Poland, Clarendon Press Oxford 1982 p. 375 ff.

4. Particularly in the case of the most influential works of the Second and Third International, whose work will be reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4.

Question.⁵

Above all, two considerations were crucial in the formulation of Marx and Engels theoretical understanding of the national phenomenon: the first was their adherence to a universal, but at the same time, historically-located model for national development. This is the model 'state- language -nation'. The second consideration concerned the capacity or incapacity of concrete national communities to evolve from "lower" to "higher" stages in developing production. This is the theory of "historical versus non historical" nations. It is necessary to evaluate these two considerations in some detail.

The Pattern: "State - Language - Nation"

For Marx and Engels, what was called the "Modern Nation" was the direct outcome of a process whereby the feudal mode of production was superseded by the capitalist mode of production - a situation that caused dramatic concomitant changes in the process of social organisation. This event, according to Marx and Engels, impelled a number of western European social formations to evolve into more linguistically cohesive and politically centralised units through the formation of "modern states".⁶

5. In relation to the national question in Catalonia and the equation of the "national bourgeoisie" and "national identity, J. Llobera perceptively argues that..."*It never ceases to amaze me the extraordinary appeal that Vulgar Marxism - Economism- has on people of different theoretical persuasions when reasons of political expediency requires it!*- Josep Llobera, The Idea of Volksgeist in the formation of the Catalan National Ideology, unpublished paper. Goldsmith College, London 1983.

6. In the context of the ongoing discussion on the national phenomenon the concept of "the state" is used in the descriptive sense of a centralised unit of political administration and

Thus, what Marx and Engels called "Modern Nations" only came into existence through the embryonic capitalist economy in the transition from Feudalism to Capitalism. As a direct result of this process, the feudal society was slowly united under the structure of the embryonic modern state. This, according to Marx and Engels, caused the destruction of local peculiarities, initiating the process of uniformisation of populations, which was considered an important condition for the formation of a market economy - an essential feature of the capitalist system.⁷ In Marx' view, one of the strongest indicators of this process of uniformisation was the emergence and development of Western European languages. In Marxist terms, a crucial characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is the intensification of the division of labour coupled by a growing inter-dependence among the different units of production, holding together a mass of dispossessed free labourers capable of selling their labour power in a free market. Thus the capitalist mode of production

authority and not in the more elaborate analytical sense of a system of ideological and political organisation that flows from the works of the Austro Marxists, Gramsci and Poulantzas. for a valuable discussion of Marxist theories of the state see B. Jessop, The Capitalist State, Martin Robertson, Oxford 1983 and B. Jessop, Nicos Poulantzas, Marxist Theory and Political Strategy, part II pp.53-84, MacMillan, London 1985

7. F. Engels, "Über den Verfall des Feudalismus und das Aufkommen der Bourgeoisie" Marx Engels Werke (MEW), Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1977, Vol. 21 p. 395. ff., English translation in F. Engels, "Decay of Feudalism and Rise of Nation States" in F. Engels, The Peasant War in Germany, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1977, p. 178 ff. See also G. Haupt and C. Weil, "L'Eredità di Marx ed Engels e la Questione Nazionale", Studi Storici, Istituto Gramsci Editore, 15, 1974 ,2 p. 281

breaks the isolation of feudal units increasing the interaction of the various participants in the newly-formed market. This in turn, necessitates a "medium" for efficient communication; thus according to Marx and Engels, western European languages emerged to fulfill this role and to consolidate distinct and recognisable linguistic units based on the embryonic absolutist state.⁸ That is, in essence, Marx and Engels account of the emergence of "Modern Nations". From the discussion above, it is possible to derive two important observations which help to define the meaning of the notion of "modern nations" by understanding the essential features of the phenomenon under consideration. A "modern nation must fulfill the following criteria:

- a) It must hold a population large enough to allow for an internal division of labour which characterises a capitalist system with its competing classes; and
- b) it must occupy a cohesive and "sufficiently large" territorial space to provide for the existence of a "viable state".⁹

This understanding of the process of formation of "modern nations" is clearly derived from Marx and Engels' observation of the process of formation of national states in Western Europe, particularly France, and to a limited extent, England. But above all, it adheres to the view that the French revolution provided the model for national development. The founding fathers of historical materialism regarded the process of national consolida-

8. G. Haupt and C. Weill, L'eredità di Marx ed Engels., op. cit. p. 275

9. S. Bloom, El Mundo de las Naciones, spanish translation of "the World of Nations", siglo veintiuno editores, Buenos Aires, 1975, p. 44

tion that took place after the French revolution as a model for national formation in other "less developed" parts of the world; and much of their discussion on the national question appears as an implicit (and sometimes also explicit) attempt to generalise from the "French Model", into an overall process of national evolution. Given the importance of the "French Model" of national formation in Marx and Engels thought, it may be useful to briefly discuss the process of national formation in that country particularly at the time of the French revolution.

The Jacobins and other French revolutionaries believed that the best way to establish a democratic state was to follow a path of tight centralisation and linguistic standardisation. Pursuing this political project, the Jacobins perceived the existence of non Parisian- French speaking peoples within the boundaries of the French state as a considerable menace to this process of uniformisation. It has been widely argued that the mobilising effect of the revolutionary ideology assisted the formation of the first modern nationalist movement creating the unity of the French people (nation) in the revolutionary process. Sieyès and the Jacobins firmly believed that the third estate was, in fact, the French nation. All this, however, belongs to revolutionary mythology. The geographical area occupied by the French absolutist state, was in fact, inhabited during the best part of the pre-revolutionary period by a conglomerate of linguistic communities, some of which spoke Romance languages (Langue D'Oc, Langue D'Oil, Catalan), others celtic languages (Breton), and other ancient pre- Latin languages (Euzkera). In reality, the language of the court of Versailles, which subsequently became "French" was spoken only by a minority of the population of the state. Pierre Giraud argues that

During the Middle Ages there was not one French languages but several French languages. Each province spoke and wrote its own dialect.¹⁰

But, during the period preceding the Revolution, the language of Paris began to exercise its definitive supremacy, eventually converting itself into the official language of the state.¹¹ After the revolution this process was greatly encouraged by the revolutionary government, anxious to create a "national state" with a uniform language for all its citizens. But this task was not at all easy. According to C. F. Brunnot¹² of a total population of about 25 million inhabitants, between six and seven millions did not understand Parisian French, a similar number was only capable of holding a very basic conversation in this language; ten million were bilingual, using their respective "dialects" as their mother tongue and Parisian French as the "lingua franca". Only three million inhabitants of Paris and surrounding areas spoke "French" as their mother tongue, and an even smaller number was capable of reading and writing in this language. This situation was reported to the 1791 constitutional convention, resulting in intensified efforts by the revolutionary government to spread the use of the French language as fast as possible. Two closely connected reasons account for this: the revolutionaries wish to create a democratic and tightly centralised state and the need to ensure the hegemony of the Parisian bourgeoisie against pockets of feudal and aristocratic resistance in remote locations. Given the close association between Parisian French and revolutionary aims, it is hardly surprising that the counter-revolution was stronger in those areas where French was hardly spoken. Brittany for example. A

10. Pierre Giraud, Patois et les dialectes Français, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p.27, Paris

11. Albert Doujot, Le Patois, Paris, Librairie Delagrave, 1946

12. Histoire de la Langue Française, Paris, 1958 pp. 44-49

tightly centralised state was bound to destroy the administrative and cultural autonomy of the non-French national communities. The combination of cultural imperialism and tight administrative centralisation, lead an almost complete destruction of the culture and language of the non-Parisian French national communities. As the animosity of the oppressed national communities towards the Parisian bourgeoisie grew, they became the rallying point for counter-revolutionary activities. In response the Jacobins equated the national identity of those unfortunate peoples with counter-revolution, without realising that it was the Jacobins' own lack of sensitivity towards their cultural aspirations that was pushing these communities into the arms of the reaction. The Jacobin Deputies Barrere and Gregoire presented a report the constitutional assembly of 1794 with a very revealing title: Report on the need and means to destroy rural dialects (patois) and universalise the use of the French Language. This title eloquently illustrates the ideas and generalised positions of the Jacobins in relation to what we may call today "national minorities".

Federalism and superstition speak low Breton...the emigration and hatred to the republic speak German, the counter-revolution speaks Italian and fanaticism speaks Basque (Euzkera)....It is necessary to popularise the (French) language; it is necessary to stop this linguistic aristocracy that seems to have established a civilised nation in the midst of barbaric ones.¹³

 13. "Rapport sur la necessite et le moyens d'anéantir les patois, et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française," Gazette Nationale, 28 January 1794, quoted by R. Rosdolsky op. cit. F. Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker.." p. 100, spanish translation, p. 24, also quoted by S. Salvi, Le Nazione Proibite, Guida a dieci colonie "interne" dell'a Europa occidente, Vallecchi Editore, Florence 1973, p. 477

One year later, the above-mentioned Jacobin deputies advanced the following revolutionary slogan: "...dans une République une et indivisible l'usage unique et indivisible de la langue de la liberté"¹⁴, a slogan which as Rosdolsky argues, conveniently forgot that French was also the language of the court of Versailles and of pre-revolutionary absolutism in general.

It is perhaps interesting to note that this tendency to use the French language as the cultural medium for the advancement of revolutionary goals was noted by Marx in his famous refutation of Lafargue's attempt the abolition of all national differences.

...the English laughed very much when I began my speech by saying that our friend Lafargue and others had spoken "en français" to us, i.e. a language that nine tenths of the audience did not understand. I also suggested that by the negation of nationalities, he appeared quite unconsciously to understand their absorption by the model French nation.¹⁵

Marx, however, did not draw any theoretical conclusions from this incident and continued all his life to believe that the "French model" was the universal path for national development. Marx and Engels believed that state centralisation and national unification with the consequent assimilation of small national communities was the only viable path to social progress. Their preference for large centralised states was not only a strategic consideration, but also the basis their unwritten conceptualisation of the national phenomenon inspired, it will be remembered,

14. "In the one and undivided Republic, the one an undivided use of the language of freedom", *ibid.*

15. K. Marx to F. Engels, 20 June 1866. Marx' and Engels' Collected Works (MECW), London, Lawrence & Wishart, vol 21, p. 288-9

by the parameters of analysis discussed in the previous chapter. The basis for their position can be seen in their discussion of the civil society, the national state, and what they called the "historical nations".

The concept of "Civil Society" was taken by Marx from Hegelian political philosophy. Civil society is for Hegel the place where individual self interest receives its legitimation and becomes "emancipated" from religious and other considerations, which until the formation of the civil society limited the free play of individual interests.¹⁶ Since the development of individual interests to their fullest expression can only be achieved, according to Hegel, in a situation of a free market, then "civil society" as an institutionalised sphere of activity was the consequence of the technological and political achievements of what he called the "modern world". The Hegelian definition of the civil society bore some resemblance with the conceptualisation of the Free Market in classical Political Economy. Civil society, according to Hegel, was an association of members acting as "self subsistent individuals", in which their association is brought about by their "needs". The purpose of this association is to "ensure security of persons and property", by means of an external organisation which supported "their particular common interests".¹⁷ This definition of the Civil society should be not confused, according to Hegel, with the definition of the state. According to Avineri, what the social contract theoreticians call "the state" is in Hegel's thought the civil society. Civil society is based on the needs of a "lower kind", which are best defined in the concept of "Verstand" (knowledge, understanding in the concrete mechanical sense). The State is the expression of a "higher level of reason" which Hegel

16. S. Avineri, Hegel's Theory of the Modern State, op. cit. p. 142

17. *ibid.*, and G. W. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, Paragraph 182

calls "Vernunft" (an ethical principle that permits essential understanding or consciousness). For Hegel, the state is the consciousness of freedom, but in a way that it permits to enjoy that freedom "in conjunction with others", while in the civil society people realised their freedom with disregard to the freedom of others.¹⁸

Marx was certainly influenced by the Hegelian conceptualisation of the civil society and its relation to the state, but he located that relationship in a different perspective, by attempting to conceptualise the developmental historicity of both concepts within the context of the process of production. Civil society emerges, for Marx, at a specific stage of development of the productive forces. Here he inherited the evolutionist-universal perspective developed by Hegel; but he explicitly rejected its idealistic base. This becomes clear when Marx argues in "The German Ideology" that the modern state its very constitution, unable to overcome the the egoism of civil society, because "mere political emancipation" (the "bourgeois state") leaves intact the world of private interest (civil society)¹⁹ . In "The Jewish Question" Marx argued that the civil society is the "real" basis for the State, and called for a separation between them. Civil society is motivated by competition and egoism, in appearance the bourgeois state overcomes this contradiction by granting political emancipation, but in reality it is only a reflection of the social forces within it.²⁰

18. S. Avineri, Hegel's theory of the Modern State, op. cit. p. 143

19. K. Marx, Early writings, introduction by L. Colletti, Penguin Books, London 1985 pp. 28-35

20. *ibid.* p. 218 ff.

Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage, and, insofar, transcends the state and the nation, though, on the other hand again, it must assert itself in its foreign relations as "nationality" and inwardly must organise itself as state.²¹

This is an important consideration. The general form of the civil society is present in the more specific forms of "state" and "nation", and given that the civil society is only the reflection of the dominant forces within it, it follows that in the capitalist mode of production the dominant class (the bourgeoisie), determines the form and content of the civil society, while the civil society itself, in the format described by Marx, can not exist outside capitalist relations of production.²² The implications of Marx' discussion of theoretical status of the civil society are important for the discussion of the national question. In Marx and Engels' terms, the "modern nation" is an historical phenomenon that has to be located at a precise historical period; this is the era of the ascendance of the bourgeoisie as an hegemonic class, this is to say, the period

21. K. Marx, German Ideology, students edition, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1974 p.57

22. *"The principle underlying the civil society is neither need, a natural moment, nor politics. It is a fluid division of masses while various formations are arbitrary and without organisation. The only noteworthy feature is that the absence of property and the class of immediate labour, of concrete labour, do not so much constitute a class of civil society, as provide the ground on which the circles of civil society move and have their being."* K. Marx, Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State, in K. Marx Early Writings, L. Colletti (ed.) op. cit. p. 146-7

of consolidation of the capitalist mode of production.

In this context the different treatment given by Marx and Engels to different national communities acquires meaning and coherence. The "modern nation" is an epiphenomenal result of the development of the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic class, and the former must be evaluated on the merits of the latter. If it represents a higher stage of development of the productive forces in relation to a pre-determined process of historical change, if it abolishes the feudal system by building a "national state", then the nationalist movement deserves support because it becomes a "tool" for progressive social change. If, however, the nationalist movement emerges among linguistic or cultural communities incapable of surviving the upheavals of capitalist transformation, because they are too small or they have a weak or non-existent bourgeoisie, then the nationalist movement becomes a "regressive" force because it is incapable of overcoming the stage of "peasant-feudal" social organisation. As is will be shown in a moment, Marx and Engels repeatedly argued that national communities incapable of constituting "proper national states" should "vanish" by being assimilated to more "progressive" and "vital" nations. The concept of "Historyless Peoples" to be discussed in the next subsection of this chapter will further highlight the crudity of this social evolutionist perspective.

The conceptualisation of the emergence and development of "modern nations" presented in this "social evolutionist" and epiphenomenalist way, may be seen in every analysis of concrete features of national movements in the works of Marx and Engels and constitutes Marx and Engels theory of national development even though the specific question it is not specifically discussed in any single work. There is however, a problem that has to be dealt with to understand the implications of Marx and Engels position on the national question, and this is the terminological ambiguity that recurs in the works of of the founding

fathers of historical materialism. This must be clarified.

The Terminological ambiguity

In different European languages the concepts of "people", "nation" and "nationality" have at times different and confusing meanings. This situation is further complicated by the not less confusing and indiscriminate use of this terminology in the specialist literature. The terms "nation", "nationality", "people", "nation state", are either taken as synonyms or to mean different things in different situations, creating a terminological confusion that is seldom clarified with clear cut definitions.²³ Marx and Engels were not an exception to this situation. The terms "nations" "nationalities" and "Modern Nations" have at times different and confusing meaning in their work, as G. Haupt argues in his illuminating account:

La difficulté première se traduit par la grande "misère" terminologique qui a entravé les tentatives de clarification.²⁴

In English and French the word "nation" usually refers to the population of a sovereign state, but it is sometimes taken to mean clearly identifiable national communities that lack a na-

23. In his influential study on Catalonia, Pierre Vilar argues that: "Une étude critique de l'emploi du vocabulaire montre en effet combien il est facile de mettre sur fiches un nombre imposant d'emplois discutables ou manifestement abusifs des mots "nation", "national", "nationalisme", "patriotisme" ou "patrie"....La Catalogne dans L'Espagne Moderne, Bibliothèque Générale de L'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Vol. 1, Paris 1962, p. 29

24. G. Haupt, Les Marxistes face à la Question Nationale, op. cit. p. 21

tional state (for example, the Welsh nation or the Catalan nation). The word "nationality" has two different and confusing denotations:

- a) A synonym of citizenship, juridical definition of membership of a state usually defined by entitlement to a passport (British nationality, French Nationality).
- b) A community of culture and/or descent, which also incorporates some of the meanings of the more contemporary term "ethnicity". (English nationality, Welsh nationality).²⁵

Marx and Engels generally used the word "Nation" in its English and French meaning to designate the permanent population of a Nation- State. The term "nationality", however, was used in its central and eastern European denotation, to designate an

25. In other western European languages, the term has a more restricted meaning because the term "People" (Peuple, Pueblo, Volk in French Spanish and German) has a wider ethno- political denotation. In German the term "Nationalität", acquires almost exclusively the denotation (b), since the denotation (a) is covered by the word "Staatsangehörigkeit". Also the term "Volkszugehörigkeit" defines people of the same (normally German) ancestral ethnic origin, and it is enshrined in the "Transitional Provisions of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, article 116 (1)"definition of German Citizenship". The other well know case of an ethnic criterion enshrined in Basic Laws of a state is the State of Israel, see sections (1) and (4) of the "Law of Return". In Slavic languages, the concept of "Narod" and related terms has also an ethno-political denotation. For a recent discussion of the lack of an English equivalence for the russian "narod'nost" see the illuminating article by T. Shanin "Soviet Theories of Ethnicity, The Case of The Missing Term" New Left Review, 1986 p. 113 ff. see also footnote 66 in chapter 4

ethno- cultural community that had not achieved full national status because it lacked a state of its own.²⁶ In Marx and Engels works, "nationalities" will either become "nations" by acquiring a State of their own (Poland, Ireland), or alternatively they are said to be "Historyless Peoples" (Geschichtslosen Völker), national communities that lack "historical vitality", because of their inability to consolidate a national state. In the works of Marx and Engels, these "non historical nationalities" or "ruins of peoples"²⁷ are intrinsically reactionary because of their inability to adapt to the Capitalist Mode of Production. This is because their survival is only guaranteed in the old order, so, by necessity, they have to be regressive, to avoid extinction. Following this rather twisted logic, Marx and Engels maintained that these "non historical" national communities had "disappear" from the "stream of history", with democracy as compensation.

To summarise the discussion so far: Modern Nations are for Marx and Engels what we may call today "nation states"; ethno cultural and linguistic communities with their own distinctive state. Nationalities are ethno cultural and linguistic groups not developed into full nations because they lack their own state. This model of national formation is greatly inspired by the historical development of the French and to a lesser extent, the British case, which by nature of being "the most advanced nations" must serve as a model for "less developed" national communities. But there is another dimension to Marx and Engels discussion of national communities. The nation, as noted earlier, was for Marx one of the concrete forms of the general form "civil society". Civil society only comes into existence as a result of

 26. R. Rosdolsky, "Workers and Fatherland" Science and Society, Vol. 29, 1965, p. 337

27. F. Engels op. cit. Revolution and Counterrevolution in Germany.

a specific configuration of classes, which in general responds to the characteristics of the capitalist mode of production. Since the bourgeoisie the universally dominant class in this mode of production, civil society gives legitimacy to bourgeois class domination by creating the impression that the class requirements of the bourgeoisie to reproduce its conditions of existence, are the "general" requirements of society as a whole. Thus, the state in its "national" form is responsible for regulating the best possible conditions for the fulfillment of these "general" requirements, which will inevitably lead towards towards the final contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and to the eventual abolition of all forms of class domination. Following this logic, which is at the center of Marx and Engels' evolutionary discussion of the development of capitalism, it is possible to envisage a chain of events that will destroy the foundation of every form of class society via the emancipation of the proletariat. Thus, the achievement of this "final goal" of abolishing capitalist relations of production, has far reaching consequences for the "nation". This could be schematised in the following way: The abolition of the capitalist mode of production will cause the abolition of:

- a) civil society as an entity reproducing the conditions of existence of class societies.
- b) the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic class of the civil society and the proletariat as the subordinated oppressed class.
- c) The state as the instrument through which the bourgeoisie controls the civil society.
- d) The nation as the framework for the existence of the bourgeois state.

The nation as the framework for the existence of the capitalist (national) state, creates a "linguistic unit" that

is essential in consolidating of the conditions of existence of capitalism, by generating a medium of communication (language) and a focus of identity which gives a general appearance to the sectarian interests of the bourgeoisie (nationalism). Thus, in terms of this unilinear and Eurocentric process of development, the nation is crucially linked with the fate of the capitalist state, because both are concrete epiphenomenal expressions of the "civil society"- the mechanism which created them in the first place. Once the state is abolished (or withers away), a similar fate awaits the nation. Consider the statement in the "Communist Manifesto":

...the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.²⁸

One is presented with a tactical ploy to gain power to gain power from the bourgeoisie in its own terrain, since the nation will be abolished by the advancing tide of history:

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto. The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster.²⁹

Marx and Engels expected the proletariat to become the "national class" for a short period, believing that this is a

28. K. Marx and F. Engels The Communist Manifesto, various editors and editions.

29. *ibid.*

transitional but historically necessary step in order to advance to a "higher" developmental stage, the abolition of the national state. In this sense Marx ironic remarks on Lafargue's speech,³⁰ does not indicate that he rejected the abolition of nations as such, but merely that he rejected the idea that such stage of development had come to pass at the time of the meetings of the international.

The parameters of analysis discussed in the previous chapter help to give coherence to the apparently contradictory formulations of Marx and Engels on the national question. Their support for the right to self determination in the Irish and Polish case, as well as the opposition to any self determination to the so called "South Slavs", could be thus explained in terms of the rigid evolutionary model, the epiphenomenal economism, and the Western Eurocentric approach that permeated Marx and Engels interpretations of the processes of social change. These parameters of analysis, concerned as they were with the universal effect of the process of transformation of the productive forces, are insensitive to the concrete and specific circumstances that generate the emergence of concrete national movements. Marxist epistemology is only concerned with the impact of universal processes of social transformation, and is therefore, blind to all those aspects that cannot be directly derived from the laws of motion of political economy. The nation is understood to be a residual creation of the productive forces to secure the conditions of domination of the bourgeoisie during the transition to, and consolidation of, the capitalist mode of production. A clear effect of this requirement to refer concrete analyses of national communities to rigid universal laws of social evolution, is best exemplified by one of the most unfortunate aspects of Marx and Engels' conceptualisation of the national arena, the theory of the "Historyless peoples".

30. see footnote 14.

The Theory of the Nations "without history"

*Bože, ak juš nikto nenj na zemi ktoby Slavom
spraviedlivost činil?*³¹

The way in which Marx and Engels related to a number of stateless or numerically small national communities had been a subject of both, embarrassment and amazement by a considerable number of commentators sympathetic to the Marxist tradition, from the second international, right up to recent works on the subject.³² Nevertheless, with the possible exception of Rosdolsky's thorough and illuminating research, there have been very few attempts to understand Marx and Engels position on the subject, and locate this bizarre discussion in the context of their overall theoretical contributions. The purpose of the following discussion will be to try to provide a link between the theory of "non historical" nations and the general Marxist dis-

31. *"God!, is there anybody in this earth that will do justice to the Slavs?"*; the desperate plight of the Czechs disdainfully quoted by Engels in a letter to Kautsky on 2 February 1882, Quoted by Rosdolsky. op. cit. p. 197, spanish translation, p. 136

32. see K. Kaustky, "Die Moderne Nationalität" in Die Neue Zeit, 5 1887. Spanish transaltion in La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, part 1, series Cuderno de pasado y Presente, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico 1978; H. B. Davis, Socialism and Nationalism, Monthly Review Press 1967, p.73; G. Haupt, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, op. cit. p. 22, M. Lowy, "Marxists and the National Question", New Left Review, 96, 1976 p. 83, however the most detailed and illuminating discussion of this unfortunate use of hegelian terminology could be found in R. Rosdolsky, op. cit. F. Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker

cussion of the national question.

As has been noted, the idea of progressive centralisation, as the economy develops from a lower to a higher stage is at the heart of Marx and Engels analysis of the national question. This premise, as Ian Cummings asserts, "runs like a red thread through Marx's writings"³³. Since this is an axiomatic point of departure for many discussions of concrete national movements, it is hardly surprising to find that Marx and Engels regarded every form of nationalist ideology and activity as aimed towards the formation and consolidation of national states. Nationalist ideology is for Marx, a mere epiphenomena of the growth of the nation.³⁴ One of the main problems with this pattern of analysis, is that on the one hand it leads to a gross over-estimation of the structural need of the bourgeoisie to build a national state, and on the other hand, to a parallel under-estimation of cultural and ethnic factors (insofar as they are not explained as an epiphenomena of the Economy) in the process of formation of national communities. The problem here is not only the use of Western European models of development, but also a "Capital-centred" emphasis in the discussion of all aspects of the national phenomenon. Nationalist movements and nationalist communities are always defined in terms of their position or functionality within the capitalist system.³⁵ Once the clear goal of

33. Ian Cummings, Marx, Engels and National Movements, Croom Helm, London, 1980, p.31

34. A. D. Smith, "'Ideas' and 'Structure' in the Formation of Independence Ideas", Philosophy of Social Sciences, Vol. 3, 1973 p. 21

35. R. Gallisot, "Nazione e Nazionalità nei Dibattiti del Movimento Operaio" Storia del Marxismo, E. Hobsbawn, G. Haupt, F. Marek, E. Ragionieri (eds.), vol. 2 p. 809. Turin, Einaudi Editore p. 809

national communities is defined to be the formation of national states, the resultant difficulty from this over-simplified analysis is how to explain the existence and behaviour of nationalist movements that are neither capable of making, nor willing to form a national state.

If, in accordance to the Marxian interpretation, the growth of the nation only heralds the formation of national states, so that the bourgeoisie could secure its hegemonic position, the inescapable logic of this analysis, as has been noted, dictates that national communities incapable of constituting national states, are acting against "the tide of history". National communities incapable of constituting national states perform a "reactionary function" since according to this analytical logic, they cannot develop a "healthy" and hegemonic bourgeoisie, a condition "sine qua non" for the subsequent proletarian revolution. This analysis, however, leads to an even more serious and disturbing conclusion; these usually small national communities are not only "functionally" reactionary, but intrinsically reactionary relics of the past, which must disappear to pave the way for social progress. Since for Marx and Engels, the only purpose of national agitation is the drive to build a national state, those national communities that because of their size are not viable independent economic units, have no "raison d'être". If these national communities wish to follow a path of national revival, according to this faulty logic, they will become "socially regressive" since they cannot adapt to the capitalist mode of production, and therefore have to remain "feudal enclaves" in order to subsist as independent entities. Furthermore, according to Marx and Engels, these "feudal enclaves" have no other choice but to "closely associate" with those reactionary forces that oppose the "progressive" unifying role of the bourgeoisie. These unfortunate national communities (ethnographic monuments in Engels words), must culturally and politically perish in order to give way for the unifying role of the bourgeoisie. Closely following some of the worst excesses of the Hegelian political thought,

Marx and Engels called these national communities "Non- Historical Peoples (Geschichtslosen Völker).

The concept of "Non- Historical Nations" emerges out of some of the most reactionary (if not blatantly racist) aspects of Hegel's political philosophy. The central idea behind this dubious concept is the argument that peoples (Völker) who had proven to be unable to build a state over a period of time, will never be able to do so.³⁶ Hegel makes a sharp distinction between "Nations" and "States". For Hegel, a group of people may exist as a nation, but in such a condition the nation is unable to contribute to the unfolding of world history. A nation, according to Hegel, will only fulfill its "historical mission" if it is capable of building a stable state.³⁷ Hegel justifies this analysis by arguing that history should be understood as the process of development from lesser to greater freedom, and freedom is only realised in the organised community. History begins with "self conscious" activity, that is, in the organised community, which in Hegelian terms it means the embryonic state.³⁸ Therefore it is not an accident that what Hegel calls "uncivilised peoples" have no history, because they have been proven "incapable of having a state".

As it was argued in the previous chapter, from this Hegelian conceptualisation of history Marx and Engels drew the logic of their evolutionary paradigm. Hegel argued, perhaps for the first time, that history cannot be conceived as a mere recording of change, but must be first and foremost considered in terms of the

36. H. B. Davis, Socialism and Nationalism, op. cit. p. 2

37. *ibid.*

38. see H. A. Reyburn, The Ethical Theory of Hegel, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967, P. 226 ff.

development of the human agency. Hegel's teleological conception of history indicates not only the direction, but also the stages of evolution towards a higher stage of freedom embodied in a superior state. Thus, earlier or "less developed" civilisations must give way to more advanced forms of social organisation that will unavoidably result in a superior state. However, what fate awaits those national communities unable to achieve a higher degree of statehood, or those nations that lost their national state, or even those that never had a national state?. On this issue, Hegel's position is very clear: Peoples (Völker) who had been proven incapable of building a state will never be able to do so, and are damned to culturally vanish in the stream of history.³⁹

Hegel makes a clear distinction between State and Nation while arguing that the supportive base for the state is the nation. A nation in Hegelian terms, is held together by natural and emotional ties: kinship, language and other means of union. In translating this argument into more contemporary terminology, nations are first and foremost ethno-cultural communities. The state preserves the ethnic link, but its specificity is derived from something different - the ethical ideal derived from the genius of the "national spirit" (Volksgeist). The particular national spirit of each nation develops as a consequence of the harmonic interaction of the particular elements that constitute the whole: the people, the civil society, ethnic links, the rulers, etc. Since the "national spirit" is the result of the harmonic interaction of the above mentioned elements, it becomes a discrete unit independent of its constitutive elements. In this way the "national spirit" takes an "objective" form by generating the state and its institutions, but this only occurs if the "national spirit" is capable of a significant contribution to the development of freedom. If this condition is fulfilled, the

39. Hegel, Philosophy of History op. cit.

"national spirit" has a place in history. National communities that hold such a "national spirit" then become "historical nations bearers of the world spirit" (Welthistorische Volksgeister).⁴⁰

In the existence of a Volk, there is a substantial purpose to become a state, and to maintain themselves as such; a Volk without a state formation (a nation as such) had actually no history, as the people before their state formation existed and others yet exist, as wild nations.⁴¹

The unfortunate national communities that are incapable of creating a national state are not the bearers of the "world spirit". Because of their inability to contribute to the "unfolding of civilisation", they are peoples without rights (Rechtlos), and as Hegel clearly indicates, they "count no longer in history"⁴². Also, for Hegel, not all nations have the same rights, the rights of "barbarian nations" are certainly unequal to those of "more civilised nations" the true bearers of the spirit of freedom.

The same consideration justifies civilised nations in regarding and treating as barbarians those who lag behind them in institutions which are the essential moments of the

40. Hegel, Philosophy of History, quoted by H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, Beacon Press, Boston 1969, p. 237

41. G. F. W. Hegel, "Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grumdrisse", quoted and translated by C. Herod, The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought, Martinus Nijhoff, the Hague, 1976 p. 30

42. G. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, paragraph 347, Translated with notes by T.M. Knox, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1953, p. 217-218

state. Thus a pastoral people may treat hunters as barbarians, and both of these are barbarians from the point of view of agriculturalists & etc. The civilised nation is conscious that the right of barbarians are unequal to its own and treats their autonomy as only a formality.⁴³

These idealistic speculations are perhaps one of the weakest features of Hegel's political philosophy and are certainly in direct opposition to an historical materialist conception of history. It is indeed strange to find this conceptualisation echoed in the works of the founding fathers of historical materialism. The revival of hegelian terminology, particularly in the context of 1848 revolutions, was coupled with an increasing usage of abusive language (sometimes blatantly racist statements) vis à vis communities that did not conform with the path to national development discussed above. The intense dislike and hostility to these national communities could be ascertained from the following quotations.

Spaniards and Mexicans

...The Spaniards are indeed degenerate. But a degenerate Spaniard, a Mexican that is the ideal. All vices of the Spaniards - Boastfulness, Grandiloquence, and Quixoticism - are found in the Mexicans raised to the third power..⁴⁴

Scandinavians

...Scandinavism is enthusiasm for the brutal, sordid, piratical old Norse national traits, for the deep inner life

43. *ibid.*, paragraph 351 p. 219

44. Marx and Engels correspondence, 2 December 1847, quoted by L. Aguilar, Marxism in Latin America, New York, W. Knopf, 1969 p. 67

which is unable to express its exuberant ideas and sentiments in words, but can express them in deeds, namely in rudeness towards women, perpetual drunkenness and wild berserk frenzy alternating with tearful sentimentality....Obviously, the more primitive a nation is, the more closely its customs and way of life resemble those of the old Norse people, the more "scandinavian" it must be.⁴⁵

Chinese

It is almost needless to observe that, in the same measure in which opium has obtained the sovereignty over the Chinese, the Emperor and his staff of pedantic mandarins have become dispossessed of their own sovereignty. It would seem as though history had first to make this whole people drunk before it could rise them out their hereditary stupidity.⁴⁶

North African Bedouins

...The struggle of the Bedouins was a hopeless one, and though the manner in which brutal soldiers like Bugeaud have carried on the war is highly blameworthy, the conquest of Algeria is an important and fortunate fact for the progress of civilisation...and even if we may regret that the liberty of the Bedouins of the desert has been destroyed, we must not forget that these same Bedouins were a nation of robbers, whose principal means of living consisted in making excursions upon each other, or upon settled villages.⁴⁷

45. MECW, vol 7, p. 422

46. K. Marx, "Revolution in China and in Europe" New York Daily Tribune, 14 June 1853, quoted in S. Avineri, op. cit. Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernisation, p. 68

This is only a sample; Marx and Engels were, to put it mildly, impatient and intolerant with ethnic minorities. It is possible to ascertain this from their private correspondence of which the most infamous example is the characterisation of Lasalle as a "Jewish Nigger".⁴⁸ But the dichotomy "historical-non historical nations" was revived by Marx and Engels in the context of the 1848 revolution while discussing the revival to national life of the Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians (Ruthenians), Serbs all of which were Eastern European national communities that spoke Slavonic-related languages. These diverse national communities were constituted into a fictitious unit called the "Southern Slavs". The reasons that lie behind this can be understood if Marx' and Engels' model of national formation discussed above, is taken into consideration. If the conditions of a national community do not allow for the formation of a "viable" state, the national community has to assimilate to a larger state and a more viable national community, with "democracy as compensation".⁴⁹

 47. Quoted by I. Cummings, Marx and Engels and the National Movements, op. cit. p. 54

48. *It is now perfectly clear to me that, as testified by his cranial formation and hair growth, he is descended from the negroes who joined Moses' exodus from Egypt (unless his paternal mother or grandmother was crossed with a nigger). Well this combination of Jewish and Germanic stock with the negroid basic substance is bound to yield a strange product.* K. Marx to F. Engels on 30 July 1862. MEW, op. cit. Vol. 30 p. 259, English translation in F.J. Raddatz (ed.) Marx and Engels Personal Letters, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981

49. F. Engels, "The Democratic Pan Slavism" pp. 362-8, and "The Magyar Struggle", p.227, in MECW, op. cit. vol. 8

But not only this process of national assimilation is highly desirable in Marx and Engels view, but it cannot also be opposed. Nations that are incapable of forming national states and still persist in their claim to nationhood oppose the inexorable process of development of the Capitalist Mode of Production, by virtue of their claim to national existence in a Capitalist world which according to Marx and Engels, they cannot possibly survive. The conclusion that the founding fathers of historical materialism drew from this situation, was that, if national survival is to occur, then the national community in question must seek to return to the state of affairs that preceded capitalist transformation, a retrograde step in the evolution of humanity, just for the sake of allowing the survival of a national community.

In this context, the old Hegelian terminology served a very useful purpose in the Marxian analysis of the slavonic national communities. These unfortunate peoples were defined as "non historical" in much the same way as Hegel used the term for the same peoples a century before. The Hegelian "Volksgeist" was replaced by the "capacity to enter the Capitalist Mode of Production", but much of the metaphysical social evolutionist logic survived to demand the disappearance of the "South Slavs". These national communities were understood by Marx and Engels as incapable of having National States of their own because they were either "too small" or they lived in areas of mixed population, in the midst of a "more energetic race" (usually German, but also Magyar), in a situation in which the other national community was considered "more advanced" and "better equipped" in terms of its class composition to constitute a national state.

Bohemia and Croatia (another disjected member of the Slavonic family, acted upon by the Hungarian, as Bohemia by the German) were the homes of what it is called on the European continent "Panslavism". Neither Bohemia nor Croatia

was strong enough to exist as a nation by herself. Their respective nationalities, gradually undermined by the action of historical causes that inevitably absorbs into a more energetic stock, could only hope to be restored to anything like independence by an alliance with other Slavonic nations.⁵⁰

Thus, if the Slavonic East European Nationalities cannot constitute national states, their only hope for survival according to Marx, was to constitute a federation of "Slavonic Nations", under the leadership of the Czar of all Russia, the "bulwark of European reaction". The Democratic Movement in Austro Hungarian Monarchy, will according to Marx and Engels, assimilate this "remnants of peoples, transforming their culture and national identity into the "superior" German and Magyar culture, granting to them a democratic way of life as a compensation. But given that national communities persisted in preserving their "Backward" national identities and culture, they could only subsist on condition that they locate themselves within the sphere of influence of the equally "backward" Russian Absolutism. So according to Marx and Engels, only in semi-feudal conditions, could these national communities survive, and this only could be guaranteed by the "Backward" Russian Empire.⁵¹

Engels provided the theoretical justification for this

50. K. Marx, "Panslavism - The Schleswig Holstein War" in Revolution and Counter Revolution, edited by Eleanor Marx Aveling, London, Unwin Books, 1971, p. 48

51. This analysis had strong implications for the emergence of the socialist movement in Austria around the turn of the century, as it will be shown later in this work. For a discussion of the ingenious socialist solution to the complex national question in Austro Hungary see Chapter 6.

analytical logic in the following way:

There is no country in Europe which does not have in some corner or other one or several fragments of peoples, the remnant of a former population that was suppressed and held in bondage by the nation which later became the main vehicle for historical development. These relics of a nation, mercilessly trampled under the course of history, as Hegel says These residual fragments of peoples (Völkerabfalle) always become fanatical standard bearers of counter revolution and remain so until their complete extirpation or loss of their national character, just as their whole existence in general is itself a protest against a great historical revolution. Such in Scotland are the Gaels, the supporters of the Stuarts from 1640 to 1745. Such in France are the Bretons, the supporters of the Bourbons from 1742 to 1800. Such in Spain are the Basques, the supporters of Don Carlos. Such in Austria are the panslavist Southern Slavs, who are nothing but residual fragments of peoples, resulting from an extremely confused thousand years development. This residual fragment, which is likewise extremely confused sees its salvation only in the reversal of the whole European movement, which in its view ought to go not from west to east, but from east to west...⁵²

Here it is possible to find with unusual clarity, as Rosdolsky correctly points out, the repetition of a pattern which first emerged with the French revolution and constitutes the theoretical basis for Marx and Engels' analysis of the national question. The revolution will destroy the particularism of small

52. F. Engels, 'The Magyar Struggle' in op. cit. MECW, vol 8 pp 234-5 it will be difficult to find a clearer example of Western European supremacy and narrow mindness.

nationalities, incorporating them to the "higher" and "developed" nations, becoming in this way the vehicle for emancipation from feudalism and superstition. German is the "language of liberty" for the Czechs in Bohemia, in the same way as French is the language of liberty for the Occitans and Bretons in the French State. In the same way as the Jacobins perceived the non-French nationalities as intrinsically reactionary, Marx and Engels so perceived the "South Slavs" in the Austro Hungarian Empire.

The same argument that so strongly denies the right to self determination and historical continuity of the "non historical" nations, also sustains a strong justification for the emancipation and state independence of the so-called "historical nations". These are national communities capable of being agents of historical transformation, that will, in the judgment of Marx and Engels, further the formation of a strong capitalist economy. The founding fathers of historical materialism strongly supported the right to state independence of the Irish and Poles, since they were considered historical nations that did not have a national state. In this sense, the right to self determination (meaning state independence) for Marx and Engels is not an absolute right, is the right of "some" nations - those which are capable of being "agents" or "vehicles" of social transformation - for themselves and for the nations that oppress them:

A French historian has said: Il y a des peuples nécessaires - there are necessary nations. The Polish nation is undoubtedly one of the necessary nations of the nineteenth century. But for no one is Poland's national existence more necessary than for us Germans....So long, therefore, as we help to subjugate Poland, so long as we keep part of Poland fettered to Germany, we shall remain fettered to Russia and Russian policy, and shall be unable to eradicate patriarchal feudal absolutism in Germany. The creation of a democratic Poland is a primary condition for the creation of a democratic Germany.⁵³

Similar observations were made by Marx and Engels over the Irish question. They reasoned that England cannot embark on a true revolutionary path until it "got rid" of the Irish problem. In the concluding section of chapter 25 of "Capital" Marx conclusively shows how the occupation of Ireland "underdeveloped" the country by making it an appendix of the British Economy.⁵⁴ Consequently, the separation and independence of Ireland from England was not only a vital step for Irish development, but also was essential for the British people since "A nation that oppresses another forges its own chains"⁵⁵

...in the big industrial centers in England there is a profound antagonism between the Irish and the English proletariat... The average English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and standard of life. This antagonism among the proletarians is artificially nourished and supported by the bourgeoisie. It knows that this scission is the true secret of maintaining power.⁵⁶

53. MECW, op. cit. vol 7, pp. 350-351

54. K. Marx Capital, Vol. 1, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1977 pp. 652-666. The term "underdevelopment" is of course a modern term, associated with the work of A. Gunder Frank and the "dependency theory". However, the intellectual meaning of the term, namely the prevention of economic development in a peripheral country by the intervention of a more powerful dominant economy, is at the heart of Marx' conceptualisation of the Irish Problem.

55. K. Marx "Confidential Communication" Written in 1870, in K. Marx and F. Engels On Colonialism, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974 p. 259

56. *ibid.*

But this analysis is not applicable to the "non historical nations", and in terms of Marx and Engels analytical logic, there is no contradiction or incoherence. The Irish and the Polish national movements are perceived to advance the course of "progress" by constituting national states capable of developing a "healthy" contradiction between the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie. Furthermore, their state independence will be a considerable help for the proletarian struggles within the nations that subjugate them. The "non historical" nations cannot, in the judgment of Marx and Engels, develop a bourgeoisie, because they either are "peasant nations", or because they cannot develop a state of their own, because they either live in a mixed area of residence, or they are too small to create an internal market. In this conditions, in the judgment of Marx and Engels, the "non historical" nations must seek an alliance with the defenders of "the old order", since this is the only way of securing their survival. Consequently, the "irresistible flow of progress" requires either the voluntary assimilation or the annihilation of these national communities. If they persist in maintaining their national identity in alliance with reactionary forces in a revolutionary situation, they will be simply "trampled over" by the forces of progress. This is particularly the case of the "Southern Slavs" who must "perish in the revolutionary struggle".

...We shall fight an implacable life and death struggle with the Slavs, which have betrayed the revolution, a war of annihilation and ruthless terrorism, not in the interest of Germany, but in the interests of the revolution.⁵⁷

57. F. Engels, "The Democratic Panslavism" in op. cit., MEW, vol 6 p. 286, also in G. Haupt., C. Weill and M. Lowy, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, op. cit. p. 86

The contrast between Marx and Engels perceptive discussion of the Irish question and their racist attitude towards the "South Slavs", puzzled many observers and commentators on the works of Marx and Engels on the national question. The differential treatment received by different national communities in struggle for self determination surprised them and they attempted to account for this apparent inconsistency in a number of ways. The most common position is the argument that Marx and Engels had "no theory" on the national question and the inconsistencies in the discussion of the national phenomenon are the direct result of the "ad hoc" position in every case. Here, Marx and Engels discussions of concrete national situations are considered to be more connected to circumstantial political events and are seen to be devoid of any theoretical significance. This is the position of among others, Lowy and Davis.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, even a superficial evaluation of the works of Marx and Engels shows this this is not the case. The presence of important traces of Hegelian historicism in the universal evolutionary theory of the founding fathers of historical materialism, and the related understanding of the national state as an historical construct to secure the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie, makes an "ad hoc" discussion of the national question an unthinkable event within the parameters of analysis indicated above. If all historical devices have a functional purpose in terms of the overall movement of history, it is inconceivable that the national phenomenon should be an exception. On

 58. H. B. Davis, Socialism and Nationalism op. cit. pp. 79-82, M. Lowy, argues that "Marx offered neither a systematic theory of the national question, a precise definition of the concept of "nation", nor a general political strategy for the proletariat in this domain", see Marxists and the National Question, op. cit. p.

the contrary, the systemic view of the process of evolution of humanity through different Modes of Production and their concomitant forms of social organisation must provide the analytical tools to conceptualise the nation within definite historical boundaries. The "modern nation state" is for Marx and Engels, that which secures the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie, and as such it is intimately bound to the latter, for as Cutler et al argue, it is an absurdity to argue that something secures the conditions of existence of something else that does not exist.⁵⁹ Consequently, the emergence of every national state is for Marx and Engels indissolubly linked with the universalisation of the capitalist mode of production and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. The viability or otherwise of every national state is tested against this fundamental theoretical assumption. Each of Marx and Engels concrete analysis of a specific national community, from the firm advocacy of the right to self determination to Irish and Poles, to the harsh treatment of the "southern slavs" is guided by this principle, which gives meaning the every concrete analysis.

A second influential explanation of the embarrassing Engelsian statements about the "southern slavs" is advocated by S. Bloom. Referring to Engels scornful attacks on the "southern slavs" he argues that most of them "must not be taken into account", because Engels was more prone to "political generalisations" and he was "rather more severe" than Marx with small nations.⁶⁰ The implication of this argument is that Marx should be disassociated from this analysis because it was Engels that promoted the use of Hegelian terminology as well as being

 59. A. Cutler, B. Hindess, P. Hirst, A. Hussain, Marx's "Capital" and Capitalism Today, op. cit. vol. 1, p.216 f.f

60. S. Bloom, El Mundo de las Naciones, spanish translation of "The World of Nations", op. cit. p. 49

guilty of a certain "german jingoism" in his youth. Such an explanation is also partly accepted by Davis. R. Rosdolsky, in his very detailed discussion of the problem appears also to suggest the same argument.

Engels understood by the notion of "peoples without their own history", peoples (Völker) that in the past were not capable of creating a vigorous state system, and because of this, in Engels view, they had no vigor to obtain national autonomy in the future.⁶¹

While Rosdolsky does not in this paragraph explicitly disassociate Marx from this analysis, by arguing that *...Engels understood*, and *...in Engels view*, he implicitly appears to be disassociating Marx from this conceptualisation.

This conclusion is unjustified for two main reasons: first, as it was shown below, Marx also indulged in a derogatory denunciation of small and non western European national communities. Second, and even more important, it is unthinkable that Marx and Engels in a situation of close collaboration and joint revolutionary work, would disagree over such a fundamental question. As David Fernbach rightly suggests⁶² the reason for Engels recurrent use of Hegelian terminology, was mainly a consequence of the division of labour between between the two partners. In this situation, as Fernbach suggests, Engels was in charge of the national question and in the hypothetical case that the senior partner was in disagreement with the views of the junior partner, he never made this disagreement explicit. If such a disagreement

61. R. Rosdolsky, F. Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker, op. cit. p. 87, spanish translation p. 10

62. David Fernbach, "introduction to the 1848 Marx and Engels writings"

existed, this would have been an extraordinary situation, given the importance of the issue during the period 1848-52.

Also F. Mehring,⁶³ in a comprehensive study of the writings of Marx and Engels in the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung", argues that there is no clear way to determine the origin of the majority of the leading articles of this newspaper (most of the attacks on the "South Slavs" appeared in this format), which as a rule were written in close collaboration between the two partners. Consequently, it is then hard to escape the conclusion that the articles referring to the use of the Hegelian derogatory terminology were written in close collaboration and agreement, and were not the result of Engels' idiosyncratic perception of the problem.

Another perhaps more sophisticated interpretation of the embarrassing use of the racist Hegelian terminology is discussed in G. Haupt and C. Weill well documented article on the Marxian heritage concerning the national question.⁶⁴ According to these authors, the persistent use of the Hegelian terminology should be understood in the same context and domain in which the terminology was used, namely the area of political action. Consequently the authors reason that this terminology is neither the result of any aprioristic elaboration, nor does it arise from a careful and systematic thinking of the problems involved. It

63. F. Mehring, Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von K. Marx, F. Engels und F. Lasalle quoted in C. Herod The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought, Matinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1976, p. 19

64. G. Haupt, C. Weill, L'eredità di Marx ed Engels e la questione nazionale, op. cit. p. 284 ff., similar ideas are expressed in the not less valuable introductory essay by G. Haupt. in op. cit. G. Haupt., C. Weill, M. Lowy, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale

arises from the heath of the revolutionary fervor of the 1848 revolutions. In this situation Marx and Engels perceived the task of the democratic and revolutionary forces to be:

- a) The destruction of the political system established in the Congress of Vienna of 1815, and in particular, the dismantling of the big multinational Empires (Austria Hungary and Czarist Russia).
- b) The political independence of the "big" historical nations, particularly those oppressed by the above-mentioned multinational Empires.

But according to Haupt and Weill, this strategy did not take into account the interests of the small national communities (which Marx and Engels considered to be "backward peasant nations"), and which needed the equilibrium of the multinational Empire to counteract the assimilationist pressures of their larger neighbors in order to maintain their national individuality. In this situation, the movements for national revival among the small slavic national communities, were pushed by the incapacity of the revolutionary movement to provide a solution to their national aspirations, into the arms of the counter revolutionaries, because by preserving the "status quo", they were not forcing assimilation upon themselves.⁶⁵ Thus, ac-

65. As it will later discussed in Chapter 6, this situation was half a century later, understood by the Austrian socialists, who in the Brno (Brünn) Programme, incorporated a number of important safeguards to protect the rights of these small national communities. See "Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Gesamt - Parteitages der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich, Brünn", spanish translation, in La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente 73, Vol 1, Mexico 1978, pp.181-217

according to Haupt and Weill,⁶⁶ Marx and Engels drew theoretical conclusions from the transitory and conjunctural circumstances of the 1848 revolution, by defining these unfortunate peoples as "intrinsically reactionary".

While Haupt and Weill's hypothesis has the important merit of providing a very plausible historical context for this bizarre analysis it is still not entirely satisfactory for two main reasons: first, Marx and Engels maintained their strong animosity towards the small central European national communities over most of their political career. In 1855 in an article in the "New York Daily Tribune", Marx argued that "one part of the Austrian Slavs consists of tribes whose history belongs to the past."⁶⁷, and Engels repeated this same argument in an article about Russia.⁶⁸ In 1882, one year before the death of Marx, Engels declared in response to a criticism by Kautsky, that he had no sympathy for the small slavonic groups" and "ruins of nations", who looked to the Czar for salvation, and in 1885, two years after the death of Marx, Engels argued that:

The European War is beginning to seriously threaten us. These miserable remnants of former nations - Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks and other dishonest rabble [Raubergesindel] - over which philistine liberals gush in the interests of Russia, are unwilling to grant each other the very air they breathe and seem to be compelled to cut each others greedy throats. That each of these tiny tribes can determine whether Europe is to be at war or peace serves these

66. *ibid.* p. 287

67. New York Daily Tribune, 7 May 1855, quoted by C. Herod, The Nation in the history of Marxian Thought, op. cit. p. 33

68. F. Engels, MEW, op. cit. vol 18 p.586

nationalistic philistines right. The first shot has been fired at the Dragoman, where and when the last shot will be fired, no-one knows.⁶⁹

Second, as it was shown earlier in this chapter, Marx and Engels used their offensive terminology, and the Hegelian concepts, not only in writing about the "Southern Slavs", but also in respect of (or rather with disrespect to), other national communities. In using this terminology, Marx and Engels created a system of equivalences which clearly implied the creation of a dichotomous analysis of national communities, on the one hand were the "historical" great European nations - on the whole, the standard bearers of the process of "civilisation and progress". On the other hand, were the small and "non western and central European nations" - on the whole, "barbaric and reactionary". This dichotomous conceptualisation implies that the pattern of national development of Western and Central Europe, should be considered "normal" and "universal", and lack of compliance with it implies a reaction and retrogression. In conceptualising the national phenomenon in this way, the emerging theoretical categories of analysis go beyond the specific case of the 1848 revolutions.

Otto Bauer, in his monumental work on the national question, also provides for the Marxist tradition a highly ingenious way out of this embarrassing analysis, by arguing that the concept of "Non Historical Nations" is not an absolute criterion, but the result of a set of historical circumstances occurring at a particular period in the process of development of the forces of production. In a different set of circumstances connected with

69. Letter of F. Engels to August Bebel in Berlin, on 17 November 1885, MEW, op. cit. Vol 36, p. 390, translated from German by P. Vintila. Also quoted by C. Herod, op. cit. The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought p. 33

the development of a more "advanced" stage of capitalist development, these "non historical" nations will "awake to national life". Bauer's arguments will be further discussed in chapter seven, for the moment it is sufficient to note that Bauer felt uneasy about the categorical and deterministic use of the concepts of "historical" vs. "non historical" nations, but nevertheless accepted them as the theoretical point of departure, if only to radically change their meaning.

Rosdolsky's Critique of the concept of "Non Historical Nations"

But it is above all R. Rosdolsky, the distinguished Ukrainian Marxist scholar who, without any doubt, provides the most comprehensive, detailed and scholarly written work on the subject of the "Non Historical" Nations.⁷⁰ It is regrettable that, to date this very important work has not been translated into English, depriving the English reading audience of an extraordinary rich and useful source of information as well as a stimulating analysis. Even if some of Rosdolsky's conclusions appear to lack sufficient critical discussion, the work should be praised for its detailed discussion and systematic use of primary sources.

The first part of Rosdolsky's work is devoted to a comprehensive presentation of the attitudes of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung and of Marx and Engels towards each of the Eastern European National communities under discussion, attempting an initial tentative explanation of the reasons for Marx and Engels attitude towards these national communities. According to Rosdolsky, one factor that must be taken into account is the complexity of the national problem in Austria, and the difficulties faced by anyone attempting to provide a solution to the conflict-

70. R. Rosdolsky, Friederich Engels und das problem der "Geschichtslosen" Völker, op. cit.

ing claims of the national movements under consideration:

On the one hand, there were plebeian populations that had just awoken to historical life, did not have their own bourgeoisie or working class, and were just able to sustain an autonomous national existence. On the other hand, there was a German bourgeoisie that felt at home in the slavonic countries of the monarchy as it felt in Germany proper, populating the cities of those countries, and dominating industry and commerce. Given its class position, (the German bourgeoisie) was not prepared to resign its privileged position, as for example the Hungarian or Polish nobility to the exploitation and domination of its foreign tributary (Hintersassen) Groups.⁷¹

This situation of clear cultural and political domination of the German bourgeoisie over territories inhabited by national communities of slavic descent and culture, made the acceptance of any form of national emancipation of the latter (meaning national-territorial state sovereignty) by the German bourgeoisie an impossible situation. In this sense, Rosdolsky argues that to ask the German bourgeoisie to voluntarily give their hegemonic position in these slavonic countries was tantamount to "Question the ability of the German bourgeoisie to participate in the revolution".⁷² So, according to Rosdolsky, Marx and Engels found themselves in an acute dilemma: if they supported the emerging national communities this would certainly alienate the German bourgeoisie, the "most advanced class at the time" which

71. *ibid.*, p. 91-92, spanish translation p.15. The word *Hintersassen* has no precise English equivalent, in the ongoing discussion it has been translated is "tributary". For the etymological meaning of the term, Chapter 7 footnote 74

72. *ibid.*

was the very basis of the 1848 revolutionary fervor. Thus Rosdolsky reasons that Marx and Engels had "no other choice", but to support the "progressive bourgeoisie", even if this meant encouraging harsh and savage national repression of the "non viable" national communities. The Czech provinces were, according to Rosdolsky, "in the middle of Germany"⁷³, and in a language that is more in tune with a reactionary and nostalgic "völkisch" nationalist rhetoric than the analytical wit of a distinguished Marxist scholar, he argues that if the slavic national communities were to constitute a national states, they would have represented "*Einem Dorn in Fleische des künftigen grossdeutschen Reiches bilden (!?)*"⁷⁴. If this was not enough, there was according to Rosdolsky, a second major problem: the "underdevelopment" of the Czechs and other "Southern Slav" national communities vis a vis the German bourgeoisie.

..in addition to this, evidently the Czechs and South slavs were not sufficiently mature to form national states, and such states -in the hypothetical case that they would have been formed- would have only become with ease "bounty of Czarism" (Beute des Zarismus) in becoming "vanguard positions" (Vorposten) of the latter in Central Europe.⁷⁵

By posing the problem in these terms, Rosdolsky is falling into the same paradigmatic trap that made Marxian analysis so insensitive to the plight and national awakening of the national communities wich did not conform with the pattern of national

73. K. Marx Her Vogt, Buenos Aires, Editorial Lautaro p. 212, quoted in Rosdolsky, op. cit. p. 93, spanish translation p. 16

74. "*A thorn in the flesh of the future Great German Empire*", ibid. p. 93, spanish translation p. 16

75. ibid.

development of non Western European national communities. Rosdolsky is repeating Marx' epiphenomenal analysis by arguing that a) every national movement exists to build a national state, and b) national awakening is only progressive where there is a strong bourgeoisie. Rosdolsky however, qualifies his analysis by arguing that the danger of counter-revolution would have been kept under control if these national communities had achieved autonomy and equality of rights at the cultural, linguistic, and political levels. But Rosdolsky asks the rhetorical question "What could have moved the German bourgeoisie to unilaterally resign their privileges?" Here he believes that to suggest a programme of national cultural autonomy, as it was suggested fifty years later in the Brno (Brünn)⁷⁶ congress of the "All Austrian" (Gesamtpartei) Socialist Party, was during this period, an utopian solution.

In this situation, Rosdolsky concludes his analysis by arguing that given the conjunctural relations of forces, the German revolution could only give power to the German bourgeoisie and to the Hungarian and Polish aristocracy, the junior partners of the former. This argument leads Rosdolsky to the conclusion that the victory of the revolutionary forces would have had to coincide with an even greater oppression of the so called "Non Historical" nations. Rosdolsky attempts a critical defense of the German left and of Marx and Engels when he argues that:

It was impossible for the German left to identify objectives that went beyond this objective "barrier" (Schranke) of the revolution, and attempt a reconciliation of irreconcilable antagonisms.⁷⁷

76. For a discussion of this programme see chapter 6

77. Rosdolsky, op. cit. p. 194, spanish translation p. 133

Consequently, "the left" was unable to reconcile the antagonisms which, according to Rosdolsky, were "irreconcilable" at that particular historical period. In this situation, Rosdolsky argues, the left had "no other option" but to take position "in favour" of the "progressive" bourgeoisie and to declare as their "natural enemies" the populations that resisted the political hegemony of the German bourgeoisie and the Polish and Hungarian nobility. In other words, the German left had to declare entire national communities "counter-revolutionary". This posed a theoretical problem for the left as well as for the founding fathers of historical materialism:

This unusual distinction between nations and not between social classes had to be explained, this is to say, deduced, from the history or from the nature of these nations. In this situation it seemed "natural" for the revolutionary "left" to recur to the traditional Hegelian doctrine of "historical" and "non historical" peoples (Völkern) as a mechanism for self deceit, escaping to the terrain of historical mythology to cover for the fatal objective difficulties of the revolution. The Hegelian nostalgic recollections (Reminiszenzen) of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung were very useful for this purpose...⁷⁸

Consequently, Rosdolsky's arguments could be summarised in the following way: a) The "objective" conditions did not allow for the emancipation of the "South Slavs"; even if it would have been possible for them to gain some form of national emancipation, they were too "backward" to constitute modern nations. b) The revolutionary "left" had no alternative, but to oppose the demands of these unfortunate national communities, even if they were struggling against a vicious form of oppression. The vic-

78. R. Rosdolsky, F. Engels un das Problem..., op. cit. p. 194, spanish translation p. 133.

tory of the bourgeoisie was supposed to pave the way for the eventual emancipation of humanity as a whole in the form of the impending proletarian revolution. If in order to achieve this goals whole national communities were culturally and politically obliterated, the left had to shrug its shoulders and wonder about "the heavy price" paid for development of "progress". So, according to Rosdolsky, the "mistakes" of the revolutionary left were conditioned by historical circumstances and were in this sense, unavoidable. Thus Rosdolsky argues that one must not judge them in terms of our "contemporary perceptions of the national question", but they should be perceived in terms of the historical circumstances of the period in question.⁷⁹

Rosdolsky's conclusions are problematic in a number of ways:

First, the theory of "nations without history" was applied, as Rosdolsky is well aware, not only to the small Slavonic national communities. They were also applied to a variety of nations, both large and small which in Marx and Engels judgement, were not capable of a revolutionary transformation of their societies (the Welsh, the Scots, the Quebecois and the Mexicans are just but few examples). The widespread use of the theory denotes a more systematic conceptualisation than the conjunctural explanation proposed by Rosdolsky appears to indicate.

Second, it seems that also Rosdolsky falls into the paradigmatic theoretical trap which logically leads to the formulation of the theory of "non historical nations". This is clear from Rosdolsky's argument that historical circumstances were not yet "ripe" for the emancipation of the "Southern Slav" national communities. By sustaining this argument, he is implicitly accepting the teleological model of social evolution behind the Hegelian

79. *ibid.* Conclusions, p. 240 and ff., Spanish translation, p. 184 and ff.

theory of "non historical" peoples. This influence was also noted in Chapter 1, when evaluating the social evolutionary parameter inherited by the Marxian tradition from the works of the founding fathers. The Epiphenomenalist equation:

Modern Nation = National State = Hegemony of the Bourgeoisie

Is accepted by Rosdolsky, considerably weakening his case against Marx and Engels abusive attitude towards the "South Slavs".

Third, Rosdolsky fails to see the link between his very well documented section of Marx and Engels evaluation of the national question and the overall theory of evolution developed by the founding fathers of historical materialism. Rosdolsky argues that "Revolutionary Left" could not overcome the "objective" circumstances in which the struggle for the emancipation of the southern slav national communities was taking place, and therefore it had to oppose their struggle for national emancipation to prevent further delays to the development of a "revolutionary" class (the bourgeoisie). The problem in this argument is not the "objective" conditions, but the use of epistemological constructs which lead to a conceptualisation of the lack of maturity of the "objective" conditions. Rather than the "objective" circumstances, it was the numbing effect of the epiphenomenalist epistemology that prevented the German "left" from conceptualising the national problem in such a way that takes into account the national development of the "South Slavs". Marxist epistemology required the definition of a developmental continuum in which the national state must be historically located to function as a vehicle for the crystallization of bourgeois power. National communities that do not follow this developmental path cannot "fit" the theoretical model, and are declared "deviant exceptions" that to be rectified at the best possible opportunity. This is perhaps the single most important explanation for the lack of a sensitive analysis of the national phenomenon in the works of Marx and Engels, as well as in subsequent generations of Marxists dis-

cussing the national question. The epistemological requirement which demands the historical location of the national phenomenon within a hierarchical, universal and developmental continuum must be seriously challenged, if the Marxist tradition is to provide a more sensitive discussion of the multi-dimensionality of the national arena.

To conclude this chapter, it may be useful to summarise the main findings of the discussion.

First, Contrary to the assertions of Davis, Lowy and other analysts and commentators of the work of Marx and Engels on the national question, it has been argued in this chapter that the work of the founding fathers of historical materialism could be understood as a coherent corpus of literature, even if the theoretical arguments which sustain Marx and Engels analysis have not been explicitly conceptualised. The "Modern Nation" is a clearly defined and historically located political phenomena. It represents a mechanism for consolidating and securing the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie. The theory of the "non historical nations" is not a curiosity, a slip of the tongue, an ad hoc" argument or a regrettable mishap. It is rather the result of the formulation of the rigid universal laws of social evolution that define the precise historical location of the "modern nation" and by default renders obsolete national communities that cannot fulfill this Eurocentric political criterion. All this gives meaning to the rigid evolutionist epiphenomenalism that colored Marx and Engels analysis of the various aspects of the national phenomenon.

Second, the analytical parameters discussed in chapter 1, inform the conceptual requirement that every "modern nation" must form a national state to further the development of the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the formation of a national state is a "sine qua non" functional requirement for the survival of a national community in a capitalist mode of production. National

communities incapable of forming national states are hindering the development of the progressive centralisation and uniformisation of humanity, and must therefore, assimilate to more "vital" and "energetic" nations capable of forming national states with democracy "as compensation". The National State is the condition for a mature bourgeoisie and the requisite for the final contradiction that will render both, the nation and the state historically obsolete. The "model" for national development is that of the "large" Western European nations, particularly France, but also British England, which is considered a "successful case" of assimilation of the celtic fringe, with the important exception of Ireland- a "historical" nation.

Third, the perception of the national community outlined above is the nucleus of the misleading heritage of European Marxism. It informed the positions of the main debates within the Second and Third International, and it configured the framework in which subsequent generation of Marxists thought the national question. As it will be shown in later chapters, some were more successful than others in their attempts to break with these abortive rigidities. The impact of this discussion on the works of the most influential traditions on the second international will be now evaluated.

Chapter 3 : The Second International and the National Question

Leszek Kolakowski argues in his influential book on the history and development of the Marxist theory that the Second International "may be called without exaggeration the Golden Age of Marxism"¹, and this is because:

Marxist doctrine had been clearly enough defined to constitute a recognisable school of thought but it was not so rigidly codified or subjected to dogmatic orthodoxy as to rule out discussion or the advocacy of rival solutions to theoretical and tactical problems²

While this may be superficially the case, particularly where the proliferation of debates and thinkers is taken into account, this apparent plurality of approaches hides a more dogmatic and deterministic approach to the fundamental features of historical materialism. The Second International's "Left", "Right", and "Center", were closely associated with, and became leading exponents of, the parameters of analysis discussed in Chapter 1, which choked the analytical creativity and imagination of the movement in more than one way. As it will be shown in a moment, the conceptualisation of the national question is one of the many important examples of this dogmatism and ossification of the old parameters of analysis. A significant exception in this analytical pattern was the emergence and development of the *Wiener Marxsche Schule* (Viennese Marxist School) which was later to take the name of "Austro-Marxism". Given the importance of the contribution of the Austro-Marxist school to the analysis of the na-

1. L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1978, Vol II, The Golden Age, p.1

2. *ibid*

tional phenomena, a specific chapter will be devoted to the discussion of Austro-marxism and the national phenomena.

As Kolakowski rightly argues, the Second International was blessed with a prolific discussion of a number of controversial issues, of which the "National Question" was both one of the most important and one of the most heatedly debated. While from this debate it is possible to recognise a genuine attempt to come to grips with an important problem that was perceived to have been insufficiently discussed by the founding fathers of historical materialism, the possibilities of conceptualising the national phenomena in a novel and imaginative way were silenced from the start by the logic of the parameters of analysis discussed in chapter one.

It will be impossible in the context of this work to provide a detailed and comprehensive account of the historical circumstances and substantive arguments that surrounded all debates on the national question that took place in the context of the Second International. The purpose of this chapter will be rather more modest: to account for the most influential arguments on the national question debated during this historical period, considering the factional organisation that resulted from the revisionist debate, as a cleavage that in many ways determined the configuration of ideas in the context of the Second International, and the intellectual legacy of the period as a whole. The Marxist-Leninist and Austro-Marxist traditions will be considered in separate chapters given the intellectual originality of the latter and the profound influence of the former in contemporary discussions of the national phenomena. In this chapter a discussion of the contributions of Eduard Bernstein, Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg will be attempted, these being the most influential figures in the "Revisionist", "Center" and "Left" factions.

The epiphenomenalist analysis of the national question; Kautsky and Luxemburg

Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky represent two different and often contradictory approaches and political strategies in the context of the second international in the years preceding world war I. R. Luxemburg was the outstanding figure of the radical left and K. Kautsky was the most influential intellectual figure of the so called "centrist" or "orthodox" faction. Many contentious issues separated both Marxist thinkers, but in spite of these differences it is possible to detect a common 'axiomatic' departure in their conceptualisation of theory and discussions over strategy. This common axiomatic departure was precisely the cornerstone of the epiphenomenalist approach to the so called "superstructural phenomena"³: This is the direct equation of political and social institutions with the most meaningful features of the economic order and the understanding of the process of production in a functionalist and deterministic way. Every social institution "represents" an agent in the class struggle and socialism will evolve out the capitalist mode of production in a mechanistic way, much the same as capitalism was perceived to have evolved out of the feudal mode of production.

Kautsky, heavily influenced by earlier forms of a Social Darwinian logic,⁴ developed his analysis of the process of social

3. For a discussion of the concept of "Epiphenomenalism", see Chapter 1, and C. Mouffe Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci, in C. Mouffe (ed.) Gramsci and the Marxist Theory op cit. p.169

4. Kautsky himself in a number of occasions acknowledged Darwin's influence in his thought, defining for instance morality as an ethical impulse derived from the natural social condition of humans. However as Steenson rightly argues, Kautsky subsumed under the name of Darwin a number of diverse influences in his interpretation of Marxism For a further discussion on the subject

transformation in terms of what he called "The natural necessities of the capitalist mode of production"⁵. This meant that history should be understood as a series of interrelated stages of linear development, the so-called "Iron Laws of Evolution", which will lead history to its inexorable end: the abolition of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society. Communities, like all other "superstructural" social institutions are understood to be mere tools or instruments in this process:

All communities have economic functions to fulfill! This must, self evidently have been the case with the original communist societies which we encounter at the threshold of history"⁶

Rosa Luxemburg's major theoretical work, "The Accumulation of Capital" is also committed to the same analytical logic:

[Imperialism is]...The political expression of the accumulation of capital in its competitive struggle for what remain still open to the non-capitalist environment" ..."Though imperialism is the historical method for prolonging the career of Capitalism, it is also a sure means of bringing i to a swift conclusion...But the more violently, ruthlessly and thoroughly imperialism brings about the decline of non-capitalist civilisation, the more rapidly it cuts the very ground from under the feet of capitalist accumulation...⁷

see G. P. Steenson, K. Kautsky, Marxism in the Classical Years, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978, p. 24-25.

5. K. Kautsky, The class struggle W.W. Norton, New York, 1971, p.

6. Karl Kautsky, The Class struggle, op. cit. p. 104

7. R. Luxemburg, The Accumulation of Capital, p.446. This deterministic understanding of the development of capitalism con-

These notions of the "inescapable" and "unavoidable" impending collapse of capitalism are the logical conclusion of Kautsky's and Luxemburg's analytical logic. The "prophetic" nature of this prediction is deeply rooted in the transparent and linear nature of the epiphenomenalist analysis - the very essence of the mechanistic Marxism of the men and women of the Second International. The apocalyptic perception that the process of social transformation will unavoidably result in the eventual collapse of the capitalist mode of production results from the transparency of the "base-superstructure" relationship, which in turn, is determined by the rigid and mechanistic interpretation of the function of the laws of motion of political economy. This analytical logic deeply influenced Kautsky's and Luxemburg's understanding of the national question. In what follows, it will be argued that this understanding was intellectually abortive since it confined the analysis of the national phenomenon to the paradigmatic straitjacket of epiphenomenalism. In this way it prevented a more multidimensional and imaginative understanding of the national question, which was during this period, of enormous importance for the theory and strategy of the workers' movement. The legacy of K. Kautsky on the national question will be discussed first.

contradicts Luxemburg's emphasis on political activism and radical action by the working class. This contradiction in Luxemburg's work has been discussed at some length by her biographers, e.g., J. P. Nettl, Rosa Luxemburg, abridged edition. Oxford University Press 1969 and P. Frolich Rosa Luxemburg, London, Pluto Press 1972.

The classical form of the modern state is the National State. But the classical forms only exist as tendencies. It is only seldom that they develop in a typically perfect form⁸

For Kautsky, as for Marx, the origin of the modern nation was unequivocally located in the period that led to the consolidation and development of the capitalist mode of production. Kautsky further argued that the basic requirement for the development of a modern nation is a common language. national languages, Kautsky argues, had most probably developed from idioms used by traders. With the creation of internal markets and the development in the context of emerging capitalism of free wage labour, the nation emerges embracing all classes in society

Nationalism is, for Kautsky, the expression of the interest of commercial capitalism and the cover for "the most sordid profiteering"⁹. In Kautsky's analysis, the central factor in the formation of nations has been language: to the extent that modern economic development has taken priority, the need for all those who speak the same language to be united in a common state became a priority in the process of social organisation. This point is crucial for the development of Kautsky's argument; not only is this linguistic unification of the modern state a causal explana-

8. K. Kautsky Die Moderne Nationalitat, in G. Haupt, C. Weill, M. Lowy, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, F. Maspero, Paris 1974, p. 114, my own translation from French.

9. K. Kautsky, Die Moderne Nationalitat, Neue Zeit, 5. 1887, quoted and translated by H. Mommsen and A. Martiny in "Nationalism and the Nationalities Question", Encyclopedia of Marxism, Communism and Western Society, op. cit. p.42

tion for the formation of modern nations, but also the existence of a common language becomes for Kautsky a "methodological yardstick" for the process of national development. Languages play the role of "barometers" of the stage of development of the productive forces.¹⁰ This is because it is possible to measure the level of national development from the degree of linguistic unification of the state under consideration, and this in turn will denote the level of hegemony achieved by the bourgeoisie of that particular nation. For Kautsky, languages are the basic medium of social intercourse, and the full development of capitalism out of the Feudal Mode of Production requires as a condition "sine qua non", the formation of a market, which is in the first instance, the place in which this extended intercourse takes place. For market forces to be able to interact without hindrance, a medium of communication must be defined and institutionalised, and this is when a common language becomes the functional necessity of the new state, delimiting in this way the administrative and territorial boundaries of the linguistic unit in the process of becoming a nation.

For Kautsky then, language constitutes the system of communication through which the interaction required for the formation of markets takes place. However, the process of linguistic consolidation is not an abrupt transition. Is a gradual process of evolution in which different dialects and languages merge to form the common base for the interaction process. The constituent parts of the emerging economic system face a darwinian dilemma, either they adapt to the new socioeconomic condition or perish in the process, trampled over by the irresistible forces of "progress". According to Kautsky, this process is at times painful ¹¹, but the inexorable laws of capitalist development evolve

10. K. Kautsky, Die Moderne Nationalitat, in Haupt, Weill and Lowy, op. cit. p.119.

11. this probably reflects Kautsky's tribulations about his own

without hindrance. The fate of "modern nations" is linked to the fate of capitalism, and all this is expressed in the evolution of modern languages:

To the extent that international communications expand, the need is felt for a medium of international communication, for a universal language 12

But this cannot and will not be an "ad hoc" language like Esperanto. Neither will it be one of the "civilised" contemporary languages such as French, English or German. The universal language will result from the mutual assimilation of the most important contemporary languages as the process of economic development brings into a single system the different national economies.¹³ However, according to Kautsky, this process cannot be achieved as a result of political or extra-economic coercion, as it was taking place in Czarist Russia at the time that Kautsky wrote his essay on "modern nations". National assimilation is the essential and necessary outcome of the amalgamation of market forces, so, according to Kautsky, it cannot be imposed by political decree. Linguistic difference is merely a symptom not the problem; the real locus of the problem has always to be located at the level of the economy. To clarify this point, Kautsky refers to the Irish question:

nation, the Czechs, to whom he recommended a prompt assimilation to the more "civilised" Germans.

12. K. Kautsky, Die Moderne Nationalitat, in Haupt, Weill and Lowy, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, op. cit. p.121

13. *ibid.* p. 122

The Irish case is a clear proof that the solution to the "linguistic question" would not be enough to suppress a national antagonism, while the economic conditions that created this antagonism in the first place still persist.¹⁴

Thus Kautsky correctly argues that after centuries of British colonisation in Ireland, and the subsequent loss of Gaelic as the national language, Ireland did not become part of Britain through the loss of its national language. This was because according to Kautsky, the country was exploited and colonised rather than integrated into the British economy. In the same way, Kautsky argues that the national communities in Czarist Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire will not assimilate out of forcible compulsion. But neither the languages of the small slav national communities nor the Irish Gaelic have any future. The relentless process of assimilation of all nations into an "international " community will simply imply that the languages of the small national communities will vanish first. At most, Kautsky argues, these national languages will remain for "domestic use" in the same way as "old family furniture" is conserved for "family veneration" but has little practical use. ¹⁵

The languages spoken in the international trade and communication centers will slowly take the place of the more peripheral ones, until one of them will assimilate the others. But only "economic considerations" will decide the victor, and not considerations of "grammar or musicality", since for Kautsky

The need for a universal language is nothing else but a symptom of the need for the union of all nations that constitute modern civilisation into a single economic territory, which will undo national barriers¹⁶

14. ibid p. 117

15. ibid p. 122

In concrete terms, this means that for Kautsky only the more "advanced" and "developed" nations will survive the initial process of assimilation; "small communities" like the Czechs, are bound to disappear in "the near future".¹⁷ To the extent that capitalism develops in Bohemia, the importance of the Czech language decreases and the importance of German increases. However Kautsky advises the Czechs to find solace and consolation in the fact that the same fate awaits "larger" and more "advanced" national communities.

Kautsky's position on the national question remained unchanged through his long and prolific political life. Twenty years after Die Moderne Nationalität, Kautsky wrote a polemical article in which he tried to refute Oto Bauer's contention that national communities will survive capitalism. In this article, Kautsky restates his epiphenomenal analysis in all its crudity:

Once we have reached the state in which the bulk of the population of our advanced nations speak one or more world languages besides their own national language, there will be a basis for a gradual reduction leading to the total disappearance of languages of minor nations, and finally, to the uniting of all civilised humanity into one language and one nationality. 18

From the above it is clear that Kautsky's analysis is

16. ibid p.122

17. ibid. p.121

18. K. Kautsky, Nationalität und Internationalität, in H. Mommsen, op. cit. p. 43

replicating the epistemological premises that determine the evolutionary parameter of analysis of classical Marxism. The process of social transformation is determined by universal laws and the existence of national communities and nationalist movements must be located within the parameters of this discussion. In other words, each national community must "fit" into this process of social transformation, and, what is more important, this posits a crucial limitation to the interpretative capability of the emerging theoretical analysis on the national question. The logic of interpretation of the general behavioral patterns, and historical meaning of national communities, is informed "a priori" by conceptual constructs resulting from the above mentioned epistemological devices. This situation renders impossible an analysis of the national phenomenon in terms of a conceptual framework incompatible, or even unrelated, to the teleology of a universal and linear process of social evolution leading to the eventual dissolution to the nation in general. For example, if the working class is bestowed with the privilege of being the social stratum that will preside over the dissolution of nationalities, it becomes then impossible for the latter to claim any kind of connection with the national phenomenon other than to assist in the process of bourgeois consolidation, a situation which in itself contains the seeds of its own destruction. Consequently, any working class attachment to the national community is rendered impossible by the terms of reference of the epistemological devices used in the Kautskian discussion. Also, and equally important, any conflictive relation between national communities is not analysed in its own merits, but in terms of possible "progressive" outcome of the process of change. If the cultural existence and values of more "backward" national communities is shattered in the quest for "human progress", then this is always an acceptable and even desirable outcome, since the above discussed parameter of analysis ascribes no importance or meaning to cultural diversity. Indeed, cultural diversity, would not "fit" into the rigid categories of social evolution, and is therefore a utopian principle. As Rosa Luxemburg argues

it is always necessary to sustain a "healthy" and "objective" perspective in the analysis of the national question. Anything that cannot "fit" the general logic of epiphenomenality, i.e., the epistemological principles that inform the Kautskian analysis, is rendered an illegitimate concern. In what follows it will be shown how these axiomatic analytical tools are developed even more explicitly in the works of Luxemburg, who took this logic of analysis to its inescapable conclusion by arguing that nations are only "temporary phenomenon".

The rejection of the nation: The work of Rosa Luxemburg

...In a society based on classes, the nation as a uniform social and political whole simply does not exist. Instead there exist within each nation classes with antagonistic interests and "rights". There is literally no social arena, from the strongest material relationship to the most subtle moral one, in which the possessing classes and the self-conscious proletariat could take one and the same position as one undifferentiated national whole.¹⁹

Rosa Luxemburg was probably the most uncompromising Marxist discussant on the national question. She became involved in countless debates and discussions on the subject, particularly in relation to Poland, her native country. Her constant involvement in discussions on the national question led one of her most important biographers to argue that she had an "insatiable appetite for public polemics on the subject"²⁰. Her uncompromising opposition to any concession to nationalism or to the widely accepted "right of nations to self determination" must be under-

¹⁹. Rosa Luxemburg, The question of Nationality and Autonomy quoted by Nettl op. cit. and H. B. Davis (ed.) op. cit p.135-6

²⁰. J. P. Nettl, op. cit. p. 505

stood not only as the result of the logic of epiphenomenalism, but also in the context of her analysis of the contemporary situation in her native land. She was in principle opposed to the creation of an independent Polish state.

Around the turn of the century, the demand for the liberation of Poland became one of the key political demands of the young European Social Democracy. This followed a long tradition dating from the works of Marx and Engels in which Polish independence was considered to be of paramount importance for the development of the revolutionary forces in Europe. However, Rosa Luxemburg challenged this interpretation of events. Her main argument was that the Polish working class in the areas of occupation should join forces with their fellow workers in their respective multinational states, rather than join forces with the Polish petty bourgeoisie for what she regarded to be "utopian" liberation of Poland, which according to Luxemburg will invariably signify the creation of a bourgeois Polish state. While she acknowledged that Marx was justified in campaigning for the emancipation of Poland in 1848, towards the end of the century social conditions had changed dramatically; Czarist Russia showed signs of developing towards a capitalist economy, and this should certainly change the Marxist perception of Russia and Poland. Consequently, if the independence of Poland in 1848 was supported because it helped the development of the capitalist forces of production, it must, given the dramatic change in the socioeconomic circumstances, be opposed at the end of the century for the same reasons. Czarist Russia is not any longer a semi-feudal economy, but a state rapidly changing towards a capitalist system. In a polemical article published in the theoretical journal of the German socialist party, Die Neue Zeit,²¹ in response

21. Der Sozialpatriotismus in Polen, Die Neue Zeit, 2, 14, 1895-96 pp. 324-332. Spanish translation in El desarrollo industrial de Polonia y otros escritos sobre el problema nacional, Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, 71 Siglo XXI editores, Mexico 1979, pp 195-

to a previous article by a group of socialist activists from the city of Cracow,²² Luxemburg argued that since the removal of the tariff boundary between Congress Poland (This was the area of Poland under the occupation of Czarist Russia), and since the freeing of serfs, industry had "mushroomed" in Congress Poland. The effect was to tie this part of Poland to Czarist Russia, on which it depended for the maintenance of its markets. Luxemburg concluded that the Polish bourgeoisie is economically linked to Czarist Russia, and is therefore not interested in an independent Polish state. This was because a Polish state would create customs barriers that would jeopardize the expansion of markets of the bourgeoisie in Congress Poland. The same criterion applied to the Polish textile industry since it depended for its markets on Czarist Russia. Consequently, Luxemburg argued that there are "sound and objective economic reasons" for the bourgeoisie of Congress Poland not to support the movement for Polish unification.

However, the petty bourgeoisie was another matter. While acknowledging that the petty bourgeoisie was by no means united, and that certain sections had done well under the annexation to Czarist Russia, the "backward" nature of the cottage industry generates very good reasons for petty bourgeois support for the unification of Poland, since, according to Luxemburg, the small industry:

...has been obliterated by the Russian connected big industry. These petty bourgeois, with their very backward productive methods, with no capital and near bankruptcy have good reasons to be dissatisfied with the current state of affairs...as big industry is the result of the Russian annexation, the petty bourgeoisie trampled over by the latter

209

22. S. Hacker, "Der Sozialismus in Polen" Die Neue Zeit, 14, 2

becomes the adoptive parent of that orphan national aspiration... "the bourgeois intelligentsia is initiated into the national sentiment by the brutal system of Russification... and only those [intellectuals] who had not been absorbed into industry complain against their exclusion from the civil service and from the heart of the nationalist agitation.(23)

From her analysis in the above mentioned article, Rosa Luxemburg concludes that only two class fractions have a tendency towards nationalism: the declining petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia that cannot find its place in the more advanced capitalist structure that resulted from Poland's incorporation into the Czarist economy (24). Given this configuration of forces, Luxemburg argues that in principle, the unification of Poland will be a retrograde step, since it will impede the development of capitalism and consequently will only benefit those reactionary forces which want to return Poland to a previous stage in its developmental process. The proletariat, which is the progressive class "par excellence", cannot take sides with "backward " forces in the process of development:

If the proletariat would consider Polish independence as its own political program, this will be against the process of economic development. This will not only be of no help in the fulfillment of its task as a class, but, on the contrary, it will produce an ever widening gap between itself and its goals and aspirations.(25)

1895-1896 pp. 324-332.

23. R. Luxemburg, Die Sozialpatriotismus in Polen, in op. cit. E desarrollo Industrial de Polonia p. 206-207(my own translation from spanish), a similar quote could be found in in H. B. Davis, Socialism and Nationalism Monthly review Press, 1967 p.136

In her doctoral thesis at the university of Zurich⁽²⁶⁾, Luxemburg develops further the argument first sketched in the above mentioned article, providing an impressive economic substantiation of the structural link between the Polish and Russian economies. The central argument of the work could be summarized in the following way The emergence of Polish industry took place between 1850 and 1870. The introduction of a railway system accelerated the process of capitalist development even further. After 1877 Polish industry was further stimulated by the introduction of protectionist policies by the Czarist government, and like St. Petersburg and Moscow, the Kingdom of Poland became one of the most developed regions of the Czarist Empire. In 1886, according to Luxemburg, the 141 largest factories in Poland sold 53% of their production to Russian markets, and in 1898 the whole of the Polish textile industry sold more than 50% of its production to Czarist Russia. On the basis of an impressive array of statistical data of which the above is only a small part, Luxemburg concluded that the the Polish bourgeoisie had benefited and been strengthen economically with its close connection with the Russian market. Given this situation, the industrialisation of Poland would go ahead accompanied by a growing Polish proletariat, which would eventually transform Poland into a socialist society. In view of this, the separation of Poland from its Russian markets would bring the process to an end without any gain for the socialist cause. In the same way as the economic activity between Polish and Russian business interests tended to have the effect of destroying national separatism, a strong com-

24. *ibid* p. 207

25. *ibid.* p. 208 my own translation from Spanish

26. *Industrielle Entwicklung Polens*, (The Industrial development of Poland). The thesis was submitted on 12 March 1897 and examined on 1 May of the same year by Professor Julius Wolf.

munity of interests would emerge between the nascent Polish and Russian proletariat. The political consequence of this analysis of the economic tendencies of the Kingdom of Poland was that "self determination", meaning a separate national state, was a retrograde step. By cutting Polish industry from Russian markets the class struggle could only be slowed(27).

Rosa Luxemburg's analysis of the Polish case aroused a strong controversy not only among Polish socialists but in the whole socialist international. The tactical and political implications of her thesis was to fuel the discussion as to whether the working class and its political organisations was to support national liberation movements - or should social emancipation take priority? In terms of the epiphenomenalist analysis of Rosa Luxemburg, the priorities are clear. national oppression was only one aspect of the process of oppression in general, which is the direct result of the division of social formations into classes. The main task of the working class was to abolish the very root of the system of oppression, the class society. Since all forms of oppression are derived from the need to sustain class cleavages, with the emancipation from class societies, the oppression of nations will be necessarily abolished after the abolition of classes. This analysis caused a vigorous discussion within the Second International, which motivated Lenin to write a series of influential articles of the national question.(28)

27. R. Luxemburg, El desarrollo Industrial de Polonia, Spanish translation of Industrielle Entwicklung Polens (The industrial Development of Poland), Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente 71, Siglo XXI editores, Mexico p. 155

28. Lenin's arguments will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. for an appreciation of Lenin's arguments see "Critical Remarks on the National Question" and "The Right of Nations to Self Determination", in which Lenin develops a strong polemic against Luxemburg's discussion of the national question, in V. 1

The intransigent position of Rosa Luxemburg and her supporters finally split the Polish socialist camp. The Polish Socialist Party (known by its Polish initials P.P.S.) favored the reconstitution of Poland and its branches in the parts of Poland under foreign occupation campaigned for a reconstitution of a Polish State. In 1893 Luxemburg and her supporters founded the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (known by the Polish acronym SKDKPiL) which campaigned against the creation of a separate Polish state (29). Rosa Luxemburg consistently polemized against the PPS, accusing them of being "social patriots" (a term that she herself coined and used for the first time in the socialist movement). The theoretical and political conflict between the PPS and the SKDKPiL grew in intensity and in the course of the heated debate, Rosa Luxemburg developed a strong theoretical and political animosity towards the national liberation movements of small national communities. In the heat of the argument Luxemburg adopted uncompromising positions that puzzled many commentators.(30). In her analysis of the Russian situation, she discussed the position of the small national communities of the Czarist Empire with the same lack of sympathy and understanding that characterised Marx and Engels' discussion of the situation of the "South Slavs". Since she was a

Lenin Collected Works Vol. 20

29. H. B. Davis, The Right of Nations to Self Determination, Luxemburg vs Lenin, introductory article in H. B. Davis (ed.) The national Question, Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg, Monthly review Press, 1976, p. 13 Davis underestimates the socialist commitment of the PPS and overestimates the popularity of Luxemburg's arguments among Polish socialists.

30. see for example J. P. Nettl Rosa Luxemburg, Vol. II, Oxford University Press 1966 p. 859

strong supporter of the principle of state centralisation to achieve larger markets that will permit capitalism to arrive at its maturity, her sympathies were definitively not with small national communities struggling for national emancipation. Small states only delay the process of socialist transformation.

In an article published in Die Neue Zeit (31), Luxemburg argued that the Russian middle class was "immature" since it sat and watched the freedom of Russia being "destroyed" because of the conflicts between the various national groups.

...the many Kirgiz, Baschirs, Lapps and others, the remainders and ruins of former nations had no more to say in the social and political life of Russia than the Basques in France and the Wends in Germany.(32)

She then rhetorically asked how these numerous nationalities could constitute a parliament and concluded that in two days "they will tear each other hair out"(33).

Clearly the model that emerged from her doctoral thesis, on the lack of economic viability of Poland as an independent state, informs much of Luxemburg's strategical and theoretical analysis on the national question. The only "healthy objective criterion" to judge a nation's performance was to evaluate its capacity to develop productive forces that will help it to evolve towards socialism. However, J. P. Nettl, Rosa Luxemburg's most important

31. R. Luxemburg, "The Problem of the Hundred Nationalities", Die Neue Zeit, Vol 1, 20, 1904/1905, quoted by C. Herod, The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought, The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1976

32. in C. Herod, *ibid.*

33. *ibid*

biographer, argued that the denial of the Polish right to self determination (the creation of a separate Polish state), was not the same thing as the denial of a separate Polish nationality. She always recognised, Nettl claimed, the distinctive national identity of the Poles. (34) Without denying that it is possible to sustain the principle of national identity while arguing against the creation of national states, this seems to me not to fairly characterize Rosa Luxemburg's position, since for her, the unity of the nation was invalid, precisely because it cut across class identities. Her epiphenomenalist analysis did not permit the conceptualisation of any unitarian, autonomous social phenomenon that cuts across class identities. Classes are for Luxemburg not only the causal explanation of superstructural phenomena, but also they are constituted into clear and distinguishable units with no genuine common interests. If Nettl is right in arguing that Luxemburg recognised the distinct national identity of the Poles, this was presumably of bourgeois and proletarian Poles alike, a position totally incompatible with her epiphenomenalist premises. At best, it is possible to argue that perhaps Luxemburg was prepared to recognise the principle of nationality in a future classless world, or to accept the national identity of a uniform proletarian national community, but neither of these possibilities applied to the Polish nation of her time, or indeed to any other national community.

But it was only in 1908, when Rosa Luxemburg wrote her major series of articles entitled "The Question of Nationality and Autonomy"(35) that her main ideas were presented in a theoretical

34. J. P. Nettl, op. cit. p. 860

35. This series of articles was originally published in the polish journal Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny, Organ Socjaldemokrajci Krolestwa Polskiego i Litwy (Social Democratic Review, the organ of the social democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania) Cracow numbers 6,7,8-9 and 10, August- December 1908

and systematic way. In this series of articles she argues that the very concept of nation is temporary, is not an absolute standard of measurement. It is not more than the particular way in which the bourgeois society encapsulates its structural arrangement. To talk about a theoretical "right of nations" that is valid for all nations at all times is for Rosa Luxemburg a metaphysical cliché such as "the rights of man" and "the rights of citizens". The "scientific nature" of historical materialism demonstrates in the eyes of Rosa Luxemburg, that rights are not "universal and absolute", but are determined by the "material conditions of production" of the period under consideration.(36). In other words, it is not possible to conceptualise any so-called "superstructural" phenomena outside a strict determination of the forces of production. In terms of Luxemburg's analytical logic, it is unthinkable to conceptualise "superstructural" phenomena that transcend the immediate economic conditions of causality. For this type of Marxist interpretation, to refer to general principles outside the immediate sphere of production is illegitimate, because this means locating these principles outside the parameters of the epiphenomenal relations of causality, an unthinkable situation in terms of the epistemological premises of the Marxism of the Second International. On the basis of this argument, for Luxemburg, the position of socialists on questions of nationality is not guided by some universal "abstract" principle, but depends primarily on the concrete circumstances of each case, which differ in each country and change with time(37)

there is an English translation of this series of articles in H. B. Davis (ed.) The National Question, op. cit. p. 101 to 288

36. R. Luxemburg, The National Question and Autonomy, in Davis (ed.) op. cit. p. 111.

37. ibid. p. 112

To support the "right of nations to self determination" is for Luxemburg to be in favor of an abstract and metaphysical right, because the epistemological stance of epiphenomenalism prevents a conceptualisation of the term nation beyond the parameters of the existing conditions of production. To talk about the right of nations to self determination is for Luxemburg to posit the "right" of workers to eat in "gold plates" or to sustain "the right to work" in a world in which unemployment is a structural feature of social organisation. (38)

Since in the Capitalist world at least, for Luxemburg regards the nation as a uniform entity which does not exist, support for the right of nations to self determination implies at best support for a non-existent entity and at worst support for the bourgeoisie which uses the nation as a smoke screen to present its sectarian interests as the general aspiration of the community. Also, following her Polish discussion, there is another important impediment to the formulation of a general theory of national self determination: to support the right of self determination for small national communities, incapable in the words of Luxemburg, of constituting a proper state, is a retrograde step that impedes the development of the bourgeoisie and the emergence of a victorious proletariat.

From the previous review of the main ideas of Kautsky and Luxemburg on the national question, it is possible, as previously suggested, to recognise the nature of the paradigmatic trap that severely impoverished the ability of both Marxist thinkers to conceptualise the national phenomenon: *logic of epiphenomenalism*.

38. ...even if present day governments were forced to declare a universal right to work it would remain only a fine sounding phrase, and not one member of the reserve army of labor waiting on the sidewalk would be able to make a bowl of soup for his hungry children from that right *ibid.* p. 123

Kautsky and Luxemburg, in spite of profound and lasting disagreements over conceptual and strategical issues, were both bound to a severely limited analysis of the national phenomenon by an epistemological stance that could only recognise the position of a so called "superstructural" phenomenon in terms of a chain of causality directly derived from the conjunctural relations of classes in a limited historical setting. An observed change in the conjunctural relation between the most important classes in the social formation under consideration represented, for Kautsky and Luxemburg, an unmistakable sign that a similar change is taking place at the level of the so called "superstructure". This renders an autonomous theoretical analysis of the national question a conceptual impossibility. If the national phenomenon has no logic of its own, but is determined by events outside its topographical location, it is impossible to deduce its nature even from a generalised observation, since changes are not endogenous, i.e., the result of a developmental logic of the phenomenon in question, but must be always attributed to events that occur outside its topographical boundaries. As a consequence of this, transformations in the function of the national phenomena are always exogenous to the event under consideration and cannot be deduced from an isolated analysis of the phenomena in question. In a similar way, it is equally impossible to ascertain causal connections with events that are located outside the relations between the fundamental classes. Any such relation of causality will be rendered illegitimate by the epistemology of epiphenomenalism, since the latter only recognises transparent relations of causality. In this sense, the epiphenomenalism of the Second International was not restricted to the so called "left" or to the so called "center", but became a central paradigmatic feature of the turn of the century Marxism. National communities were only to be understood in terms of the universal development of the forces of production and, even under these circumstances, they remained closely linked to the fate of the bourgeoisie. In the same way as the bourgeoisie was considered a transitory class destined to be abolished in the

course of the unavoidable transformation of capitalism into socialism, the nation was also a transitory category, resulting from the bourgeois bid for hegemonic power and destined to collapse with it. This dogmatic and shortsighted conceptualisation of the national phenomena was an important factor in the resounding Marxist defeat in its struggle against nationalism on the eve of World War I. The narrowly focused chain of causality that was the cornerstone of epiphenomenalism was only to be partially corrected by the Leninist criticism of Kautsky and Luxemburg and by the more flexible interpretation of the national phenomena advocated by Lenin and Stalin. The Bolshevik contribution to the debate and Lenin's criticism of Luxemburg's discussion of the right of nations to self determination will be discussed in chapter 4 .

REVISIONISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Superficially the term "Revisionism" appears to be easy to define: Bernstein's and his supporters evaluation of classical Marxism, and their attempt to "revise" some aspects of the works of the founding fathers of historical materialism not considered relevant to their period. However the task is not that easy, as Kolakowski rightly argues, the term "Revisionism" never has been precisely defined and in present day Marxist discourse it is little else than an arbitrary label affixed to any group or individual who in any way criticises Marxist orthodoxy³⁹

L. Labedz goes as far as to say that the term "revisionism" implies a certain institutionalisation of a form of Marxist orthodoxy to the point that the use of the term becomes to classical Marxism what heresy is for religious thought.⁴⁰ Fortunately,

39. L. Kolakowski, op. cit p. 98

40. L. Labedz (ed.) Revisionism. Allen & Unwin, London 1962 for a more recent use of the term in way described by Labedz see R.

for the purposes of our discussion on the national question in the context of the Second International it is not necessary to engage in such hair-splitting debate on orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The term Revisionism will be confined to its original meaning, namely the critique of classical Marxism that emanates from the works of Eduard Bernstein and his followers. The subsequent use of the term "revisionism" is devoid of any unitarian meaning except in an oppositional relation to Marxist orthodoxy. "Maoism", "Eurocommunism", "Titoism", the writings of Hindes and Hirst, Laclau and Mouffe etc., only have in common an oppositional relation to classical Marxism, without holding any intrinsic similarity that may warrant a common theoretical location. The parallelisms between the work of Bernstein and his followers, and the variety of Marxist and post-Marxist discussions lumped together in what R. Milliband called "The New Revisionist Spectrum"⁴¹ ceases here. In the work of Milliband revisionism is at best a descriptive oppositional category devoid of any intellectual meaning, and at worst a pejorative grouping and labeling of ideas with whom Milliband disagrees.

However, even within the period under consideration in this chapter, namely the debates in the Second International, "revisionism" was only a cohesive and homogeneous position in the writings of many of its critics. Revisionism was not at any time a cohesive theoretical and political movement in the context of the German Social Democracy. Its relative unity consisted in its critique of classical Marxism by way of giving stronger emphasis to the paradigms of social evolution and rejecting the notion of the eventual revolutionary collapse of the capitalist mode of production. In this sense, revisionism not only doubted the clas-

 Milliband, "The New Revisionist Spectrum" New Left Review 150.

41. see R. Milliband, The New Revisionist Spectrum op. cit.

sical Marxist notion of the inevitable collapse of capitalism, but it was also skeptical of the notion of the immiseration of the proletariat and the idea that society is polarised into two antagonistic fundamental classes. The consequence of this criticism of classical Marxist notions of economic determination was the development of a vision of the political arena as a more autonomous dimension, directly opposed to the classical Marxist view of the political arena as being determined by the parameters of class struggle. However, this does not mean that revisionism was free from the parameters of analysis that imprisoned classical Marxist conceptions of the so-called "superstructural" arena. As will be shown in a moment, this relative liberation from the straitjacket of economism was replaced by an even stronger dependence on the paradigmatic notions of universal social evolution. Revisionism merely displaced the traditional Marxist privileged agency of social change (the working class), for another privileged agency (the ethical-progressive human being emerging out of modernity), thus maintaining the same teleological bias of classical Marxism of bestowing the functional causality of the process of social transformation upon a social agent defined a priori. If Revisionism "revised" Marxist epistemology, it was only to change its format and relation of priorities, but maintaining its epistemological logic intact. In this shifting of privileges, history maintained its Telos, but "The Ethical Progressive Man" replaced "Class" as the agency of social transformation. In this sense, it is difficult to understand why Miliband sees any continuity between Bernstein and the recent "post-Marxist" debates, for what characterises this recent debate is precisely the rejection of any ontologically privileged historical agency capable of being the universal agent of change.

In what follows a review of Bernstein's critique of classical Marxism will be attempted, followed by an analysis of the implications of this review for the analysis of the national phenomena.

Bernstein's Critique of Classical Marxism

In order to understand Bernstein's critique of classical Marxism, it is necessary to locate the debate in the context of the German Socialist Party (SPD) around the turn of the century.

Above all, two elements precipitated the crisis of orthodox Marxism in the context of the German socialist party. The first element could be best described by the apocalyptic vision of Bourgeois democracy sustained by the majority of the socialist parties before World War I. As Joll argues, no socialist party could escape the difficulties presented by its own existence as a mass party, forced to operate in a political system to which it denied legitimacy and which it consciously sought to destroy.⁴² To illustrate the Point, Joll quotes from a report of the parliamentary section of the party to the 12th congress of the SPD:

...social democracy differs from all other parties through its fundamental opposition to the social and governmental system of capitalism.

Faced with this situation, it becomes difficult to justify socialist participation in all the forms of political maneuvering that are part of the bourgeois parliamentary system. When the socialist parties were marginal to the process of policy making it was possible to maintain a principled position by rejecting the system in toto. But when, as in the case of France and Germany, the socialist parties became leading political parties, with a distinct possibility of at least sharing political power, this contradictory stance became a continuous source of internal debate.

The second element that precipitated the ideological crisis

42. J. Joll, The Second International, op. cit. p. 77

of the Western European socialist parties, was the perceived failure in the context of the European process of industrialisation of the theory of the immiseration of the masses and subsequent class polarisation. The western European societies of the turn of the century were far from the Marxist vision of clearly defined social classes conscious of their role in history and confronting each other. With the consolidation of the bourgeois democratic state, a multiplicity of social strata emerged, and this had the effect of blurring the traditional distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Not only was the working class only a segment of the population of the main industrialised states, but it became difficult to determine with any degree of certainty the class location of a substantial section of the population. This problem was to shadow marxist discussions for generations to come 43 . As Laclau and Mouffe correctly argue, the emergence of the revisionist critique of orthodox Marxism has to be understood as a response to the disjunction between classical Marxist theories and the observable tendencies of capitalism in the period under consideration.44

In his major work Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus45, Bernstein begins his criticism of orthodox Marxism by examining

43. This debate is far from over. For a contemporary discussion of this subject see among others G. Therborn, "What Does the Ruling Class do When It Rules?", in A. Giddens and D. Held (eds.) Classes, Power, and Conflict, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1982, pp. 224-248; E. O. Wright, Class, Crisis and the State, New Left Books, London 1978, N. Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, London, New Left Books, 1975

44. E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, New Left Books, London 1985 p. 29

45. Translated as Evolutionary Socialism, with an introduction by Sidney Hook, Schocken paperbacks, New York 1961

the distribution of wealth in a number of West European countries and then asserting that the theory of the immiseration of the masses is not sustained by facts. After a statistical examination he argues:

..it is thus quite wrong to assume that the present development of society shows a relative or indeed an absolute diminution of the number of the members of the possessing classes. Their numbers increased both relatively and absolutely⁴⁶

In this context, it is interesting to note that Bernstein is borrowing a methodology from the then nascent social sciences - empiricism - and using it to sustain a revision of the theoretical tenets of classical Marxism. Some authors argue that the data used by Bernstein was incomplete and that it represented at best, only part of the picture.⁴⁷ But unless the crude empiricism that is being criticised by these same authors is accepted, it is necessary to conclude that the main thrust of Bernstein's argument was valid (with or without accompanying data). Is then socialism an unattainable utopia? Not for Bernstein. The shortcoming of classical Marxism is the result of the inability to understand that socialism and the abolition of capitalism are not dependent on the pauperisation of the proletariat. Socialism will be the result of what he calls "the irreversible advances" of democracy in industrial societies. Socialism is not only the collectivisation of the means of production, but the fulfillment of the theory and practice of democracy in the widest possible array of social relations. From

46. E. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, op. cit. p. 48

47. See for Example, P. Gay, op. cit. The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, A. Pierre, E. Bernstein et l'évolution du socialisme allemand, Paris 1961, L. Labedz, op. cit. Revisionism

this Bernstein concludes that socialism is not the result of the fulfillment of the corporate aims of the working class, nor does it represent any "objective" need of the latter as such. For Bernstein socialism results from the universal embodiment of "human" interest, the interests of all human beings qua humans. All forms of dictatorship, including "the dictatorship of the proletariat", are then alien to socialism, which constantly tends towards a further democratisation of social life including the economy. Bernstein was critical of those cadres in the socialist movement who were contemptuous of what he called "contemporary societies" and were prepared to demand sacrifices from contemporary generations for the achievement of a socialist goal in a distant future. This is the context in which he formulated his famous slogan: *What is generally called the ultimate goal of socialism is nothing to me, the movement is everything* This statement was of course ambiguous and therefore distorted by his orthodox critics. Bernstein did not mean that socialists should limit their horizons, and work only towards the achievement of limited immediate goals, but simply that immediate sacrifices for the sake of a distant socialist future should be out of the question. 48 This statement also constituted the focus of the classical Marxist backlash against Bernstein's ideas, and should not be confused with the prevailing reformism of the trade union movement in Britain, France, and Germany. While trade union reformism and Bernstein's revisionism may coincide in certain points of immediate policy, there are a number of fundamental differences that separate both positions. Reformism referred to the gradual consolidation of the achievements of the trade union movement and the working class. Such an approach was corporatist in nature; it practiced a form of political activity that subordinated political activity to the daily needs of the trade union movement. As Laclau and Mouffe correctly argue, this form of political quietism did not prevent reformist leaders from accept-

48. W. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, Vol 2 op. cit. p.109

ing the theory and political goals of classical Marxism. In the context of the German socialist party, many reformist leaders voted with classical Marxists on issues of principle. This position becomes clear from a letter of I. Auer a trade union leader to Bernstein:

Do you think that it is really possible for a party that has a literature going back fifty years, an organisation going back forty years, and a still older tradition, to change direction like this in the twinkling of an eye?...My dear Ede, one doesn't formally decide to do what you ask, one doesn't say it, one does it!...our whole activity is the activity of a Social democratic reforming party. A party that reckons with the masses simply cannot be anything else.⁴⁹

The reformist leadership attempts to defend what they considered to be the immediate interests of the working class required both, a defensive political stance and a clear demarcation of the working class as a corporate entity with clearly defined boundaries. ⁵⁰ But Bernstein was precisely arguing the opposite; socialism was considered to be part and parcel of the democratic tradition and as such was not in the corporate individual interests of any one section of society, but in the interests of the community as a whole. In this sense, as Laclau and Mouffe correctly argue, while reformism was closing boundaries for the working class, Revisionism represented an effort to break with the corporatist isolation of the working class, by attempting to establish an autonomous political arena⁵¹. The

49. E. Bernstein, "Ignaz Auer, der Fuhrer, Freund und Berater", in Sozialistische Monatshefte, organ of the revisionist section of the SPD, quoted by J. Joll The Second International, op. cit p. 95

50. Laclau and Mouffe, op. cit. p.30

Revisionist attempt to establish an autonomous political arena was the result of the need to recompose at a political level a fragmented working class by the fundamental changes that affected capitalism around the turn of the century. If the middle classes were not proletarianised but, on the contrary, sections of the working class joined the consumer patterns of the middle strata, then the reconstitution of the fragments could only occur at a political level. As Laclau and Mouffe perceptively observe;

Under such conditions, socialism had to change its terrain and strategy, and the key theoretical moment was the break with the rigid base/superstructure distinction that prevented any conception of the autonomy of the political⁵²

But as Laclau and Mouffe rethorically ask, if the class unity can only be reconstituted at the political arena, in what sense is this unity a class unity?. At this point Bernstein introduced an element that became crucial for the revisionist discussion of the national question: The notion of *the evolutive and progressive nature of human history*. Bernstein accepted without reservations the evolutionary parameters of classical Marxism, making it a crucial milestone of his discussion of the development of industrial societies.

Now, to whatever degree other forces besides the purely economic, influence the life of society, just so much more also does the sway of what, in an objective sense we call historic necessity change. In modern society we have to distinguish in this respect two great streams. On the one

51. *ibid*, p. 31

52. *ibid*

side appears an increasing insight into the laws of evolution and notably economic evolution. With this knowledge goes hand in hand, partly as its cause, partly again as its effect, an increasing capability of directing economic evolution"53.

Thus, the more "advanced" a society is, the less dependent it becomes on economic forces, and the greater the possibility of a conscious human agency to direct this process of social transformation. In this sense Bernstein appears to be arguing that with technological development, the iron laws of history tend to play a less determinant role. If this is the case, the process of technological development introduces an element of growing indeterminacy in the process of historical development, but this apparent indeterminacy is controlled by another element that gives intention and coherence to the process of social evolution: the ethical dimension of human behavior and the notion that socialism is an ethical principle. -

For the epiphenomenalist Marxism of Kautsky and Luxemburg, socialism was the embodiment of the "objective interests" of the working class and as such it became an ethical principle. In opposition to this idea, Bernstein argued that a) socialism appeals to humanity as a whole, b) technology liberates humanity from the determination by the laws of motion of political economy, and c) the more "civilised" a society becomes the greater the need for cooperation between different social forces. The result of this is an historically constructed ethical subject, increasingly liberated from the tyranny of political economy and embodied with the need to cooperate with other human beings. Thus a new historically constructed ethical subject emerges out of the civilisatory process, replacing the working class as an agent of social transformation, via his or her capacity to master the en-

53. E. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism op. cit. p. 14

vironment through an ever more sophisticated technology. The higher the level of "civilisation", the lesser the dependency on economic forces and the possibilities of realising the great ethical ideas of socialism.

Bernstein relied on the neo-Kantian critique of classical Marxism to sustain his arguments about ethics but, as P. Gay correctly argues, Bernstein had no proper training in philosophical issues and never clearly understood the neo-Kantian critique of historical materialism. The denial that ethics has a status of a rational discipline separates Bernstein from the neo-Kantian interpretations of Marxism, an issue on which Max Adler was later to demolish Bernstein's arguments,⁵⁴ for, as we shall see later, Austro-Marxism provided the only fruitful combination of Kant and Marx.

Bernstein's linear and one-dimensional perception of human progress owes more to classical Marxism than many of Bernstein's Marxist critics cared to admit. Peter Gay argues that Bernstein distorted the classical Marxist concept of evolution because it eliminated its dialectical dimension⁵⁵. But while it is true that Bernstein was hostile to the use of Hegelian dialectics and saw its influence on Marxism as pernicious, the consequences of his evolutionary vision were not that different from those of classical Marxism. Humanity was seen in terms of a hierarchical and universal process of social transformation of social structures. In terms of the resulting model of development, it matters very little whether this evolution was the result of a dialectical process or the result of cooperation between different social subjects.

54. P. Gay The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, Octagon Books, New York 1979 pp. 158-60

55. *ibid.*, p. 143

What is the crucial distinction between Marxist theory and socialist doctrines preceding Marx? It is the emphatic and profound achievement of a form of developmental thought [Entwicklungsgedanken] and the conceptualisation of evolution [Evolutionsbegriff], that was taken to its most significant consequences, in a way in which it was not done by any other socialist thinker, before Marx or during his lifetime.⁵⁶

The methodological result of this analysis is the creation of a hierarchical and universal model of social transformation which locates concrete societies in terms of a heuristically constructed social continuum. This is precisely the essence of the evolutionist parameter discussed in Chapter 1.

REVISIONISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Bernstein's faith in the progressive nature of the process of social evolution had a profound effect on the way in which Revisionism conceptualised the national phenomenon. The idea that the Western state moves to higher levels of democratic achievement, as the process of historical development unfolds, led Bernstein to the following reflection:

... if one starts from the sentence in the Communist Manifesto "The proletariat has no fatherland". This sentence might, in a degree, perhaps, apply to the worker in the forties without political rights, shut out of public life. To-day in spite of the enormous increase in the intercourse

56. Eduard Bernstein, "Der Revisionismus in der Sozialdemokratie" in Handbuch de Politik, vol 2, p. 55, quoted and translated into Italian by Vernon L. Lidtke, "Le premesse teoriche del socialismo in Bernstein" in Annali, Istituto Giacomo Feltrinelli, 15, 1973, p. 156.

between nations it has already forfeited a great part of its truth and will always forfeit more, the more the worker by the influence of socialism moves from being a proletarian to a citizen. The workman who has equal rights as a voter for state and local councils, and who thereby is a fellow owner in the common property of the nation, whose children the community educates, whose health it protects, whom it secures against injury, has a fatherland without ceasing on that account to be a citizen of the world.⁵⁷ (emphasis added)

The above quote shows the extent of Bernstein's positive assessment of what the Victorians called "the irreversible advances of progress and civilisation". For Bernstein, the question of the national identity of the working class was directly linked with their participation in the affairs of the state through the electoral system. For Bernstein, nationhood was essentially a political issue, linked to the nature of the state apparatus; cultural and ethnic considerations are absent from his analysis.

Bernstein strongly opposed the anti-nationalist rhetoric of the radical left, arguing that the break-up of the nation was "no beautiful dream" and German Social Democracy should not be indifferent to the German nation carrying out what Bernstein believed to be was "its honourable share in civilising the world"⁵⁸. This "honorable share in civilising the world" implied a positive attitude towards the colonial ventures of the European powers. Over the issue of colonialism, Bernstein sharply disagreed with Kautsky and Luxemburg.

57. E. Bernstein, Evolutionary socialism, op. cit. p.169-70

58. ibid. p. 170

The assumption that the extension of colonies will restrict the realisation of socialism rests at the bottom of the altogether outworn idea that the realisation of socialism depends on an increasing narrowing of the circle of the well to do and an increasing misery of the poor⁵⁹

Clearly Bernstein misunderstood the critique of colonialism that came from the left and center of the German socialist party. For Bernstein, colonies were one aspect of "progress" and "civilisation" and as such an important part of the development of industrial societies. In this sense he believed that the socialist party should be a strong advocate of colonialism:

...if we take into account the fact that Germany now imports yearly a considerable amount of colonial produce, we must say to ourselves that time may come when it will be desirable to draw part of this products from our own colonies.⁶⁰

In other words, for Bernstein reasons of capitalist expediency dictate that the socialist party should become a fully fledged partner in the colonial enterprise, but would this situation contradict the ethical postulates of socialism that Bernstein advocated so vehemently?

Not at all,

...but if it is not reprehensible to enjoy the produce of tropical plantations, it cannot be so to cultivate such plantations ourselves...It is neither necessary that the occupation of tropical lands by Europeans should injure the natives in their enjoyment of life nor has it hitherto

59. ibid p. 175

60. ibid., p. 178

usually been the case⁶¹

The dogmatic use of the evolutionary principle of revisionism becomes clear from the above quotation. Bernstein's advocacy of a form of "humane colonialism" is completely coherent with the revisionist analysis of the role of civilisation and progress. If some societies (i.e. Europe) achieve a "higher level of civilisation and development" then their occupation of "less developed" societies will be for the benefit of those less developed peoples. But not only "humane colonialism" will benefit colonials and native alike, but also as a matter of principle, "natives" have no exclusive rights to their own lands:

...Moreover, only a conditional right of savages to the land occupied by them can be recognised. The higher civilisation can ultimately claim a higher right. Not the conquest, but the cultivation of the land gives the historical legal title to its use.⁶²

In order to give emphasis to his argument, Bernstein quotes Marx's Capital when he argues that all contemporary societies are only tenants and usufructuaries of land and have a social responsibility towards coming generations.

It was Bernstein's uncritical acceptance of the progressive nature of industrial capitalism coupled with a rigid and dogmatic understanding of social evolution in eurocentric terms that provided the rationale for this analysis. The eurocentric and rigid evolutionary analysis constructs a new subject the "industrial and civilised democratic man" who takes over as the agent of social transformation. An ethical notion of socialism

61. *ibid.*

62. *ibid* p. 178-79

becomes intelligible out of the superior morality of this democratic subject. Many of Bernstein's socialist critics rushed to denounce the non-Marxist nature of this analysis, and the introduction of neo-Kantian categories of analysis was blamed for this "idealist deviation". However, it would be illegitimate to completely disassociate this analysis with classical Marxism, even if the Kautskian center and the radical left relentlessly criticised and denounced Bernstein's views. As was shown in Chapter 2, Marx was not exactly tolerant towards the "peculiarities" of many non-European national communities, and Kautsky and Luxemburg themselves argued that "less developed" nations should relinquish their right to self determination and assimilate to more "civilised" nations so that the cause of progress could be advanced. In fact, Bernstein's analysis should not be considered an aberration of classical Marxism, but on the contrary one of the possible interpretation of the dogmatic and unilateral evolutionism that colored classical Marxist interpretations of the national phenomenon. If the emergence and legitimate existence of national communities is to be located in in a universal-historical continuum, then there is no escape from a hierarchical interpretation of national development, and from the argument that, given the uneven nature of the process of development, some nations are "more civilised" than others. The first partial break with this parameter of analysis is to be found in the work of Lenin on colonialism and imperialism, and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Bernstein was even more explicit in his "humane colonialist" position in a number of articles published in the Neue Zeit and Sozialistische Monatshefte.⁶³ In an article published in the Neue Zeit devoted to the British colonisation of India, Bernstein argued that it was "not fair" to blame the British Empire for the

 63. Organs of the German Socialist Party and the Revisionist wing of the party respectively.

famine in that country. On the contrary, it was the British reforms of the Indian political system that would help to alleviate such crisis. If the Indian population still fell victim of famines, it was "their own fault", since given the "backwardness" of the population "it is not easy to help Indian peasants". The "well intended" reforms of the British clashed with "religious and other prejudices" of the Indian population. But above all, the "passive resistance" of the Indian population was the most difficult stumbling block.⁶⁴ In a famous article discussing the Armenian genocide in Turkey at the beginning of the century, Bernstein wrote a passionate plea supporting the situation of the unfortunate Armenians. However the theoretical part of this article gives a unique insight into Bernstein's Eurocentric and dogmatically evolutionist position with regard to national and colonial questions. According to Bernstein, in Africa there are "tribes that give themselves the right to slave trafficking" and they can only be dissuaded from such purposes by more "civilised nations". From this Bernstein concludes that:

Peoples that are enemies of civilisation and incapable of achieving higher level of culture have no right to request our sympathy when they rise against civilisation⁶⁵

 64. E. Bernstein Einigen Über Des Indische Problem, Die Neue ZEIT, 15 1896-97 quoted by L. Marmora (ed.) in his introduction to La segunda Internacional y el Problema Colonial, Siglo XXI editores Mexico 1978 p. 11

65. E. Bernstein, Die Deutsche Sozialdemokratie und Die Türkische Wirren, (The German social democracy and the Turkish disturbances) translated into spanish by C. Cerreti and published in La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Colonial part 1, siglo XXI editores, Mexico 1978, p. 48, my own translation from Spanish.

Bernstein agrees with critics of colonialism that certain methods used to subdue "savages" are cruel and unethical, but he makes clear that this does not mean that such "savages" should not be subdued, since "the right of civilisation should prevail"

For a struggle for emancipation to awake our interest...it must have a civilising character: this may either be peoples or nations that develop a cultural life of their own and rebel against a foreign domination that hinders their development, or the uprising of progressive classes against the subjugation they suffer from more backward ones. To every people (volk) that gives evidence of its capacity to develop a national cultural life we should recognise the right to nationality...If some time ago, the proposition to support savages and aborigines in their struggle against capitalism was made from a socialist point of view, this was only the result of a romanticism whose inconsistency could be easily demonstrated by simply observing the consequences of such proposition⁶⁶

Bernstein goes on to argue that support for the struggle of aborigines against capitalism cannot be sustained by any serious socialist argument, and this proposition only makes sense if the blind eurocentric bias of the debates of that period is taken into account. The dogmatic epiphenomenalism of the various factions of the second international prevented any serious intellectual or political challenge to this proposition. The works of Kautsky and Luxemburg on the national question show a similar eurocentric bias. In the first footnote to this revealing article, Bernstein is full of praise for Rosa Luxemburg's article on the national struggles in Turkey:

66. *ibid.*, p.49, my own translation from Spanish

This essay was almost finished when I received the relevant copies of the Sachsisten Arbeitzeitung [The Workers Newspaper of Saxony] with the articles of Miss Luxemburg on social democracy and the national struggles in Turkey. From the contents of this article the reader will be able to judge how much I agree with the arguments and conclusion of that excellent work.⁶⁷

While Luxemburg opposed all forms of colonialism, Kautsky was ambivalent about its progressive role, supporting settler colonialism but opposing other forms of imperial colonisation⁶⁸

...consequently, with reference to settler colonialism, even if in many occasions we are obliged to criticise the treatment given to the natives, we cannot reject the act of colonisation. On the contrary, we must see it as a powerful lever for the development of humanity, and for this reason the latter has a debt of gratitude to this policy ⁶⁹

67. *ibid.*, p. 47 ff. 1 Unfortunately Bernstein does not provide a more precise reference to this article. Luxemburg's contemptuous perception of small national minorities in Czarist Russia, was outlined above.

68. Kautsky's ambivalences on the colonial question are discussed in L. Marmora's introduction to La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Colonial, *op. cit.* Kautsky's position on the question of colonialism is spelled out in Sozialismus und Kolonial Politik (Socialism and Colonial Policy), Berlin, October 1907, translated into Spanish by Juan Behrens in La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Colonial Vol 2 *op. cit.*, pp. 39-120

69. K. Kautsky, Sozialismus und Kolonial Politik, my own translation from Spanish in *op. cit.* p.64

In the case of Bernstein, his support for colonialism is derived from the unilinear and Eurocentric understanding of social evolution. The culture of the "civilised nations" only develops at a "high stage" in the process of universal development. But for Bernstein, even the possession of a "civilised culture" is not yet enough to attract socialist support for the process of national liberation:

The liberty of some insignificant nationality outside Europe, or in Central Europe cannot be compared with the development of the large and highly civilised peoples of Europe⁷⁰

Here the full Eurocentrism of Bernstein becomes evident. The "big" and "civilised" nations of Europe constitute the highest stage in the process of development, which is both, linear and universal, with the large Western European nations located at the pinnacle of this process of development.

After clarifying the theoretical standpoint of revisionism vis-a-vis national and colonial questions, Bernstein proceeds to tackle the main theme of his article, the massacres of Armenians in Turkey. The Turkish society is presented as a prime example of 'oriental decadence', and the Turkish state as incapable of overcoming its internal disintegration. The main religion of the Ottoman Empire - Islam - constituted according to Bernstein an important factor in the "Ottoman backwardness". Even if the Muslims "propagated culture" through southern Europe, they "did not know how to preserve it" or "continue with its development":

...the religion they professed - Islam - did not stop them from becoming barbarians; quite to the contrary, under the

70. E. Bernstein, "Social Democracy and the Turkish disturbances" op. cit p.49

influence of the conditions of the orient, this religion encouraged them. In accordance with its fundamental conceptions and its precepts [Islam] results in reality as a religion of barbarians, this is to say, nomads, traders of the old style and peasants that still live in local communities. (emphasis added) 71

The racist⁷² tone of this argument is clear, but even a closet racist like Bernstein must concede that religion on its own cannot hinder historical development, so after the above "enlighten" observation on Islam, Bernstein argued that what prevented Turkey from becoming a modern state was its inability to assimilate the ethnic communities under their rule. And what is, according to Bernstein, the reason for this state of affairs? "Simply, they are a barbarian people, violence is mixed with indolence"⁷³.

71. E. Bernstein, Social Democracy and the Turkish Disturbances, op. cit, my own translation from Spanish.

72. The term "racism" used in this context follows the definition provided by Professor John Rex in his insightful book on Race Relations. *In our belief the common element in these [racist] theories is that they see the connection between membership of a particular group and the genetically related sub-groups (i.e. families and lineages) of which that group is composed and the possession of evaluated equalities as completely deterministic. It doesn't really matter whether this is because of men's genes, because of the history to which their ancestors have been exposed, because of the nature of their culture or because of divine decree.* John Rex, Race Relations in Sociological Theory, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1983 p.159

73. *ibid.* p. 49-53

Edward Said would have been hard put to find a better example of the nature and aims of "orientalism", the Western image of the east, that he so vividly and eloquently describes in his remarkable book⁷⁴. As far as Orientalism in particular, and the European knowledge of non-European societies in general, the historicist evolutionism of which Bernstein was just one exponent meant that there was just one universal human history that either culminated in the West or was observed from the vantage view point of Europe, conditioning in this way the intellectual, political and economic superiority of the West.⁷⁵ - sub species aeternitatis. Classical Marxism was not the only intellectual and political tradition guilty of this myopic understanding of the world, others, such as the ruling classes in colonial states, had a vested interest in this approach, given the benefits they derived from it.

In view of the intellectually abortive nature of this form of analysis, the failure of revisionism to understand the national question becomes clear. The optimistic confidence in "Progress and Civilisation" fueled a complacent and profoundly ethnocentric perception of the national phenomenon. While the revisionist enthusiasm for colonial ventures was unique in the context of the Second International it would be wrong to regard this as a unconnected aberration. The unilinear notions of social evolution -with and without dialectics- that permeated most of the classical Marxist works on the national question were responsible, at least in part, for the emergence of this ideas. Eurocentric notions of evolution were present in the works of the orthodox center and the radical left, since they were the unchallenged epistemological premises of the parameters of analysis

74. Edward Said, op. cit. Orientalism

75. E. Said, Orientalism Reconsidered, Race and Class, 27, 2, 1985 p.10

of classical Marxism.

This chapter began with L. Kolakowski's evaluation of the Second International. On the light of the preceding discussion, how can we evaluate Kolakowski's assertion the the Second International was the golden age of Marxism because Marxist theory was not so rigidly codified or subjected to a dogmatic orthodoxy?⁷⁶ If the previous discussion has not confirmed that at least on the analysis of the national question, there was a certain rigidity and Eurocentric dogmatism, it may be appropriate to quote Kolakowski himself when he describes what were the central beliefs of the different Marxist factions. According to Kolakowski, in the period of the Second International, a Marxist was a person who accepted among others, the following propositions:

The interests of the proletariat are identical on the world scale, and the socialist revolution will come as an international event, at all events in the advanced industrial societies.

In human history, technical progress is the deciding factor in bringing about changes in the class structure, and these changes determine the basic features of political institutions and the remaining ideology.⁷⁷

These rigid notions of universal evolution and Eurocentrism represented the basis for a "rigid codification of a dogmatic orthodoxy" - in spite of Kolakowski assertion to the contrary - preventing an imaginative understanding of the multifarious forms of the national phenomenon. At least at the level of the

76. see footnotes 1 & 2

77. L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism,
vol II op. cit. p.5

analysis of the national phenomenon, this intellectual dead end was partially corrected by the contributions of the Bolsheviks, Gramsci and the Austro-Marxists and their work will be discussed in the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Marxism-Leninism and the National Question

...For the present it is essential to realise the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognizance of actual events, of the precise facts of reality, and must not cling to a past theory, which like all other theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, and only approximates to an inclusive grasp of the complexities of living reality...he who continues to regard the "completion" of the bourgeois revolution in the old way sacrifices Marxism to the dead letter¹

In terms of the epiphenomenalist epistemology and rigid evolutionist notions that prevailed in the thought and actions of the leaders of the Second International, the October Revolution in Russia was an almost inconceivable event. But at the same time, to regard Lenin's break with the epiphenomenalism and rigid evolutionism of the Second International as an opportunistic attempt to justify the October revolution is a gross oversimplification of the social and political background that revolution. In his early works² it is possible to detect a break

1. V. I. Lenin. Selected Works, Vol 6 p.34

2. See for example, "Who are the Friends of the People?" and his influential work "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", Collected Works, Vol.1. In his important study of the Politics of Combined and Uneven Development, Verso, London 1981, Michael Lowy argues that..."A close reading of Lenin's most important political text of the period, Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, reveals with extraordinary clarity the tension in Lenin's thought between his profound revolutionary realism and the limitations imposed by the straitjacket of so-called "Orthodox Marxism" p.34

with epiphenomenalism, a break that was to be maintained during all his political and intellectual life, relentlessly criticising Western forms of epiphenomenalism, while paradoxically claiming total adherence to the principles of classical Marxism. Given the incompatibility of the claims, it is interesting to note that there is no evidence in Lenin's writings that he was aware of the contradictory nature of his positions. In what follows, it will be argued that this incompatibility resulted from Lenin's introduction of an element of indeterminacy to Marxist theory at the level of the economy by breaking with the predicament of "the Iron Laws of Necessity", an essential part of the epiphenomenalist conceptual discourse among the Orthodox and Radical wings of the Second International. But at the same time, this moment of indeterminacy was immediately superseded at the political level by the definition of the role of the avant-garde party and the crucial role of professional revolutionaries in the process leading towards a revolutionary change. Given the lack of symmetry between the economic and political levels in the conceptualisation of social relations of causality of classical Marxism, the resolution at the political level of a tension that had its origins at the level of the economy, generates an insoluble contradiction that requires a constant intervention of political actors to make the conjunctural configuration relations of production intelligible. This argument will be expanded in a moment.

A great deal has been written about the nature of Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' original contributions to Marxism, but as Marcel Liebman perceptively argues, a great part of it is sterile historiography. This results from the extraordinary paradox that one of this century's most subversive political theories was converted into a theoretical system that justifies a particular established political order³. At the same time and at the opposite

3. Marcel Liebman, Leninism under Lenin, Merlin Press, London 1980, p.19

end of the political spectrum, many western works on Lenin and the Bolsheviks attempt to do the exact opposite, to find reasons in their earlier theories and actions to discredit the contemporary Soviet political order. While not denying that certain features of Marxism-Leninism lend themselves to a sectarian, dogmatic and Manichean perception of political arena, it is important to understand the reasons for the emergence of Marxism-Leninism in terms of its factual (but not theoretical) break with Classical Marxism, and not as an a priori justification of the nature of the Soviet state. If this rather more productive line of inquiry is taken one dominant factor prevails: the specificity of the Great Russian situation. The causes of the Bolshevik's break from epiphenomenalism must be found in the social and political structure of Czarist Russia which defied attempts to extrapolate rigid western models of development. Located at the physical and political periphery of Europe, inhabited by more than one hundred national communities, Czarist Russia's social and political order was perceptively different from that of Central and Western Europe. This major difference was without any doubt a major factor in the transformation experienced by Marxism in Russia and in the originality of Lenin's thought.

During the nineteenth century generations of Marxists and democratic thinkers (including Marx himself), regarded Czarist Russia as the most backward European state. In the words of Marx, Russia was the "bulwark" of antidemocratic absolutism. But the concept of "backwardness" is always an oppositional category; it must be defined in terms of its opposite, the concept of "progress". Given the all inclusive contextual nature of the universal process of development espoused by classical marxists, the comparative criterion that gave meaning to Russian backwardness was the notion of a more "advanced" western European situation. This situation prevented any constructive understanding of the specificity of not only Czarist Russia, but the "non-European" world in general. If Lenin and the Bolsheviks were to

provide a constructive understanding and a guide to action for the non-central and non-western European world, they had to first and foremost break with the logic of epiphenomenalism. The way in which Lenin and the Bolshevik party broke with the central tenets of epiphenomenalism is amply discussed in the ever growing literature on Lenin, Stalin and Soviet Communism⁴. The Bolshevik strategic break with epiphenomenalism had, as will be shown in a moment, a profound impact in the way on which Marxism-Leninists conceptualised the national question. But before approaching the discussion of the national phenomenon, it seems appropriate to briefly evaluate those theoretical aspects of Lenin's work that bear a direct relation to the Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the national question. These aspects are: a) the emphasis on the political dimension, b) The conceptualisation of the Revolution, and c) The conceptualisation of imperialism and the theory of uneven development. These three aspects will be briefly discussed.

The emphasis on the political dimension: the organisational question

With the possible exception of Rosa Luxemburg⁵, the most im-

4. see for example E. H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, MacMillan London, 1963; G. Haupt & M. Jean-Jacques, Makers of the Russian Revolution, Allen and Unwin, London 1974, L. Shapiro and P. Reddaway, Lenin: The Man, the Theorist and the Leader, Pall Mall press, London, 1967, A. Ulam, Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Fontana, London, 1974, L. Colletti, From Rousseau to Lenin, New Left Books, London 1972, R. Service, The Bolshevik Party in Revolution 1917-1923, 1979, MacMillan, London. One of the most constructive and readable works on Lenin and Marxism-Leninism is Marcel Liebman Leninism under Lenin, Merlin Press, London 1980

5. See Chapter 3 footnote 7

portant theoretical figures of the Second International seriously neglected all aspects related to political organisation during the process of transition from capitalism to socialism. The notion that the collapse of capitalism and the socialist transformation of society are the inescapable and impending consequences of the unfolding of the process of the universal development of the capitalist mode of production, inhibited any serious consideration of the role of political strategy in the achievement of the goals of socialism. As Eric Hobsbawm perceptively argues,

Both classical social democracy in the period of the Second International and its opponents on the left tended, in different ways, to share the assumption that the transformation to socialism would, and indeed could, only begin on the day that the proletariat and its party acceded to power, whether by revolution or by winning the magical minimum of 51% of votes⁶

In "What is to be Done?", Lenin strongly attacks two socialist newspapers that supported the spontaneous uprising of workers against their immediate conditions of oppression and economic exploitation. The arguments sustained by these workers' newspapers were in many ways, a direct continuation of the early Marxist traditions of the trade union movement: the workers' struggle over wage improvements, conditions of work, etc., will necessarily create conditions for a revolutionary change as capitalism achieves its maturity. Lenin rejected this analysis of the workers' struggle labeling it "Economistic", because it overemphasized the economic dimension and "underemphasized" the political struggle, considered by Lenin essential for the achievement of workers' hegemony. According to

6. E. Hobsbawm, "Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory", in Anne Showstack Sasson (ed.) Approaches to Gramsci Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, London 1982 p. 24

Lenin, this "economistic trend" results only in the duplication workers efforts into local and limited actions, which would not challenge the hegemony of the bourgeoisie as a class. The task of the Social Democratic Party, Lenin argued, is not to support isolated and/or spontaneous uprisings of workers, since this will lead to the kind of corporatist trade unionism that subsequently became the backbone of Reformism⁷, and will not challenge the hegemony of the bourgeoisie.

We must take upon ourselves the task of organising an all-round political struggle under the leadership of our Party, in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle and to our Party. We must train our Social Democratic practical workers to become political leaders, able to guide all manifestations of all this all-round struggle, able at the right time to "dictate a positive programme of action"...⁸

Consequently, the task of Social Democracy is to organize the working class in a way in which it could mount a political challenge to bourgeois hegemony. From this argument it is possible to derive the initial dimension of Lenin's break from epiphenomenalism. The relentless process of the historical development of the productive forces is not enough to guarantee the required conditions for the construction of a socialist order. The socialist project also requires a properly and efficiently organised party of the proletariat, that has at its disposal the correct theoretical and methodological tools for a proper understanding of the conjunctural situation. Only in this

7. For the difference between Reformism and Revisionism, see chapter 3.

8. V.I.Lenin, What is to be done?, Collected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1964 Vol 5, p. 428

way could a guide to action in complex conjunctural situations be provided. The party would only be effective if it becomes a disciplined organisation of professional revolutionaries. It must be professional in two senses: the cadres will be full time activists and they should be ideologically and politically trained⁹

In this way the party develops clear political aims, and these aims could be clearly conveyed to the mass of the proletariat, becoming in this way its avant-garde:

The role of a vanguard party can be fulfilled only by a party guided by the most advanced theory¹⁰

From the above discussion, the initial break of Lenin from epiphenomenalism becomes clear. For Lenin, the revolutionary struggle and the socialist project are not going to emerge out of the "objective conditions" of development of the forces of production. The revolution is not the unavoidable consequence of the "iron laws of necessity". For the revolution to occur, leadership must be provided by an elite of disciplined, organised and committed professional revolutionaries, capable of understanding with a "correct" theoretical apparatus, the objective conditions for their willful actions. The apocalyptic perception of epiphenomenalist Marxism concerning the collapse of capitalism is then replaced by a more voluntaristic understanding of political struggle.

Lenin's argument opens the "Pandora's Box" of classical Marxism, for the conditions and relations of production do not anymore "determine" the spatial location of the political forces. Political actors, in the form of the "disciplined revolutionary

9. *ibid.*

10. Lenin, *ibid.*, p. 430

party", decisively intervene in the political arena without any obvious "economic" reason. What impels them to act is their "understanding" of their objective conditions of existence and their subjective commitment to the revolutionary cause.

However, Marxism-Leninism follows the analytical logic of classical Marxism; "reality" must be understood as the result of "objective conditions of existence" which are determined by the logic of the process of production. But as such, "objective conditions" have no meaning for the project of social transformation. It is only through the willful and voluntary intervention of the enlightened avant-garde that "objective" conditions have any significance for the project of revolutionary transformation of society. Marxism-Leninism opens, then, a dimension of indeterminacy at the level of the economy, since the arena of political struggles can no longer be deduced from the transparency of the process of production.

...not every revolutionary situation gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break or dislocate the old government.¹¹

Thus the "gap" opened at the level of the economy, is immediately closed at the political level by the presence and willful action of the enlightened revolutionaries, who give meaning to the process of change by understanding and acting upon "the objective conditions". The attempt to close at the political level the indeterminacy identified at the level of the economy, while at the same time maintaining the privileged position of the

11. V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, op. cit. vol 21, p.213-214, quoted by L. Kolakowski, op. cit. p. 495

economic (class) dimension, is a source of permanent theoretical tension, a tension that Marxism-Leninism never managed to fully resolve. The resolution of this tension could only be attempted in the direction of a greater autonomy of the political arena, but this implies a break from class reductionism, a position that Marxism-Leninism is not prepared to take. Given the lack of symmetry in the classical Marxist conceptualisation of relations of causality between the economic and political dimensions, the autonomous intervention of political agents at the level of the economy is strictly unthinkable, and therefore the contradiction unresolvable. Consequently, the result of the existence of this area of indeterminacy at the level of the economy requires the constant intervention of political agents to "unmask" contradictions and to show the "right" path out of a situation that ceased to be intelligible by means of a straightforward observation of the activities of economic forces.

These innovations had direct implications for the way in which the national question was conceptualised. As will be shown in a moment, the expansion of the political field in the manner described above, permitted Marxism-Leninism to discuss the political dimension of the national phenomenon, free from the limits of the transparent relations of causality that characterised the epiphenomenalist discussion. The "relative autonomy" of the national phenomenon allowed Marxist Leninists the strategic use of national demands to advance the cause of the revolution.

The conceptualisation of the revolution

The epiphenomenal understanding of the revolution was that the latter will occur as the result of the unavoidable advances of capitalism and therefore will take place in a "mature" and "technologically advanced" collapsing capitalist system. The West, having the most "advanced" and "developed" conditions of production, was the "natural" place where capitalism would

achieve its maturity. Given this logic of analysis it was unthinkable that the socialist revolution could take place in a "backward" society.

Czarist Russia, by virtue of being one of the most "backward" states in Europe was, in terms of the epiphenomenalist logic, a most unlikely place for a socialist revolution to occur. This conclusion had a profound impact on the way in which Russian marxists conceptualised the Russian situation. Given that the process of social transformation must precede in stages, most Russian Marxists believed that the downfall of Czarist despotism would signal the beginning of the "bourgeois democratic" revolution, a revolution that was supposed to impel Russia to "the level of development" achieved by Western Europe in the eighteenth century. If this conceptualisation of the Russian situation was to be accepted, then the turn of the century only saw an incipient bourgeois revolution taking place in this country, so a socialist transformation of society was unthinkable until the latter was completed, that is to say, when the Russian bourgeoisie as a class cannot further develop the productive forces.

Lenin, timidly in "Two Tactics" (1905) and more firmly on the eve of the October Revolution in the "April Thesis" (1917) argued, in a nutshell, that the bourgeois democratic revolution must be transformed into a socialist revolution by the proletariat, enabling the latter to take over political power at the end of the process. This last argument was clearly developed in the "April Thesis" and in this form it took by surprise not only its opponents, but also some of the "old line" bolsheviks.¹² The March 1917 Revolution, according to Lenin, not only transferred power to the bourgeoisie, but also moved closer to "the revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat"¹³. Ac-

12. M. Liebman, op. cit., p 127-128

13. V. I. Lenin, The April Thesis, in Collected Works, op. cit.

according to Lenin, the March 1917 revolution caused

The interlocking of two dictatorships, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisieand the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.¹⁴

Consequently, the specific conjuncture of Russia enabled the bourgeois democratic and the socialist revolutions to take place almost simultaneously while at the same time, maintaining a separate identity. This conceptualisation of the Russian situation enabled the Bolsheviks to sustain the general argument of classical Marxism in terms of the universal class determination of a revolutionary situation, while, at the same time, to justify the developmental multilinearity of the situation in Russia. Bourgeois and socialist revolutions were determined by different classes in every situation, but in Russia, proletarian power in the form of the Soviets was constituted before the crystallization of the bourgeois democratic state. Moreover, if the proletariat was to avoid the subordination of Soviet power to the apparatus of the nascent bourgeois democratic state - a bourgeois democratic revolution only constructs a bourgeois state - it must go beyond the limits of the bourgeois democratic state and establish a "dictatorship of the proletariat" through a "Republic of workers, soldiers and peasants"¹⁵. This was a novel and audacious understanding of a revolutionary situation. It brought upon Lenin a barrage of criticism, not only from Western European epiphenomenalists but also from some members of his

Vol 24 p. 60

14. ibid, pp. 60-61

15. V. I. Lenin, The April Thesis, Collected Works Vol 24, op. cit., p.70

own party. To this Lenin responded with the characteristic sarcasm of his polemical writings.

..."Russia has not attained the level of development of the productive forces to make socialism possible", the heroes of the Second International including of course Sukharov, are proud of this proposition as a chicken that has laid an egg.¹⁶

According to Lenin, the specific location of Russia between East and West, the historical conjuncture of World War I, Russia's similarity with other Eastern countries with large peasant populations assuming revolutionary roles, caused the situation in Russia to be essentially different from that of Western Europe. The World War diminished the imperialist pressure, but at the same time it increased the misery of the peoples of Russia.

So what if the complete hopelessness of the situation, by intensifying tenfold the energies of the workers and peasants, has offered us the possibility of proceeding to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a way different from that of Western European countries?¹⁷

From the above brief discussion it is possible to infer two aspects of the Leninist conceptualisation of the revolution that are crucial for the understanding of the Bolshevik position on the national question. Firstly, bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions may occur simultaneously, or the latter may closely follow the former. At the same time, both revolutions have distinct and contradictory identities because they respond

16. V. I. Lenin, Our Revolution, Selected Works, Vol 6 p. 511

17. *ibid.*

to hegemonic projects of different classes.¹⁸ The transition from one revolution to the other is essentially a political act, the result of the actions of the avant-garde revolutionaries. Consequently, the transition from one revolutionary situation to the other is the result of activity that takes place outside the process of production. However, the identity of the revolutionary process is determined by forces endogenous to the process of production, since they respond to the hegemonic project of fundamental classes. The paradoxical nature of this situation requires a rigorous separation of identities at every moment of the revolutionary process, a situation that is logically incompatible with the transitional nature of the revolutionary situation. A way out of this paradox would have been to argue that revolutions cannot be defined a priori as "democratic" or "socialist", an unthinkable proposition in terms of the stageist and class reductionist nature of the Marxist-Leninist discourse. This confusing distinction subsequently becomes the cornerstone of the Marxist Leninist analysis of the national question. "National Self Determination" is a bourgeois democratic demand which is supported by the proletariat in what the Bolsheviks define as "backward" situations. This is to say, situations in which the bourgeois democratic revolution has not yet been fully accomplished, and the workers are aiming to transform the bourgeois democratic into a socialist revolution. This discussion

18. This is the essence of class reductionism, all superstructural occurrences are determined by classes even if they are mediated by a complex chain of causality. To conceptualise a bourgeois democratic revolution blending with a socialist revolution is unthinkable in terms of the class reductionist paradigm. However, Trotsky stretched the class reductionist paradigm to its conceptual limits by arguing that this "blending" was possible under certain historical circumstances, but at the same time, he did not provide us with the analytical tools to conceptualise this situation.

will be expanded in the next section of this chapter. Secondly, the revolutionary process displays national peculiarities and it is possible to envisage different "revolutionary roads" from those that were been conceptualised out of the Western European experience. Lenin puts this argument in a forceful way:

It never occurs to our European philistines that subsequent revolutions in Eastern countries, which posses vastly greater diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater peculiarities than the Russian Revolution.¹⁹

In the context of these original ways of analysing revolutionary situations, a "revised" Marxist-Leninist understanding of the national question becomes essential, and this will be discussed in a moment in the form Lenin's thesis on "The Right of Nations to Self Determination" and Stalin's monograph on the national phenomenon.

Imperialism and the notion of "uneven development"²⁰

While the notion of "the Law of uneven and combined development" was first coined by Trotsky²¹, it would be impos-

19. V. I. Lenin, Our Revolution, in op. cit. p. 512

20. I wish to thank Norman Wintrop for a stimulating discussion on Trotsky and Lenin, and for kindly allowing me to use his bibliographical material on Trotsky.

21. The "law of uneven and combined development" is discussed in L. Trotsky The History of the Russian Revolution, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1965 Chapter 1, p.25-28. For an evaluation of the concept of "combined and Uneven Development see B. Knei Paz The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1978 pp. 62-107

sible to exaggerate the importance of the concept of uneven development to Lenin's work on imperialism. Lenin's "Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism" was not an original appraisal of the economic impact of imperialism in the modern world.²² Much of the argument is based in what Lenin described as a "very valuable theoretical analysis of the latest phase of capitalist development"²³ from one of the leading political and intellectual figures of Austro-Marxism, Rudolf Hilferding²⁴. The novelty of Lenin's work lies not so much in the economic discussion, but in the political analysis derived from the evaluation of the new imperialist period in the process of capitalist development.²⁵

The "uneven" development of capitalism is a necessary pre-

22. And certainly Lenin would not have claim it was, since his economic analysis was based on a critical discussion of the earlier works of Hilferding and Hobson.

23. V. I. Lenin, Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism, In V. Lenin, Selected Works in three volumes, Vol 1 p. 641, Progress publishers, Moscow 1976. Lenin's intellectual indebtedness to Hilferding did not prevent him from wrongly accusing the latter of siding with Kautsky in the abusive and Manichean style of his polemical writings ...*Hilferding, ex- "Marxist" and now comrade-in-arms with Kautsky and one of the chief exponents of bourgeois reformist policy..* ibid., p. 639

24. R. Hilferding Das Finanzkapital, Vienna, Wiener Volksbuchhandlung 1910 Vol. 3 of Marx Studien. There is an excellent English edition with an introduction by T. Bottomore; Finance Capital, Routledge and Kegan, London 1981

25. Which were not explicitly developed in this work due to the limitations of Czarist Censorship. see V.I. Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, op. cit. p.634

requisite to understand the logic and goals of the imperialist stage. The concept of "uneven" development appears at first glance to be deceptively simple. Capitalism develops in different ways in different countries and, as a result of this, certain states are "ahead" of others in that great single universal highway of capitalist development. Not only certain "Nation-states" are ahead of others, but they also use their commanding lead to ensure that their leadership remains unchallenged. This results in an increased competition between the leading nation-states and, as a consequence of this situation, more "less developed" regions of the world fall into the hands of and are exploited by, these competing powers. Thus, capitalism becomes more and more a single universal system, eventually engulfing the whole world under its developmental logic. But this imperialist subjugation of the "backward" world does not necessarily result in a stable and comfortable situation for the leading national states. The very "backwardness" of the "East" is converted into an asset by the ability of these subjugated countries to imitate "modern" forms of economic, social, and political organisation. This has the net effect of paving the way for the possibility of a challenge to the very hegemony of the nation-states that introduced into those "backward societies" the more "advanced" methods. However, this process of change and transformation is a far cry from the regular and predictable process envisaged by Marx in his preface to "Capital"²⁶. "Backward" societies do not resemble the "advanced" capitalist states at a previous stage of development because their process of change is faster, but also because their development is "combined" with the elements of "backwardness" that characterise these societies, creating in this way a novel and unique transitional ensemble. This last argument was fully conceptualised by Trotsky in his History of

26. *The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own* K. Marx Capital, Vol 1 op. cit. p. 19

the Russian Revolution, summarising arguments developed in previous works. It led to the suggestion that, given the dramatic coexistence of "backward" and "advanced" social formations in Czarist Russia²⁷, it was possible to attempt a socialist revolution circumventing the capitalist stage. This is clearly an anathema to the epiphenomenalist Marxism of the Second International. However, following the logic of class reductionism, this coexistence of "modern" and "backward" forms of social organisation is essentially unstable, given that only one fundamental class becomes hegemonic and determines the developmental logic of the process of change. At best, a relative stability may be achieved by the subordination and incorporation of the more "backward" class, or relational pattern of classes, into the hegemony of the dominant class. From the works of Lenin and Trotsky it is possible to infer that the inescapable tendential pattern is that privileged hegemonic positions are to be occupied by more "advanced" social classes. This situation sets the limits for the "unevenness" and "combinability" of the processes of social change in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. For the class reductionist logic of the analysis of the process of change precludes the hegemonic presence of a "backward" class leading the movement for change, or a political agent acting outside the arena of determination of the fundamental classes. In consequence, this situation requires the definition of clear class identities and their field of determination in the political arena, in order to account for the nature of the hegemonic force in the "combined" ensemble. Following this reductionist logic of analysis, the political hegemony of the Bolshevik party, or any other revolutionary organisation, is only justifiable at the point in which the latter claims the political representation of the proletariat in the form of its avant-garde. However, if this

27. A dying feudal class with a young proletariat without a crystallised "national" bourgeoisie. see L. Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, op. cit. chapter 1

is not the case, the revolutionary movement may be conceptualised as an "unconscious tool in the movement of history", in line with the Hegelian teleological stance that informs the class reductionist position. The hegemonic presence, or even existence, of a non-class political force is an unthinkable utopia for the Marxist Leninist tradition, as Lenin clearly explained to the Narodnik movement²⁸. Even if the aim of a political movement is to sustain a project of socialist transformation, to succeed it must locate itself within the "objective conditions", meaning the paradigmatic field of action of the proletariat, the only class bestowed with the privilege of sustaining a socialist project. But following the logic of class reductionism discussed above, how fundamental was the proletariat as a class at the time of the 1917 revolution?. And how much of the successful bid for political hegemony by the Bolshevik party resulted from its representation of the proletariat?. Similar questions were constantly asked by Kautsky, the Mensheviks, and other epiphenomenalist critics, and given the difficulties of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in providing adequate answers, the limitations of class reductionism in coping with the Pandora's box opened by its rejection of epiphenomenalism becomes apparent. Given the limitations of class reductionism, it is crucial for Marxist Leninists to show the link between the Bolshevik party and the proletariat, otherwise the whole project lacks legitimacy, even if capitalism is abolished and the road to socialism commenced.²⁹ A way out of

 28. See V. I. Lenin, Who are the friends of the People, Collected Works, op. cit. vol. 1. p. 129 ff.

29. A reverse problem affected the Marxist Leninist understanding of the recent Iranian revolution. The popular and antimperialist nature of the Islamic Revolution defined its "progresiveness" vis a vis the Sha's regime and this prevented the understanding of its reactionary nature, even when compared with the previous regime. This "error of judgement" cost dearly to the Iranian left.

this situation is to simply deny ontological privileges to social agents, but this is incompatible with the principles of class reductionism.

Similar limitations apply to the notion of uneven development. For the concept of uneven development follows the logic of the evolutionary paradigm of classical Marxism even if though it rejects its Eurocentric prescription of a developmental linearity. The use of notions of "backwardness" and "progress" coupled with the constant identification of moments or stages in a developmental process denote a tendential movement defined by an a priori epistemological stance. This is because the identification of a stage makes no sense unless a developmental continuity is envisaged. Similarly the notions of "backwardness" and "progress" denote an interdependent polarity that gives the latter an ontologically privileged position. As will be shown in the next section, the Marxist-Leninist model of development had profound implications for the evaluation of the role of movements for national emancipation. The concept of uneven development broke with the arid linearity of epiphenomenalism, allowing a more flexible understanding of the political dimension of movements for national emancipation in the way of a conceptual framework that permits the analytical evaluation of unique ensembles. However, the hierarchical and stageist dimension of the concept of uneven development imprisoned the Marxist-Leninist analysis into an exclusively political analysis of the national arena, which inhibited the understanding of those aspects of the national phenomenon that transcended the immediate conjunctural political stage, such as culture and ethnicity. Similarly, the class reductionist dimension of the Marxist-Leninist approach required every nationalist movement to respond to the political project of a fundamental class. In this way it prevented an understanding of those aspects of the national phenomena that transcended a class location. This argument will be discussed in the next section.

The novel political understanding of the imperialist stage of development of capitalism had other implications for the Marxist Leninist understanding of the national question. Given the "parasitic"³⁰ nature of imperialism and its incorporation of vast regions of the globe into the area of influence of the capitalist mode of production, Lenin lost faith in the ability of large sections of the European working class to lead the revolution. The workers in western Europe were "corrupted by the spoils of colonialism", developed "opportunistic" tendencies, and lost in this way their wish to radically transform the capitalist system.³¹ Instead, Lenin pinned his hopes on the struggles of the peoples fighting imperialist domination. The notion of an "imperialist chain" in which the areas of the world exploited and subjected to the domination of imperialist states are the "weakest link", opens the way for the conceptualisation of new forms of struggle. These new forms of struggle are derived from the contradictory interests of colonial and colonised nations, constituting in this way an antagonistic relation that was crucial to the revolutionary movement.

The front of Capitalism will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link³²

This novel conception of revolutionary struggle also required a revised conceptualisation of the national question.

30. V. I. Lenin, Imperialism, the highest Stage..., op. cit p.708-710

31. ibid. pp.714-715

32. J. Stalin, Works, Vol. 6 p. 100, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1952

Revolutionary conditions were no longer internal to the state or region under consideration, they were also the results of the contradictions of imperialism as a world system. If the experience of the working class in western Europe was no longer the model for socialism and the transformation of the non European world, and if imperialism and uneven development had opened the possibility of socialist revolutions in what the Bolsheviks called the "backward" world, then Stalin's controversial thesis of 1924 neatly follows:

The victory of socialism in one country, even if this country is less developed in the capitalist sense, while Capitalism is preserved in other countries, even if these countries are highly developed in the capitalist sense - is quite possible and probable³³

Does the above mean that Marxism-Leninism decisively broke with the evolutionary paradigm of classical Marxism? It will be fair to say that it broke with the most glaring eurocentric aspects of the evolutionist paradigm - not an insubstantial achievement - while maintaining intact its adherence to the epistemological principles that sustain this paradigm. The constant referral to notions of "progress" and "backwardness" and the rigid use of a "stageist" conceptualisation to give meaning to a developmental process, clearly illustrates the indebtedness of Marxist-Leninism to the the evolutionary paradigm of classical Marxism. But in the same way as Revisionism opened areas of indeterminacy by criticising the ontological privilege given to the working class as an agent of social transformation, but at the same time compensating for this indeterminacy by giving greater emphasis to social evolution; so the Marxist-Leninist tradition broke with the constraining determination of the parameter of

33. J. Stalin,Leninism, quoted by D. McLellan, Marxism after Marx, op. cit. p.122

evolutionary change, while compensating for the resulting indeterminacy with a strict and rigid conceptualisation of the class determination of every so-called "superstructural" phenomena.

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is- either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. [emphasis added]³⁴

The Marxist-Leninist theory sees no contradiction between the above-discussed deterministic conceptualisation of ideology, and the subjective and voluntaristic role of the avant-garde revolutionary party. In fact, they complement each other thanks to the pendular movement of Hegelian dialectics, for subjectivity can only achieve what is historically possible, and the subject achieves his/her highest degree of freedom by, paradoxically realising the power of historical constraint.³⁵ This perfectly meaningless tautology permits a synthetic construction that obscures the incompatibility of arguing for a strict and dogmatic form of class determination, while claiming that revolutionary change occurs when "free" subjects "voluntarily" act on behalf of this class determination. The tautological nature of this

34. V. I. Lenin, What is to be Done?, Collected Works, Vol. 5 op. cit. p. 384-85

35. Within the Marxist tradition, this argument was developed by G. Luckacs in History and Class Consciousness Merlin Press, London

analysis results from the claim that revolutionary "success" results from the ability to correctly "understand and act upon" the "right" historical conditions and that revolutionary failure always implies "subjective" failure. For either the conditions were not yet ripe, or the revolutionary subjects had the "wrong" theory, in both cases there exists a failure of the revolutionary subjects to "understand" the "objective historical conditions". The only way out of this situation is to free the political arena from the totalising constraints of class determination in the form of a dogmatically fixed separation between "subjectivity" and "objectivity",³⁶ a position incompatible with the class reductionist nature of Marxism-Leninism.

As it was argued in Chapter 1, to break with epiphenomenalism is not the same as to break with class reductionism³⁷. To abandon epiphenomenality implies the rejection of transparent explanations, which is not the same as to reject class determination. The class reductionist conceptualisation implies, on the contrary, expanding the paradigmatic field of class determination by expanding relations of mediation through the "relative autonomy" of the so called "superstructure". While successfully breaking with epiphenomenality, Marxist Leninist theory remained trapped in the logic of a class reductionist perspective by conceiving classes as sole and privileged historical agents, and awarding class belonging to every so-called "superstructural" phenomena. While remaining "relatively

36. This dogmatic separation is by no means exclusive to the Marxist tradition. In sociology it took the form of the now dated Weberian separation between "Science" and "Ideology"

37. for a discussion of the difference between the two concepts, see chapter 1. The original use of this concept is to be found in C.Mouffe (ed.) Gramsci and the Marxist Theory, Routledge & Kegan, London 1979. p. 168

autonomous", no political and/or ideological phenomenon could be understood outside the dynamics of class relations. It what follows it will be argued that this had a profound impact in the way in which the national question was conceptualised in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. The break with epiphenomenalism resulted in the intense politisation of the national arena, considerably augmenting its importance for the revolutionary struggle, and therefore requiring a more careful conceptualisation. However, this conceptualisation was nevertheless severely restricted by the constraints of class reductionism, which impeded an appreciation of the importance of those aspects of the national phenomena not reducible to the logic of the class struggle, such as culture and ethnicity.

The Marxist Leninist Theory of the National Question

It is not difficult to understand that the recognition by marxists of the whole of Russia, and first and foremost by the great Russians of the right of nations to secede in no way precludes agitation against secession by Marxists of a particular oppressed nation, just as the recognition of the right to divorce does not preclude agitation against divorce in any particular case³⁸

Around the turn of the century the major point of reference on the national question for the majority of socialist parties was the resolution of the congress of the Second international held in London in 1897. Lenin considered this resolution of great importance for the nationalities policy of the Bolshevik party, to the extent that he quotes it in full in his article on the "Right of Nations to Self Determination":

38. V. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 20, footnote p. 452. Progress Publishers, Moscow 1964

This Congress declares that it stands for the full right of all nations to self determination (Selbstbestimmungsrecht) and expresses sympathy for the workers of every country now suffering under the yoke of military, national or other absolutism. This congress calls upon the workers of every country to join the ranks of the class conscious (Klassenbewusste) workers of the whole world in order jointly to fight for the defeat of international capitalism...³⁹

The only clear aspect of this resolution is its vagueness, which is the main cause of the difficulty in properly ascertaining the concrete meaning of the slogan "the right of nations to self determination". This ill-defined formulation was the end result of the controversial nature of the debate that took place, particularly between the Polish delegates, over the issue of Polish self-determination.⁴⁰ As H. B. Davis rightly argues, the phrase "self determination" is hopelessly vague on the crucial issue of whether it means "state independence", or some other status different from state independence for the national community in question.⁴¹ In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the prin-

39. Quoted by Lenin from the the official German report of the resolutions of the Congress. see V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self Determination, in Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, Progress Publishers Moscow, 1970 also in Collected Works Vol 20.

40. See chapter 3 on the controversy on Self Determination between Rosa Luxemburg's SKDPiL and the PPS.

41. H. B. Davis, "The Right of Self Determination in Marxist Theory - Luxemburg vs. Lenin, in H. B. Davis (ed.) The National Question, Selected writings by Rosa Luxemburg, op. cit. p. 20

ciple of "National-Cultural autonomy"⁴² was the socialist party's interpretation of the concept of self determination. Kautsky did not express a clear opinion on the subject, the radical left rejected the principle of self-determination in toto, and the revisionists made the principle conditional to the achievement of a "higher degree of civilisation".⁴³ For reasons to be discussed in a moment, Lenin and the majority of the Bolshevik party (with the possible exception of Bukharin), took a clear and uncompromising position on the issue of self determination.

...if we want to grasp the meaning of self determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that self determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.

Later we shall see still other reasons why it would be wrong to interpret the right of self determination as meaning anything but the right to existence of a separate state.⁴⁴ (emphasis added)

Consequently, for Lenin self determination meant only the secession of national communities from multinational states to form their own separate national states. This is to say, the exclusive right to separation in the political sense, and it means

42. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the Austrian socialist party's position on the national question

43. for a discussion on the positions of Kautsky, Luxemburg and the Revisionists, see chapter 3

44. Lenin, Collected Works, op. cit. Vol 20 p.397

neither the right to "federation" nor the right to "autonomy". In his article "The Rights of Nations to Self Determination", Lenin sustains that "it is not difficult" to see from a Social Democratic point of view that the right to self-determination means neither "federation" nor "autonomy", while conceding that when speaking in abstract terms, these two concepts come under the general category of "self-determination".

...The right to federation is simply meaningless, since federation implies a bilateral contract....Marxists cannot include the defense of Federalism in general in their program. As far as autonomy is concerned, Marxists defend not the "right" to autonomy, but autonomy itself, as the general democratic principle of a democratic state with mixed national composition...Consequently, the recognition of "the right of nations to autonomy", is as absurd as the the "right of nations to federation".⁴⁵

This position was by no means universally accepted in the Bolshevik party. A minority of Russian Bolsheviks rejected the notion of a right to self determination with arguments similar to those sustained by Rosa Luxemburg. Another small group of Bolsheviks, particularly members of non-Russian national communities, demanded a broader definition of the slogan of the right of nations to self determination. The Armenian Bolshevik, Stephen Georgievich Shahumyan argued, contrary to Lenin's ideas, that the right to self determination could not only mean secession, but also other forms of devolution, including autonomy or federation. In a letter to Shahumyan, Lenin restated his opposition to accepting autonomy or federation as valid interpretations of the principle of self determination, since federation is an

45. V. Lenin The Right of Nations to Self determination, in op. cit., Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, ff. p. 91

agreement between "equals" and cannot be implemented if only one party agrees to it. In his letter to Shahumian, Lenin also argues that federations weaken economic links, and that all circumstances being equal, he prefers a centralised state. With the characteristic forthrightness of his polemical writings he argues:

The right to self-determination does not imply only the right to secede. It also implies the right to federal association, the right to autonomy", you write. I disagree entirely. It does not imply the right to federation. Federation means the association of equals, an association that demands common agreement. How can one side have a right to demand that the other side should agree with it? That is absurd. We are opposed to federation in principle, it loosens economic ties and is unsuitable for a single state. You want to secede?. All right, go to the devil if you can break economic bonds, or rather, if the oppression and friction of "coexistence" disrupt and ruin economic bonds. You don't want to secede?. In that case, excuse me, but don't decide for me; don't think that you have you have a "right" to federation.⁴⁶

Given the nature of Lenin's interpretation, it would have been more precise to call this principle "the right of nations to an independent state", or "the right to statism", since he disregarded all forms of "self determination" that did not imply the formation of a separate national state.

In order to properly understand Lenin's advocacy of the right to state separatism⁴⁷, it is important to understand this

46. V. Lenin, Letter to Schaumian, G. Haupt, C. Weill, M. Lowy, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, Maspero Paris 1974 p.352.
also V. Lenin, Collected Works, op. cit. Vol 19 p. 500

position in relation to a) Lenin's definition of the role of the party and the notion of "democratic centralism" and b) in the context of the previously discussed taxonomical and hierarchical conceptualisation of social development. The role of the party and "democratic centralism" will be later discussed in conjunction with Lenin's evaluation of national culture and his polemical stance in relation to the project of "national cultural autonomy".

In order to justify his position on self-determination, Lenin follows a conceptualisation of national communities that is initially based on the analysis of Kautsky . In The right of Nations to Self Determination⁴⁸ , he argues that, throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism is "linked" to the emergence and development of national movements. Given that for Lenin, this form of class determination is crucial for the understanding of the emergence of national movements, the economic rationale that lies behind this linkage is expressed in the following observation:

...for the complete victory of commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements... unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and ex-

47. Given that for Lenin "self determination" means only "state separatism" I propose to use these phrases in an interchangeable manner

48. Collected Works, Vol 20 pp. 393-454

tensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism...(emphasis added)⁴⁹

Following this line of analysis, Lenin argues that unity of language is one of the most important conditions for an unimpeded exchange of goods between different peoples, and it is therefore a functional requirement for the initial development of capitalism. But once the first "seeds" of capitalism are implanted, it subsequently draws "free" and "broad" groupings of population evolve into the forms of social organisation and class alignment that characterises the development of the capitalist mode of production. In Lenin's words, "for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each proprietor", and "between seller and buyer". In this situation, when market forms establish their preponderance over other forms of social distribution, a common language becomes a crucially important functional requirement for the consolidation of the capitalist mode of production. Following this analytical logic, Lenin concludes that the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states, where the organisational requirements of modern capitalism can be best satisfied⁵⁰. In other words, the economic logic and organisational tendencies of the capitalist mode of production define the functionality of the formation and consolidation of national states, and the subsequent emergence of national movements is the "superstructural" response to this organisational tendency. Given that the hegemonic class in the process of consolidation and development of the capitalist mode of production is the bourgeoisie, the presence of national movements is the "superstructural response"

49. V. I Lenin, "The right of Nations to Self Determination", in op. cit. Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, p.46.

50. ibid. p. 46-47

to the needs and requirements of the bourgeois class.

So far, Lenin's theoretical analysis appears to be almost identical to the one put forward by Kautsky. Lenin and Kautsky refer to the nation as the outcome of the emerging capitalist system, and both see in the preponderance of national movements an expression of bourgeois hegemony. Both give crucial importance to language as the nucleus of the national community, and both conspicuously fail to distinguish between the specific configuration of the emerging capitalist state and the characteristics of national communities. In summary, both exhibit the main features of the class reductionist analysis. The bourgeoisie and the nation are connected in a relation of causality from the former to the latter.⁵¹

From the Kautsky-Lenin assertion that the national state is the "typical" form of state organisation under capitalism, Lenin derives his original contribution to the debate on the national question: the above mentioned theory on "the right of nations to self determination". While Lenin appears to accept the basic premises of the Kautskian position, it differs from Kautsky on a fundamental point which results from Lenin's break from epiphenomenalism: the principled application of the right to self determination (meaning of course state independence) to every national community. But as it will become clear in a moment, this does not mean the principled acceptance of the right of secession in every case.

Lenin justifies the advocacy of the right to state secession

51. An epiphenomenalist position is always class reductionist, while the reverse is not the case. Epiphenomenalism refers to transparent and deterministic relations of causality, while class reductionism only refers to the paradigmatic location of a "superstructural" phenomenon in the area of influence of a class position. for a full discussion of both concepts see chapter 1

by referring to the taxonomical periodisation of the capitalist mode of production discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Given that the "typical" state under capitalism is the national state, the advocacy of the right of nations to constitute separate national states will assist in ensuring the optimal development of the productive forces under capitalism, particularly in those areas of the world in which the "bourgeois democratic" revolution is not yet in full swing. In this sense, for Lenin, the national question must be looked upon within "definitive" historical limits⁵², meaning by this, the taxonomy of stages that, according to Lenin, give shape to the process of uneven development of capitalism. In discussing the role of the national state in the process of development of the capitalist mode of production, Lenin makes a clear distinction between two historically different periods.

The first period is that of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism. This is the period in which the "bourgeois democratic" state is formed, and the national movement becomes a mass movement under the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. In this case, the national struggle deserves the support of the incipient proletariat, because it is a struggle against feudalism and absolutism, for civil and political liberties, and for democracy, the main characteristics of a "democratic republic", which is "the best possible political shell for capitalism"⁵³.

 52. V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self Determination, op. cit. p. 47 and Theses for a Lecture on the National Question, Collected Works, Vol. 41 p. 313

53. V. I. Lenin State and Revolution in Selected Works in three volumes op. cit., vol 2 p. 247. For an interesting discussion of the contemporary implications of this idea, see B. Jessop, "Capitalism and Democracy, the best possible political shell?", in in G. Littlejohn et al. (eds.) Power and the State, London Croom Helm, 1978

The second is the period of fully formed capitalist states, with long established constitutional regimes and, above all, a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In this situation, the bourgeoisie has consolidated power and developed the capitalist mode of production to its creative limits. At this stage of development of capitalism, support for nationalist movements is tantamount to supporting the bourgeoisie at the expense of the proletariat.

From the above discussion Lenin infers that national movements should be supported if their aim is to overthrow absolutism and to build a "bourgeois-democratic" state. But it would be an "immense error from the point of view of the proletariat", to support the nation when the bourgeois-democratic movement achieves its maturity and the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is highly developed.⁵⁴ In this sense, it is interesting to note the rigidity with which Lenin applied the above mentioned criteria to a number of European states, notwithstanding his argument that the two periods are not "walled off" from each other and are connected by "numerous transitional links". In spite of this, Lenin argued that "there can be no question of the Marxists of any country drawing up their national program without taking into account all these general historical and concrete state situations"⁵⁵. In this context, Lenin argued that bourgeois democratic revolutions in eastern Europe did not begin until 1905, while in western and continental Europe they took place during the period 1789 to 1871.⁵⁶ His rigid and

54. V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self Determination, op. cit. p. 51

55. ibid.

56. ibid. p.55

formalistic presentation of the stages of development of the bourgeois democratic revolution results from the epistemological requirement to identify every "moment" of the developmental process within the paradigmatic field of determination of class positions, and leads Lenin to the absurd claim that in Western Europe nationally uniform states became the "general rule" at the close of period of consolidation of bourgeois democratic revolutions.⁵⁷ Consequently, Lenin argues, to seek the right of self determination in the programs of the Western European socialist parties is "to betray one's ignorance on the ABC of Marxism"⁵⁸.

Given that according to Lenin the bourgeois democratic revolution only began in Czarist Russia in 1905, and taking into account that the process of "uneven development" experienced by that diverse multinational state created developmental peculiarities, the "concrete features" of the national question in Russia were diverse and different from those experienced in western Europe at the same early stage of the "bourgeois democratic" period.⁵⁹ This argument permitted Lenin to maintain the developmental taxonomy of classical Marxism, while at the same time, to sustain an analysis that took into account the specific conjunctural situation of Czarist Russia. According to Lenin, 57% of the population of Czarist Russia was not of ethnic⁶⁰ Russian extraction, and national oppression there was

57. Indeed, the "general rule", is the exact opposite, "multinational states". Consider the U.K., France, Spain, Belgium, etc.

58. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self Determination, in op. cit. p. 56

59. ibid. p.57

60. Given that there is no direct english equivalent to the Rus-

harsher than in other multinational states. As a result of the peculiarities of the process of uneven development, capitalism was more "advanced" in some of the peripheral national communities than in the ethnic Russian center, while at the same time, some of the Asian national communities were only on the "eve" of the "bourgeois democratic stage". The combination of harsh national oppression, with a wide range of developmental diversity resulted in the "urgent" political need to resolve the question by the principled application of the right of nations to self determination⁶¹

Rosa Luxemburg vehemently opposed the notion of a "right" of nations to self determination⁶², and consequently disputed Lenin's arguments. The polemic between Lenin and Luxemburg is a good illustration of the differences between the class reductionist and epiphenomenalist position on the national question. Luxemburg denied that nations had "rights" while Lenin was prepared to grant certain qualified rights to national communities. While maintaining a strict class reductionist position,

sian "natsional'nost" and "narod'nost", the term ethnicity is used here as the closest substitution. The lack of an appropriate equivalent in English is highly revealing of the historical context in which the English language crystallized. For a very interesting and thought provoking discussion of this situation see T. Shanin's Soviet Theories of Ethnicity, the Case of a Missing Term in New Left Review, 1986 p. 113-122

61. Lenin. The Right of Nations to Self Determination, in op. cit. p.55

62. see chapter 3. Lenin devotes a substantial part of The Right of Nations to Self determination, op. cit., to polemise against R. Luxemburg.

Lenin understood that a "relative autonomy" of national movements will advance certain strategic objectives of fundamental importance for the party of the "proletariat". Luxemburg following the assumptions of epiphenomenalism, rejected the notion of national rights because there was no direct connecting relation of causality between national existence and the aims of the working class. If she was prepared to talk about rights at all, it was exclusively in terms of the rights of the working class⁶³. Rosa Luxemburg failed to see the "bourgeois democratic" revolutions in the same perspective as that of the Bolsheviks, because she was not interested in any political movements that did not directly advance the objectives of the working class. Lenin, however, understood the strategic importance of operating in the political arena and forging tactical alliances with political groupings not directly connected with the working class. As H. B. Davis correctly argues, Lenin opposed rejecting in toto nationalist demands, even if he did not agree with them,⁶⁴ because he saw that the strategical importance of the national question - an essentially political issue - transcended the immediate position of nationalist movements. In other words, Lenin understood the fundamental importance of not allowing nationalist movements to monopolise national demands. Luxemburg was blinded to this dimension because of her exclusive concentration on working class politics, and therefore she was not interested in political demands that were not directly connected with the root cause of all forms of oppression, the oppression of the working class. In this sense Lenin broke with the epiphenomenalist view that regarded national oppression as part of the process of class oppression in general, understanding that the national question

63. H. B. Davis, "The Right of Nations to Self Determination in the Marxist Theory - Luxemburg vs. Lenin", in op. cit. The National Question, Selected Writings, p. 17

64. H. B. Davis, op. cit. p.19

posed a specifically political problem that had to be resolved at the political level. In agreeing with Otto Bauer that a socialist commonwealth will cannot include national communities by the use of force,⁶⁵ Lenin envisaged that the specificity of national oppression required a specific political solution to the national problem. However, this specific general solution could only be achieved following the socialist transformation of the capitalist mode of production.

...while being based on economics, socialism cannot be reduced to economics alone. A foundation - socialist production - is essential for the abolition of national oppression, but this foundation must also carry a democratically organised state, a democratic army, etc. By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the possibility of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes reality "only"--"only"!--with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres, including the delimitation of state frontiers in accordance with the "sympathies" of the population, including complete freedom to secede.⁶⁶

In this remarkable statement, Lenin is not only radically breaking from epiphenomenality, but at the same time he is pushing the class reductionist position to its very limits. The socialist transformation of society is essential but not sufficient, to overcome national oppression, creating in this way a -----

65. Otto Bauer, Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie, Chapter 30 Socialism and the Principle of Nationality, quoted by Lenin in The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self Determination in op. cit. Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, p. 129

66. Lenin *ibid.* p. 129-130

limited autonomy of the political arena. In addition to the socialist transformation of the process of production, a full democratisation of the apparatus of government is required to resolve basic democratic demands such as the rights of national communities. However, this argument begs an important and unresolved question: is it at all possible to have a form of social organisation based on socialist production that does not "democratise" the political arena?. This question is strictly unthinkable for epiphenomenalism given the transparency of relations of causality, but it represents an unresolvable dilemma for class reductionists, for if the answer is affirmative, as Lenin appears to imply, then in what way is socialist production (the hegemony of the proletariat) essential in the determination of the nature of the political arena?. For if there is a clear difference between these two dimensions, the democratically organised state appears not to be the outcome of "proletarian" hegemony- the "economic" cannot explain the "political". But on the other hand, if the answer is negative, there is no justification for any form of political activity that transcends the strictly corporatist demands of the working class, for the organisation of socialist production will resolve all forms of political oppression, - the position of Luxemburg and a return to epiphenomenalism. A solution to this dilemma is to conceptualise the political and economic dimensions as separate fields in the pursuit of the goals of socialism. But such a separation is an unthinkable position for class reductionism, for it implies an autonomous dimension to the political arena. This difficult dilemma exemplifies the achievements and failures of the Leninist evaluation of the national question. By decisively breaking with epiphenomenalism, Lenin was able to see the formidable strategic importance of the national question in the political domain, and the requirement of a specific form of "democratic politics" to solve the issues of national oppression. However, by trying to recognize the class identity of every national movement, Lenin severely limited the possibility of achieving his first goal, to develop the specific forms of national politics required for the

consideration of issues of national oppression as distinct from those of class oppression.

But Lenin's most complete and definitive break from epiphenomenalism in the arena of the national question, relates to his appreciation of the revolutionary potential of the countries dominated by imperialism. One of the most important implications of Lenin's theory of imperialism is that it transformed the capitalist arena into a world system in which a small group of central national states oppress a large group of peripheral social formations. In this situation, the antagonistic nature of the relationship between dominant national states and the peripheral oppressed peoples, constitutes the main contradiction of the imperialist system. National liberation movements of national communities under the oppression of imperialism are for Lenin, progressive, because as noted above, they break the imperialist chain at the "weakest link". This is perhaps the most original aspect of Lenin's contribution to the Marxist debate on the national question, and it occurs precisely at the point at which Lenin broke from epiphenomenalism. This novel conceptualisation of the struggle for national liberation explains the appeal of Marxism Leninism to the non European world. Lenin's theory of the right of nations to self determination, coupled with his appraisal of the role of imperialism results in the articulation of the inherent class conflict of the capitalist system with the inherent national conflict of the imperialist stage. The process of national liberation added a radically new dimension to the Marxist conceptualisation of revolution, and this, in turn, required a reappraisal of the revolutionary imaginary, breaking in this way with epiphenomenalist limitations.

To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of

the politically conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.- to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution. So one army lines up in one place and says "We are for socialism", and another somewhere else and says, "We are for imperialism", and that will be a social revolution! Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a "pustch".

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays a lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.⁶⁷

According to Lenin, liberation from national oppression is one the most important demands in the colonial world in the era of imperialism. The slogan of national self determination will allow the working class to put forward a concrete program against national oppression, creating the conditions for the workers to assume the leadership of the national movement. A second important consequence of this situation is to allow the development of a conceptual framework that will explain why revolutions unlikely to occur in "advanced" capitalist states, while at the same time, explain why they are more likely to occur in peripheral societies, and in places where the development of the productive forces will not assure the supremacy of the proletariat. Again, Lenin again draws the class reductionist approach to its conceptual limits. He clearly understands the revolutionary potential of nationalist movements, and the specificities of the revolutionary struggle outside the European world, but the straitjacket of class reductionism prevents him from conceptualising these- by Lenin's own account- non-class antagonisms, outside the paradigm-

67. V. I. Lenin, The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self Determination, in op. cit. Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, p. 159

matic field of class determination. If national liberation movements are to move towards socialism, it will only take place under the leadership of the working class (and of course, its "avant-garde" party), even in places where an industrial proletariat hardly exists. The paradoxical nature of this analysis could have been avoided by rejecting - As Mao was eventually to do - the ontological privilege of the proletariat in the process of socialist development, an unthinkable proposition in terms of the limitations of class reductionism.

The contribution of Lenin to the marxist debate on the national question was summarised by Stalin in the following way:

Formerly the national question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions concerning primarily civilised "nationalities". The Irish, the Hungarians the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities. This was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in the most savage and cruel form, usually remained outside their field of vision"⁶⁸

Lenin's break from epiphenomenalism in the areas of political organisation, revolution and imperialism had a direct effect on the Marxist-Leninist perception of the national question: it enlarged the concept of self determination to the point in which it became a relevant tool in the antimperialist struggle of the non-European world. This resulted in an intense politisation of the national question. *putting Politics "in Command", meaning his obstinate, inflexible, constant and unflicking tendency to ...highlight the political aspect of every problem"*⁶⁹ was the

68. J. Stalin, Works, op. cit., Vol 6, p.443

main advantage and the main weakness of the Lenin's theory, as we shall see. But before evaluating the work of Stalin and concluding this chapter, it is necessary to discuss Lenin's interpretation of national culture.

In the article "Critical Remarks on the National Question"⁷⁰ Lenin addresses the question of national culture, which he considers to be of "enormous importance" to Marxists (meaning of course, those who subscribe to the Bolshevik interpretation of Marxism). In this article, Lenin argues for a specifically Bolshevik position on the subject, distinct from what he calls "bourgeois propaganda" and from the program of "national cultural autonomy"⁷¹, a program for national decentralisation that Lenin and Stalin wrongly believed that was adopted by the Austrian Socialist Party in the Brno (Brünn) conference, and was supported by the majority of socialist parties of the non-Russian national communities in Czarist Russia⁷². Lenin believed that it was important to discuss the issue of national culture for two related reasons. Firstly, he regarded the what he believed to be the Austrian position on "national cultural autonomy" dangerous for the fundamental organisational principles of the Bolsheviks, because it implied a program of thorough decentralisation of the party and state, and this con-

69. M. Lowy, Marxists and the National Question, in New Left Review, 96, 1976 p.97

70. Collected Works Vol 19 pp. 17-51

71. ibid. p. 33

72. for a discussion on the position of Austrian socialism on the program of "cultural national autonomy (the "personality principle"), see chapter 6.

tradicted the fundamental Marxist-Leninist notion of "democratic centralism". In the Austrian case, the Congress of Vienna-Wimberg decided in 1897 to divide the Austrian Socialist Gesamtpartei into a federal organisation of six ethno-national parties, and the congress of Brno (Brünn) decided in 1899 to demand the organisation of the Austrian state on a federal and multinational basis, with central power devolved into six autonomous national regions, with no linguistic privilege to be granted to any of the participant national communities⁷³. If the principle of "National Cultural" autonomy (the Austrian "personality principle")⁷⁴, was to be translated to the Russian situation - as the Bund and other socialist parties of national minorities demanded - it would have implied the decentralisation of party and state, a clear anathema to the organisational principle of "democratic centralism" as first sketched by Lenin in "What is to be done?". Second, the program of "National Cultural Autonomy" was supported by many influential socialist organisations among the non-Russian national communities, and the Jewish Bund was actively campaigning for its implementation in Russia. Lenin and the Bolsheviks clearly understood that the support of the non-Russian national communities was essential for the

73. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich, Brünn, Vienna, 1899, translated into Spanish by Conrado Ceretti in La segunda Internacional y el problema colonial, part I Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, Mexico, Siglo XXI Editores 1978 p.181-183. The protocol of the debate that took place in the Austrian socialist party congress shows an amazing similarity with the recent protracted constitutional debate over the status of the autonomous national communities in the Spanish state.

74. Which was only the position of the minority at the Brno Congress the majority supported territorial federal autonomy, see chapter 6.

success of the Bolshevik position, and they also saw the need to forestall the danger of a possible alliance between the Mensheviks and the non-Russian socialist parties on the basis of the above mentioned program of national cultural autonomy. Faced with this situation, Lenin sketched an original programmatic position for the Bolsheviks, whose positive dimension was the above discussed "right of nations to Self-determination", and whose negative dimension was a ferocious attack on the concept of "national cultural autonomy" and a denial of the unity of national cultures. This situation also constitutes the background for Stalin's famous pamphlet Marxism on the National question which will be discussed in a moment.

The Leninist conceptualisation of "national culture", is perhaps one of the best examples of the limitations of class reductionism for the analysis of the multifarious nature of the national phenomenon. Lenin argued repeatedly that in every nation there are two cultures: the culture of the bourgeoisie and the reactionary forces, and the culture of the proletariat. Consequently, the cultural unity of national communities is nothing but the hegemonic ideology of the bourgeoisie in disguise:

Politically conscious workers have understood that the slogan of "national culture" is a clerical or bourgeois deception - no matter whether it concerns Great Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Polish, Georgian or any other culture. A hundred and twenty five years ago, when the nation had not been split into bourgeoisie and proletariat, the slogan of national culture could have been a single and integral call to struggle against feudalism and clericalism. Since that time, however, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has gained momentum everywhere. The division of the "single" nation into exploiters and exploited has become an accomplished fact⁷⁵

75. V. I. Lenin How does Bishop Nikon defend the

For Lenin then, the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat does not allow for the existence of a single national culture. The cultural domain is an area of the so called "superstructure", and it must therefore be explained in terms of the paradigmatic field of class determination. However Lenin concedes that at the "eve" of the bourgeois revolution, it was possible to speak of a "single" national culture, and this is because it had a certain "progressive" role in relation to the hegemonic struggle of the bourgeoisie. Lenin attaches a strictly a "political" meaning to the notion of national culture, ignoring therefore any possible ethno-historical or contemporary-relational dimension, i.e., dimensions that transcend the paradigmatic field of class determination.

In his "Critical Remarks on the National Question", Lenin strongly attacked arguments in favor of a proletarian participation in the national culture. Lenin argued that this discussion was required, because of *the increase of national vacillations among the different national (i.e., non-Russian) Social Democrats*⁷⁶, as well as other *pro-nationalist tendencies* in the Russian society. In rejecting the argument in favor of the unity of the national culture sustained by the Bundist P. Liebman, Lenin argued that in every national community there are "toiling and exploited masses whose conditions of life inevitably give rise to the ideology of democracy and socialism", but every capitalist nation possesses a "bourgeois dominant culture", which makes the slogan of "national culture" to be the slogan of the bourgeoisie⁷⁷. To conceptualise the national culture as an un-

Ukrainians? Collected Works, op. cit. Vol 19 p.380

76. V. I. Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question Collected Works, op. cit. Vol 20 p. 19

77. *ibid.*, p.24

divided unit is unthinkable in terms of the class reductionist position held by Lenin, and consequently he advances the idea of the existence of "two" nations in every "modern nation".⁷⁸ The significance of the concept of national culture is determined according to Lenin, by the "objective alignment" of classes in a given country, which implies that, in capitalist societies, the "national culture" is the culture of the bourgeoisie.

Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against national oppression, the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.⁷⁹

Lenin then argues that both tendencies are the "universal Law" of capitalism, which will eventually result in a process of "assimilation", a tendency that manifests itself "more and more powerfully with every passing decade". Here again, Lenin is reverting to the analysis of classical Marxism, which regards the national community as a "passing phase" in the development of capitalism. The principle of nationality "is historically inevitable" in bourgeois societies. Lenin therefore recognises the "historical legitimacy" of those movements in the process of consolidation of the capitalist mode of production. But this

78. *ibid.* p. 32

79. *ibid.* p. 27

recognition must be prevented from "becoming an apologia" for nationalism, it must be strictly confined to the period when the nationalist movement is a "progressive force" so that "bourgeois ideology" does not obscure "proletarian consciousness"

Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the "most just", "purest", most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism, Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that grows before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers association that is formed⁸⁰.
(emphasis added)

The proletariat, according to Lenin, supports "everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer" or "tends to merge nations"⁸¹. Consequently, for Lenin, the Austrian program of "national cultural autonomy" was a "refined dimension" of nationalism, and could not therefore be supported by the Bolsheviks. On the organisational aspect of the State, Lenin argues that:

Marxists are, of course, opposed to federation and decentralisation, for the simple reason that capitalism requires for its development the largest and most centralised possible states. Other Conditions being equal, the class conscious proletariat will always stand for the larger state.⁸²

80. ibid., p.34

81. ibid., p.35

82. ibid., p.45

Consequently, Lenin accepts the transitional nature of national communities, implying that the process of development of the productive forces will lead to the "international unity" of all working peoples, meaning by this the eventual disappearance of national boundaries. This process of international assimilation must take place as a result of "the developmental logic" of capitalism and, subsequently, socialism, but should take place free of coercion. Any form of coercion or compulsion to assimilate will, according to Lenin, have the reverse effect. This argument becomes clear in Lenin's position on the issue as to whether it should be compulsory to learn Russian:

The Russian language has undoubtedly been of progressive importance for the numerous small and backward nations. But surely you must realise that it would have been of much greater progressive importance had there been no compulsion. Is not an "official language" the stick that drives people away from the Russian Language?⁸³

From Lenin's opposition to the compulsory use of any language, it appears that he maintained a pluralist position of the linguistic question.

Why will you not understand the psychology that is so important in the national question and which, if the slightest coercion is applied, besmirches, soils, nullifies the undoubtedly progressive importance of centralisation, large states and a uniform language? But the economy is still more important than psychology: in Russia we already have a capitalist economy, which makes the Russian language essential⁸⁴

83. V. I. Lenin, Letter to Shahumyan, op. cit. Collected Works, Vol 19, p. 499

On the one hand, Lenin believed that ethnic minorities held to national and linguistic identities as a "psychological" reaction against coercion and forced assimilation. On the other hand, he believed that state centralisation and national uniformity was essential for the achievement of the Marxist-Leninist goals, but, to achieve this, he was not prepared to risk alienating the non-Russian ethno-national communities. The solution to this dilemma was paradoxically to invoke "the iron laws" of capitalist development, the very laws that were rejected in his discussions on the role of the party, the revolution, imperialism and uneven development. He asserted that economic forces in every case worked against a "split up" of large states, and therefore the actual implementation of "the right of nations to self determination" was, in most cases, against the logic of the process of economic development. The existing centrifugal forces were mainly "psychological" in their origin:

The mass of the population knows perfectly well from daily experience the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big market and of a big state. They will therefore resort to secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder all and any economic intercourse...as long as national oppression is permitted, the victim minority was receptive to nationalist agitation; once this oppression ceased, the psychological basis for nationalism and separatism will vanish. And what better way could there be of striking at the very root of national antagonism than to guarantee to every nation the right to complete political freedom?⁸⁵

84. *ibid.*

85. Lenin, Selected Works, Vol I, part 2 Moscow 1950 p. 349, quoted by S. Shaheen The Communist Theory of National Self Deter-

Obviously Lenin was wrong on three counts. First, he was wrong in perceiving the awakening of national identity as mere reaction to national oppression. He failed to see the cultural content of national existence and the desire of members of national communities to preserve their cultural heritage, even if went against what he believed to be "objective economic interests". Second, Lenin was wrong in believing that all problems of separate national identity will be solved by the constitution of separate national states. By overemphasizing the political dimension Lenin overlooked the cultural and ethnic dimensions of the national question. Third, Lenin was wrong in perceiving national culture as divided by class loyalties. National communities often have a sense of collective identity that transcends class units. As Gramsci was later to argue, the working class also had a stake in the cultural national identity. The Marxist-Leninist concept of the "two nations" is intellectually abortive, because it gives a fixed class belonging to every national identity, and consequently, prevents the understanding of the inclusive transformative potentiality of national identities. The above Leninist mistakes are all connected to the blinding impact of class reductionism. The requirement to see national movements and national identities located within the paradigmatic field of class determination inhibits the understanding of the role of national culture, sees national identity only as a political force, and overemphasizes the role of economic forces in the determination of national identities. The contribution of Stalin to the Marxist Leninist position will now be briefly examined.

Stalin and the National Question

mination, The Hague 1956, p. 103

Contemporary discussions of Marxist Leninist theories, particularly sympathetic ones⁸⁶, tend to diminish Stalin's contribution. If Stalin is the "enfant terrible" of the Bolsheviks, then he should be detached as much as possible from Lenin. But whatever crimes were committed by Stalin in his leadership of the Soviet Union should not obscure the fact that he was regarded in the early years of the Bolshevik movement as the highest party authority on the national question. In 1913 he left for Vienna, possibly sent by Lenin,⁸⁷ to study the theories of the Austro-Marxists on the national question, and to produce a monograph on the Bolshevik theoretical position on the subject. The importance of the national question for the Bolshevik party has already been discussed and Stalin, being a member of a non-Russian national community, was in an ideal position to foster the much needed sympathy of the ethnic minorities towards the Bolshevik project. The "marvelous Georgian who sat down to produce an article",⁸⁸ Lenin wrote to Gorki, in fact produced a mediocre monograph, particularly when compared with the caliber of the works of Lenin and Trotsky. Stalin's work engaged in a discussion of Bauer's theories without seeming to understand them properly. However, Lenin at the time believed that the essay was a "very good one"⁸⁹ and Stalin was made the commissar for nationalities of the first Bolshevik government. Early differences between Lenin and Stalin

86. See for example M. Lowy, Marxists and the National Question, op.. cit.

87. ibid. p.95

88. V. I. Lenin Letter to Gorki, Collected Works, vol 5 p.84. The article in question is Marxism and the National Question, Stalin's "magnus opus"

89. Quoted by H> B. Davis. Socialism and Nationalism, Monthly Review Press 1967 p. 81

on the national question are detectable on a number of important issues and will be discussed in a moment.

In the essay Marxism and the National Question⁹⁰, Stalin saw the principal task of Social Democracy as being to protect ethnic minorities from the "epidemic" of militant nationalism. What he means by "epidemic" of militant nationalism is not entirely clear, judging from the examples presented in the work; not only does he refer to Georgian, Ukrainian, Armenian and what he calls "Polish chauvinism" but he also refers to Zionism, Pan-Islamism and anti-semitism as forms of nationalism⁹¹. But without any doubt, the most celebrated part of Stalin's essay is the schematic definition of what is nation:

A nation is an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in a common culture⁹²

Language and units of economic life were already present in Kautsky's and Lenin's discussions on the subject. Community of territory is a derivative category of Lenin's theory of the right of nations to self determination; for if self determination means only secession and the formation of separate states, the territorial component is essential. The concept of "psychological make up manifested in a common culture" is derived directly from

90. J. Stalin, Works Vol. 2, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1953, pp.300-381

91. J. Stalin, Marxism and the National Question, in op. cit. Works, Vol 2, pp. 300-301

92. J. Stalin, op. cit., Marxism and the National Question in Works Vol 2 p. 307

Bauer's definition of nations as "communities of destiny formed into communities of character"⁹³. By integrating this element into his definition of nations, Stalin is implicitly accepting Bauer's main contention that the nation is an historical community which is created through a common cultural, social and historical experience, and implicitly rejecting Lenin's argument about the two cultures in every nation. The problem for Stalin, was that this last argument was precisely the point of contention between Bolsheviks and Austro-Marxists. Lowy and Davis rightly argue that the concept of "psychological make up" is not at all Leninist, because Lenin's argument is exclusively political. At least Stalin was aware of the one-sidedness of the exclusive emphasis on the political level. It is possible to see in Stalin an implicit acknowledgment that national communities are a multifaceted phenomena, which cannot be satisfactorily explained by only taking into account the political and economic development. In fact, Lowy's criticism of Stalin for using culturalist elements in his definition is a good example of arid dogmatism caused by the rigid Leninist appreciation of the national phenomenon:

In fact, the idea of "national psychology" has more in common with certain superficial and pre-scientific folklore than with a Marxist analysis of the National Question⁹⁴

The main problem in Stalin's definition is that it is so

93. See chapter 7 for a discussion of Bauer's work

94. M. Lowy, Marxists and the National Question, op. cit. p. 95. It seems that for Lowy the only possible "marxist" interpretation of the national question is the Leninist interpretation, if cultural elements are integrated into the definition of a nation this is "pre scientific folklorism". One wonders if this is also the case of Mao, Fanon, Cabral, etc.

defective that it excludes a large number of modern national communities. The Germans would have been two nations; Italy would have only become a nation in the nineteenth century, the citizens of the Spanish state one single nation, etc. Also, Stalin appears to be criticising Bauer with self defeating criticisms:

Bauer sets up an impassable barrier between the "distinctive feature" of nations (national character) and the "conditions" of their life, divorcing the one from the other. But what is national character if not a reflection of the conditions of life, a coagulation of impressions derived from the environment?⁹⁵

But a page earlier, Stalin presents in criticism a quotation from Bauer that appears to be saying what Stalin thinks is his critique of Baer!:

...a nation is nothing but a community with a common destiny which, in turn, is determined by the conditions under which people earn their means of subsistence and distribute the products of their labor⁹⁶

Stalin's understanding of the right of nations to self determination, resembles the argument of the Armenian Bolshevik Shahumyan and appears to differ from that of Lenin:

The right of Self Determination means that a nation may arrange its life in the way it wishes. I has the right to ar-

95. J. Stalin. Marxism and the National Question in op. cit. p. 310-11

96. O. Bauer, The Nationalities Question and Social Democracy, russian translation quoted by J. Stalin in op. cit. Marxism and the National Question p. 309

range its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations, it has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights.⁹⁷

Lenin, in the same year that Stalin's monograph was published, wrote in the above mentioned letter to Shahumyan:

The right to self determination is an exception to our general premise of centralisation. This exception is absolutely essential in view of reactionary Great Russian nationalism, and any rejection of this exception means opportunism....But exceptions must not be too broadly interpreted. In this case there is not, and must not by anything more, than the right to secede⁹⁸

In theory, Stalin's version of the right of nations to self-determination is far less rigid than Lenin's version; in practice, Stalin was less prepared to compromise his wish to achieve the highest possible centralisation of the Soviet state. In the same monograph, Stalin gives a clue as to what will be his behavior ten years later as Commissar of Nationalities.

The National question in the Caucasus can be solved only by drawing belated nations and nationalities into the common stream of higher culture (emphasis added)⁹⁹

By "higher culture" Stalin probably means "Russian culture".

97. Stalin. Marxism and the National Question, in op. cit. p.321

98. Lenin. Collected Works. Vol 19, op. cit. p.501

99. J. Stalin, Marxism and the National Question, in op. cit., p. 364

The evolutionary and stageist perception of national development that permeated the works of Lenin, also had its impact on Stalin's understanding of the national phenomenon. When this is translated into the discussion of the western European societies, Stalin replicates the pattern of the assimilated intellectual from a non metropolitan society, which is often too critical of his own society, and uncritical of the "progressive" nature of the metropolitan world. In discussing anti-semitism in Russia, Stalin argues that:

Russia is a semi-Asiatic country, and therefore in Russia the policy of "encroachments" not infrequently assumes the grossest form, the form of pogroms...Germany is, however, European, and she enjoys a measure of political freedom. It is not surprising that the policy of "encroachments" there never takes the form of pogroms.¹⁰⁰

The bitter irony of this perception sadly reflects the mediocrity of a certain members of the colonised intelligentsia, who never loose the opportunity to inform the world of the "superiority" of the western ways. In this sense, Lenin clearly read the nature of the problem when he warned in his last writings against the excesses committed by Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.

I think that Stalin's haste and infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against the notorious "nationalist-socialism", played a fatal role here... I also fear that comrade Dzerzhinsky, who went to the Caucasus to investigate the "crime" of those "nationalist-socialists" distinguished himself by his truly Russian frame of mind (it is common knowledge that people of other nationalities who have become Russified overdo this Russian frame of mind).¹⁰¹

100. J. Stalin, Marxism and the National Question, in op. cit. p. 350

However, Stalin was considered to be the Bolshevik "expert" on the national question. His contribution to the Bolshevik debate should not be underestimated, in spite of the important theoretical differences with the work of Lenin on the subject.

In summarising the Bolshevik contribution to the Marxist debate on the national question, it would be fair to say that the main achievement of the Marxist Leninist tradition was to successfully articulate the class contradictions of classical Marxism, with the national contradictions of the Imperialist era. In breaking with epiphenomenalism in order to explain the specific "unevenness" of the process of development in Czarist Russia, the Marxist-Leninist tradition managed to understand the political dimension of the national question, and the potential it has for the revolutionary movement outside Europe. However, "putting politics in command" in Lowy's (following Marx) fortunate phrase, also was the main weakness of the Bolshevik approach to the national question. For the class reductionist, understanding of the political arena required the evaluation of the political nature of national communities within the paradigmatic field of class determination. The national question for Lenin, should always be looked at from the "angle" of the working class, an instrumentalist perception that obscures certain fundamental features of the phenomenon under observation. The Marxist-Leninist tradition was unable to come to grips with the cultural and ethnic aspects of national existence, since the impossibility to reduce the latter to the paradigmatic field of class determination blinded the Bolsheviks to their impact in the constitution and resilient existence of national identities. It was, in fact, a regrettable irony that the only theoretical analysis of the national question that could have provided Lenin and Stalin with a useful insight into the areas of culture and ethnicity,

101. V. Lenin, The Question of Nationalities or "Autonomisation", in op. cit. Questions of Nationality Policy... p. 165

was precisely the theory that they set out to criticise with the sense of self righteousness so characteristic of the polemical discussions of the Bolsheviks: the theory of Otto Bauer.

From the political point of view, the taxonomical periodisation of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the national question required the identification of a "bourgeois" dimension in every national movement. This effectively prevented a theoretical appreciation of "non-bourgeois" national movements, a problem that was later to be partially solved by Antonio Gramsci and his concept of the "National-Popular". The Gramscian contribution broadened the understanding of the political base of national movements by perceiving the non-class historical dimension of the political arena through the concept of "Historical Bloc". Gramsci's analysis of the national question will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Gramsci and the National Question

Today the "national class" is the proletariat, the multitude of workers and peasants....who cannot allow the dismemberment of the nation because the unity of the state is the form of the apparatus of production and exchange built on Italian labour, the heritage of social wealth that the Italian workers wish to bring to the Communist International. Only the workers' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, can today halt the dissolution of national unity¹

Antonio Gramsci, as founding member of the Italian Communist Party, had always acknowledged his political loyalty to the principles of Marxism Leninism and his intellectual indebtedness to the works of Lenin for "expanding" and "clarifying" fundamental aspects of the Marxist Theory. But to argue that the proletariat is the "national class", and that the "workers state" is the only safeguard against the dissolution of national unity, is simply contradictory to the basic tenets of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question. This incompatibility results from the class reductionist nature of the Leninist assertion that in the era of imperialism and "advanced" capitalism, national movements are always located within the paradigmatic field of determination of the bourgeois class, and consequently the support of the proletariat is conditional upon the "progressive" nature of the bourgeoisie at the specific political conjuncture. In the above quotation, Gramsci appears to imply that the proletariat has a direct and immediate interest in the

1. A. Gramsci, L'Unita Nazionale, in L'Ordine Nuovo, 4 October 1919, quoted by R. Absalom in Gramsci's Contribution, in Socialism and Nationalism Vol 2, Eric Cahm and V. Fisera (eds.)Spokesman, London 1978 p. 29

national movement. Would this mean that Gramsci broke with the class reductionist dimension of the Marxist-Leninist tradition? Yes and no. To understand the logic behind this paradoxical situation, it becomes necessary to see the simultaneous continuity and fundamental if unacknowledged, rupture of Gramsci with the Marxist-Leninist tradition; an unresolved tension, -if not a downright contradiction- that in many ways colours the originality of the Gramscian thought.² On the one hand, what Gramsci had to say in the form of the concept of "hegemony" was original and fundamentally relevant for the evaluation of problematic areas of contemporary Marxism in the west, judging from the numerous responses and discussions of this aspect of his work. On the other hand, this "relevant message", elicited a series of contradictory and controversial interpretations, which are in most cases equally rooted in one aspect or another of Gramscian thought. For example, most contemporary Anglo-Saxon secondary sources make use of Gramsci's theoretical and methodological formulations in the analysis of coercion and consent in Western style parliamentary democracies. This may indicate that his work is perceived as highly relevant to understanding mechanisms of "domination" and "consent" in these political systems. However, who is precisely "dominating" and what is the nature of the mechanism for obtaining "consent" is a matter of profound controversy in the secondary literature. Another interpretation, which incidentally is that of a minority of writers in the Anglo-Saxon world, maintains that to interpret Gramsci's

2. The evaluation of the work of Gramsci is made the more difficult by the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of his work, which comprises journalist articles and political reports, as well as his famous prison notebooks, written under the harsh conditions of the fascist jail. It is important not to lose sight of this situation, particularly when one writes in the comfort of the university environment, with a word processor, no censorship and access to bibliographical material.

original contribution to contemporary Marxism in terms of an analysis of "coercion" and "consent" is fundamentally misleading.

Perry Anderson, in a celebrated (and vilified) article³, describes the Russian Social Democratic and Marxist-Leninist continuity in the use of the concept of "hegemony", locating Gramsci's usage of the term at the end of that continuum. This gives the impression that Gramsci employed the concept of hegemony "for a differential analysis of the structures of bourgeois power in the west", but maintaining a formal continuity of essential meaning, namely, that of proletarian "class alliances" entered under specific historical circumstances. This is even if the discursive presentation of the argument permitted an "imperceptible transition to a much wider theory of hegemony than had ever been imagined in Russia".⁴ Thus for Anderson, the notion of a "class alliance" is crucial for understanding the concept of hegemony, from its first Russian usage to the more "sophisticated" Gramscian understanding. While in some cases it is clear that Gramsci uses the term to imply class alliances, in others it is equally clear that this is not the case, giving the impression of an imprecise and contradictory use of the term if Anderson's equation is accepted uncritically.

From a very different perspective, the seminal work of Laclau and Mouffe⁵, opens the way for a more creative reading of the concept of hegemony. The unity of meaning is achieved by emphasizing Gramsci's break with class reductionism in his discon-

3. Perry Anderson, The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci, New Left Review 100, November 1976, pp. 5-78

4. *ibid.*, p. 20

5. E. Laclau and C. Mouffe Hegemony & Socialist Strategy, Verso, London 1985

tinuous use of the notion of "class alliances", providing in this way a conceptualisation of hegemony that radically departs from the original Russian notion.

More than any other theoretician of his time, Gramsci broadened the terrain of political recomposition and hegemony, while offering a theorization of the hegemonic link which clearly went beyond the Leninist category of "class alliance"⁶

Thus the value of the concept of "hegemony" resides precisely in the radical methodological break with the Leninist tradition, rather than in Gramsci's "adaptation" of the concept to the western situation. This fundamental break is achieved by presenting a "non class reductionist" analysis of the reconstitution of the political arena. Following this line of analysis, it will be argued that it is only through a non class reductionist reading of Gramsci that the fundamental novelty of the Gramscian analysis of the national question could be ascertained. The Leninist tradition regarded national movements as representing at the political level, a stage in the development of the productive forces, narrowing the national question to the paradigmatic field of action of the bourgeoisie. If the notion that the proletariat is the "national class" is not to be regarded as a theoretical incoherence, it requires a conceptualisation of the national arena outside the paradigmatic field of class determination, and here lies the originality of the Gramscian concept of "national-popular" as will be shown in a moment. While the author accepts that a "class reductionist" and a "non-class reductionist" reading of Gramsci are equally possible, from the point of view of the ongoing discussion on the national question, the originality and novelty in Gramsci's legacy only resides in recovering and expanding his partial break with class reduc-

6. ibid. p.66

tionism. The class reductionist reading of Gramsci is at best a sophisticated re-interpretation of the old problems of Marxism-Leninism, as is evident in Perry Anderson's article, and it will conspicuously fail to go beyond the question marks and problems generated by the Leninist tradition as discussed in the previous chapter. The non-class-reductionist reading of Gramsci discloses an imaginative and original - but nevertheless partial - attempt to find new solutions to the perennial Marxist problems of interpreting social order and political power beyond the paradigmatic straitjacket of economism. This permits a conceptualisation of the national arena outside the limitations of class reductionism, an essential step to grasp the multidimensional nature of the phenomena. This particular interpretation is concerned with a) Gramsci's critique of all forms of economism through the expansion of the notion of the state (the integral state), and b) with the rejection of teleological and trans-historical notions of human essence (as they exist in various degrees in Hegelian readings of Marxist theory), to make room for a conceptualisation of a multiplicity of socially determined historical subjects, a condition without which the understanding of the multifarious nature of the national phenomenon becomes an impossible task.⁷

To understand the meaning and significance of the Gramscian concept of "national-popular", Gramsci's main contribution to the conceptualisation of the national phenomenon in the Marxist tradition, it is necessary to first discuss the importance of the

7. Besides the seminal works of Laclau & Mouffe, similar interpretations could also be found in C. Buci-Glucksmann Gramsci and the State, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1980, S. Hall The Problem of Ideology, Marxism without Guarantees, in B. Matthews (ed.) Marx 100 Years On, Lawrence and Wishart 1983, B. Jessop, The Capitalist State, Martin Robertson, Oxford 1982, Anne Showstack Sasson Approaches to Gramsci, Writers and Readers, London 1982

concept of "hegemony", through the original Gramscian analysis of what he called the "Historical Bloc", and the all important role of the "intellectuals" in consolidating and giving shape to the national community.

Hegemony in the Gramscian tradition

As Perry Anderson clearly shows, the concept of "hegemony" has its origins in the Russian socialist literature. For Lenin, it was an important theoretical device to think the political intervention of the "avant-garde" of the proletariat in a combined developmental situation, when a number of other classes and social strata (such as the peasants) were exploited and antagonised by ruling classes, considering that in a showdown with the bourgeoisie these strata could turn to be useful and important allies to the proletariat. In "State and Revolution", Lenin discusses the conditions in which the struggle of the proletariat must take into account the position of other oppressed strata:

...Only the proletariat - by virtue of the economic role it plays in large scale production - is capable of being the leader of all the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do to the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an independent struggle for their emancipation. The theory of the class struggle....leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the political rule of the proletariat...The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the ruling class, capable of...organising all the working and exploited people for the new economic system.⁸

8. V. I. Lenin State and Revolution, in Selected works in three volumes, Vol. 2, op. cit. p. 255

Thus, the proletariat is capable of translating its privileged position in the economic arena into a position of leadership in a political arena only under certain conditions. In the previous chapter, it was argued that Leninism opens an element of "indeterminacy" at the level of the economy, compensating this partial uncertainty with a reconstitution of the shattered chain of causality at the political level. Consequently, the potential capability for leadership of the political representative of the proletariat (the avant garde party) is only secured by a decisive "autonomous" intervention in the political arena. This has clear implications for the Leninist conceptualisation of the configuration of this arena. To succeed in the political struggle against the bourgeoisie, the "avant garde" party must become "hegemonic", e.i., capable of obtaining recognition from other political representatives of oppressed strata of the "privileged historical role" of the proletariat. The main purpose of this action is to subsequently secure the active collaboration and support of these strata in safely assuming the leadership of a politically constructed "anti-bourgeois coalition". Thus, the essence of the Marxist-Leninist notion of "hegemony" is the construction of a political coalition of anti-bourgeois forces, under the "hegemonic leadership" of the "avant garde" of the proletariat.

The term has also other related usages in the Marxist Leninist tradition, some have a positive and others a negative connotation. For example, the concept is also used in the anti-imperialist struggle. This is done by defining the political role of the vanguard party of working class (often a small minority in non industrialised societies) as "hegemonic", because of its ability to organise and lead all the anti-imperialist forces in the war of national liberation.⁹ The Leninist demand for "the

 9. This understanding of hegemony is prevalent in Marxist-Leninist organisations in the non European world. It widely used in the Iranian revolution.

right of nations to self-determination" discussed in the previous chapter, must be also understood in this context.¹⁰

With reference to the Gramscian use of the term, it is possible to identify an initial level of analysis that closely follows the Leninist conceptualisation of hegemony.

The proletariat can become the leading and the dominant class to the extent that it succeeds in creating a system of alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working population against capitalism and the bourgeois state. In Italy, in the real class relations which exist there, this means to the extent that it succeeds in gaining the consent of the broad peasant masses¹¹.

The above quotation appears to show an orthodox Marxist Leninist political analysis of a conjuncture coloured by "uneven" development. The tactical discussion on the "Southern Question" closely resembles Lenin's argument on the need to create an alliance between workers and peasants¹². If one follows the

10. The Chinese Communist Party gives an added negative connotation to the term, when it defines as "Hegemonism" what it considers to be an exaggerate claim to leadership of Communist Part of the Soviet Union in the affairs of other Communist Parties.

11. A. Gramsci, Notes on the Southern Question, in Selections from Political Writings 1921-26, quoted by Laclau & Mouffe, op. cit. p.66. As Tom Nairn perceptively argues in a fascinating article, the conditions of the south of Italy were not that different from those peripheral societies experiencing "uneven" development and which are normally called "Third World". See T. Nairn, Antonin Su Gobbu, in op. cit. Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed.) Approaches to Gramsci pp. 159-79

12. See V. Lenin, Two Tactics of Social Democracy, Op. cit.

Leninist logic, the analysis of the hegemonic situation is strictly confined to a political arena paradigmatically configured by class relations, then the concept of hegemony definitively implies a system of class alliances since the alignment is purely conjunctural. This is because the proletariat and the other participating subordinated classes have "higher interests" that transcend the conjunctural relationship. Following Laclau and Mouffe it is possible to argue that in this case, the class reductionist meaning is maintained, since the logic is still one of preconstituted sectorial interests, a conceptual framework that does not contradict the notion of class alliances¹³, and thus remains within the Marxist-Leninist parameters of class reductionism. This is the source of the class reductionist interpretation of the Gramscian concept of hegemony. In this case the only necessary and sufficient condition to validate the class reductionist understanding of the concept of hegemony, is that the identity of the participant political forces remains within the confines of the paradigmatic area of influence of the participating classes. If this is considered

Selected Works Vol 1. However, H. Portelli disagrees with this interpretation. He argues that Gramsci was only taking into account "the real class relations existent in Italy at that time", and that the working class was proposing a broad compromise taking into account the interests of the peasants on the face of the nature of bourgeois power. In Portelli's words "*this equalitarian alliance... must not hide the hegemonic character of proletarian direction*" see H. Portelli, Gramsci y el Bloque Historico, Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires 1974 p. 88. However the identity of the working class remains unchanged through the hegemonic relation and therefore the description of the event is not incompatible with the Leninist concept of class alliances.

13. Laclau & Mouffe, *ibid.*

to be the central aspect of the concept, then hegemony is an alliance of classes in which the "dominant class" imposes its ideology on the "subordinated" ones. In this situation, the only innovative aspect of Gramsci's argument would have been an adaptation and refinement of this Leninist argument to the political conditions of western Europe, and the extension of the concept to include the logic of domination of the bourgeoisie. Hegemony is then a "dominant ideology"¹⁴, and fundamental issues of coercion and consent remain as problematic as they are in the Marxist-Leninist tradition.¹⁵ Central to this interpretation of the Gramscian concept of "hegemony", is a transcendental understanding of class identity: the economic identity of classes "transcend" the economic arena to replicate themselves at the political level. This logic requires the perpetuation at the political level of the "fundamental" class identity of the class "leading" the hegemonic relation throughout the hegemonic process. If the political class identity of the participants remains unchanged through the hegemonic relation, then those sectors located in a "subordinated" position in the hegemonic relation have to be either "coerced" or they must "consent" to the leadership of the dominant class.¹⁶ However, if it is possible

14. For a penetrating critique of the concept of "Dominant Ideology" see N. Abercrombie, S. Hill and B. Turner The Dominant Ideology Thesis, London, Allen & Unwin 1980

15. This reading of Gramsci is common in British interpretations of Gramsci's work. Besides the previous mentioned article by Anderson see J. Hoffman The Gramscian Challenge London, Blackwell 1984

16. The problem here is not only a class reductionist logic. There is a manifest difficulty in translating concepts. The Italian verb *dirigere* is translated into English as "to rule" or "to lead", and the adjective *dirigente* as "ruling" (*Classe dirigente* = ruling class). This form of translation overem-

to show that the Gramscian concept of hegemony implies not a perpetuation, but on the contrary, a dissolution of political class identities and a reconstitution of the participant elements in the hegemonic whole into an autonomous political unit, then the paradigmatic field of class determination is thereby broken, and the concept of hegemony is freed from the straitjacket of class reductionism. In a moment it will be argued why this interpretation¹⁷ is more productive, and that the class reductionist conceptualisation constitutes an incomplete reading of the Gramscian concept of hegemony. From the point of view of the analysis of the national phenomenon, the class reductionist interpretation adds very little to the Leninist political and strategic discussion outlined in the previous chapter, and would not have warranted a separate chapter in this work. This is because the national phenomenon remains within the paradigmatic field of determination of the participating classes, and follow-

phasizes the aspects of "domination" and "coercion" of the concept (which are clearly there), and underemphasise the educational aspects of the Italian term used by Gramsci (which in English is conveyed by different words, such as intellectual "persuasion" or "supervision"). G. Nowell Smith and Q. Hoare point out the difficulties in translating the term in the preface to their Selection from Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1971 p. XIV. However, the overemphasis on the coercitive aspects of the terms used in translation is not fully discussed. This may explain why British commentators (who on the whole rely on translations) tend to understand the Gramscian concept of hegemony as a form of domination. The difficulties in conceptualising hegemony in English are highly suggestive of the patterns of the relations of ordination and subordination in the English society at the time the language crystallized

17. Which has been convincingly developed by Laclau and Mouffe, see Laclau and Mouffe, op. cit. p. 65-71

ing Lenin, national movements must be analysed through the utilitarian logic of the transcendental demands of the workers movement (i.e., the "angle" of the working class).

If a non-class-reductionist interpretation of the Gramscian concept of Hegemony is to be attempted, it becomes necessary to evaluate the logic of the Gramscian analysis by deconstructing the array of concepts that lead to the conceptualisation of hegemony.

The point of departure in understanding Gramsci's transformation of the concept of hegemony, is his perception of human identity emerging out the process of historical development. The realisation of the human condition lies in understanding and locating oneself in the context of the relevant historical process. The point of reference is an "historical humanism", but this term must be carefully defined outside the essentialist realm of teleology. There is no predetermined essentialist perception of human nature underpinning Gramsci's analysis. "Historical humanism" is not a Hegelian definition of the "essential characteristics" of human nature, but a rigorous attempt to understand the plural nature of the process historical constitution of the identity of the human species. Gramsci denies that "human nature" is an homogeneous and trans-historical attribute, but a set of historical characteristic, related to specific temporal circumstances¹⁸.

If you think about it, the question itself "what is man?" is not an abstract or "objective" question. It is born of our reflection about ourselves and about others...¹⁹

18. D. Grisoni and R. Maggiori Guida a Gramsci Biblioteca Universali Rizzoli, Milan 1977 p. 263

19. A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 351

The implication of this premise is far reaching: if human identity is not a predetermined essential unit, but rather a plurality of moments emanating out of historical circumstances that cannot be defined a priori, then the same logic applies to all forms of human consciousness. Thus in abstract terms, there is no "false" or "real" consciousness, because there is no essential matrix to stand as a referent. This represents a momentous break with the teleological and essentialist neo-hegelian perceptions of human nature that had plagued the Marxist tradition, culminating in the works of Lukacs and Korsch. The break with neo-hegelianism is essential for a pluralist understanding of the process of historical development because it supersedes the essentialist class reductionism implied in the notion of a "Telos", and is capable of grasping the pluralist and multifarious nature of the national phenomenon.²⁰.

Consequently for Gramsci "man" does not relate to the "natural" world as a passive element in a relationship, but on the contrary, as an active component by means of work, will and technique²¹. Therefore society is not a mere mechanical juxtaposition of what Gramsci calls "Societas Hominem"²² with what he calls "Societas Rerum"²³, but an organic relation of both:

20. see G. Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness, Merlin Press, London 1971 and K. Korsch, Marxism and Philosophy, New Left Books, 1970 .

21. A. Gramsci, Quaderni del Carcere, Vol 2, Il Materialismo Storico e la Filosofia de B. Croce (MS in the standard abbreviations of the Prison notebooks), Einaudi Editore, Turin 1966, p. 28

22. Human Collective Will - Social Organisation

23. literally "Society of Things" - Gramsci means "objective

...the locus of this activity is the consciousness of a single man that knows, desires, admires, creates insofar as he does not already know, desire, admire, create, etc. conceptualised not in isolation, but enriched with the possibility of offering to other men and to society those things of which there may not knowledge off (likewise every man is a philosopher, every man is a scientist, etc.)²⁴

But humanity is not only the result of the activities of contemporary human beings, but is also the result of past experiences, which shape and give meaning to contemporary activities.

It is not enough to know the ensemble of relations as they exist in any given time or given system. They must be known genetically, for each individual is the synthesis of not only existent relations, but of the history of these relations. He is the resume of the past²⁵

The Gramscian definition of humanity combines in this way the ensemble of present relations with a "synthesis" of past experiences. Gramsci calls this combination "organic", because it links a series of discrete elements into a higher order coherent unit. Thus humanity is an ensemble of social relations which is unique to every historical period, and any comparison between human beings of different historical periods is impossible, because according to Gramsci "we are dealing with different, if not heterogeneous objects"²⁶. In the next chapter it will be shown

reality"; or in marxian terms, the process of production

24. A. Gramsci, MS, op. cit. p. 29-30, my own translation from Italian. Also quoted by by D. Grisoni and R. Maggiori, Guida a Gramsci op. cit. p. 265

how Bauer and Adler use a similar methodological principle as the point of departure for a far reaching conceptualisation of the national community. From the Gramscian point of view, human beings are both the originators of the will to change through their relation to present conditions, and simultaneously the "synthesis" of past experiences. Both dimensions are "organically" linked and generate a specific "moment", for which no a priori conceptual relation of causality could be established in the abstract to explain the particular link between the historical and contemporary elements. It is from this understanding of the development of humanity that the specific nature of the "national popular" ensemble is derived. Far from the stageist developmental logic that characterises Marxist-Leninism, the Gramscian methodology permits the conceptualisation of the specificity of a plurality of historical and contemporary events, which in turn permits us to think of the national community as a "unique", this to say, an historically particular, ensemble. To put in Gramsci's words:

...the internal relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is "original" and (in a certain sense) unique: these relations must be understood and conceived in their originality and uniqueness if one wishes to dominate them and direct them²⁷

But in order to understand the implications of this discussion for the Marxist conceptualisation of national communities, another original Gramscian concept must be discussed, that of the "historical bloc".

25. *ibid.* p. 29

26. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, *op. cit.* p. 359

27. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, *op. cit.* p.240

The Gramscian concept of "historical bloc" is perhaps one of the most innovative and original contributions to contemporary Marxist theory. But at the same time, it has generated a protracted and controversial discussion over the precise meaning of the term. The problem results from the fact that the notion of historical bloc addresses itself to one of the most delicate areas of class reductionism, that of the relation between what Marx defined in that unfortunate metaphor of "base" and "superstructure"²⁸. The problem is compounded by the fact that while Gramsci made extensive use of the term, he only provided a schematic conceptualisation.²⁹ Gramsci's conceptualisation of the historical bloc appears to be an extension of the discussion on human nature outlined above

Man is to be conceived as an Historical Bloc of purely individual and subjective elements and as a mass of objective or material elements with which the individual is in an active relationship. To transform the external world, the general system of relations, is to potentiate oneself and to develop oneself³⁰

In the same way as Gramsci argues that historical and contemporary experiences are "organically" linked in every human

28. See for example the article by N. Bobbio and subsequent criticism by J. Texier in op. cit. C. Mouffe (ed.) Gramsci and the Marxist Theory pp. 19-79

29. H. Portelli, in his very illuminating study of the concept was able to find only six theoretical references to it in the whole Prison Notebooks, and all of them appear to sketch an "organic" relation between "base" and superstructure". see H. Portelli, Gramsci y el Bloque Historico, Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires, 1974, p.8

30. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p.360

production, it subsequently becomes part of the "determining" process as a result of its "organical" link with the base. Paraphrasing Marx's Thesis on Feuerbach, Gramsci argues that once the "educator" has been determined, the educator himself becomes a factor in the process of subsequent determination³³. The one sided "exaggeration" of the so called superstructure, Gramsci calls "ideologism" which he finds in the philosophy of B. Croce, as a notion of "free floating" ideas. Consequently, once the "historical bloc" has been constituted, then it is no longer possible to conceptualise "base" and "superstructure" as separate elements in a relational whole, since they are now "organically" linked in the notion of historical bloc. Here resides the importance of the concept for the development of Marxist theory, the endless and agonising debate on relations of causality between the "base" and the "superstructure", is replaced by the notion of "historical bloc", thus rendering the use of the Marxian metaphorical terms both unnecessary and obsolete.

...The analysis of these propositions tends, I think, to reinforce the conception of historical bloc in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable without the form and ideology would be individual fancies without material forces³⁴

Thus, from the point of view of our discussion on the national question, the important novelty of this formulation lies in the fact that it frees the discussion of so called "superstructural" phenomena from narrow and abortive discussions concerning the nature of the process of determination. From

33. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 350

34. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 377

production, it subsequently becomes part of the "determining" process as a result of its "organical" link with the base. Paraphrasing Marx's Thesis on Feuerbach, Gramsci argues that once the "educator" has been determined, the educator himself becomes a factor in the process of subsequent determination³³. The one sided "exaggeration" of the so called superstructure, Gramsci calls "ideologism" which he finds in the philosophy of B. Croce, as a notion of "free floating" ideas. Consequently, once the "historical bloc" has been constituted, then it is no longer possible to conceptualise "base" and "superstructure" as separate elements in a relational whole, since they are now "organically" linked in the notion of historical bloc. Here resides the importance of the concept for the development of Marxist theory, the endless and agonising debate on relations of causality between the "base" and the "superstructure", is replaced by the notion of "historical bloc", thus rendering the use of the Marxian metaphorical terms both unnecessary and obsolete.

...The analysis of these propositions tends, I think, to reinforce the conception of historical bloc in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable without the form and ideology would be individual fancies without material forces³⁴

Thus, from the point of view of our discussion on the national question, the important novelty of this formulation lies in the fact that it frees the discussion of so called "superstructural" phenomena from narrow and abortive discussions concerning the nature of the process of determination. From

33. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 350

34. A Gramsci, Selection from Prison . Notebooks, op. cit. p. 377

Gramsci onwards, important areas outside the paradigmatic field of determination of fundamental classes are conceptualised through the notion of "historical bloc", opening new avenues for the understanding of the relations between the "social and "political " arenas by freeing the discussion from the narrow parameters of class reductionism. The other important aspect of the conceptualisation of the historical bloc from the point of view of the ongoing discussion on the national question, is that the historical bloc itself is the locus for the formation of national identities. But before discussing this point, it becomes necessary to briefly evaluate Gramsci's analysis of the role of the intellectuals in the historical bloc.

Every social group that performs an essential function in the process of production creates, according to Gramsci, a group or strata" of intellectuals which gives "homogeneity" and "awareness" of its own function not only at the economic levels, but also at social and political fields³⁵. This is a significant departure from earlier class reductionist perceptions of the intellectuals, which invariably located them as part of the upper classes, resulting from the classical Marxian division between Manual and Mental Labour³⁶. Gramsci suggests a novel reassessment of intellectuals, by distinguishing the intellectual aspect "inherent" in every form of human existence from the intellectual "function". What distinguishes in concrete societies "intellectuals" from "non intellectuals" is what he calls "the professional function of the category of intellectuals". This distinction results from the concrete historical location of the intellectual function³⁷. The intellectuals are not in them-

35. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 5

36. See K. Marx The German Ideology, part I, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1974 pp. 51-52

37. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit pp. 8-9

selves a social class, but are a social strata related to one of the fundamental social classes. The "organic intellectuals" of fundamental classes represent the ideas and aspirations of their respective class, and in the case of the leading class in the hegemonic relation, they constitute what Gramsci calls the "ideological bloc".³⁸ This ideological bloc is the way in which the intellectuals of the subordinated classes are "won over" to the hegemonic system, creating a medium through which the intellectuals of the leading class in the hegemonic relation become "examples" and "orientators" for the intellectual of the subordinated classes, incorporating in this way the subordinated classes to the hegemonic relation via the incorporation of their own intellectuals. However, Gramsci acknowledges that every new class or intellectual stratum does not emerge in a vacuum, but finds cultural and intellectual categories already in existence. These categories appear to delineate the formal continuity of the society in question, regardless of any changes introduced by the newly arrived class or intellectual strata³⁹. The bearers of these "old" cultural and intellectual categories Gramsci calls "traditional intellectuals", and the example that Gramsci gives in the Italian case is that of the Catholic priesthood. The organic intellectuals of the leading class asserts its "intellectual and moral leadership" by incorporating the "traditional" and "organic" intellectuals of the subordinated classes into the historical bloc through a process that Gramsci calls "transformismo". This is usually a two staged process in which the values and interests of the intellectuals not organically linked with the leading class are firstly "disarmed" of their contradictory or antagonistic positions vis-a-vis the historical bloc and secondly, integrated as much as possible into the broad positions of the historic bloc⁴⁰. In this way the

38. *ibid.* p. 60-61

39. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, *op. cit.* p.7

hegemony of the leading class is secured, by defusing and incorporating to the hegemonic group the subordinated strata, via the incorporation of their intellectuals. But if the historic bloc is to be successful in the task of integrating the intellectuals of the subordinated strata, it must broaden its image as much as possible, so that it becomes acceptable to the widest possible audience. In other words, it must broaden the "narrow corporative interests" of the leading class or the existing hegemonic group to the point in which it must inspire popular support and be understood to be representing the aspirations of the community as a whole. At this point Gramsci introduces a new and highly original analytical category that will make possible the conceptualisation of the identity of the expanding historical bloc beyond the confines of the paradigmatic field of the participant strata. This new concept will also be of cardinal importance for Gramsci's conceptualisation of the national arena: Collective Will. According to Gramsci, the Collective Will is a point of "practical articulation", creating a higher order unit of the non-antagonistic social forces that transcends and dissolves the "economic corporate" interests of the participant strata. As will be shown in a moment, this is the national identity.

Any formation of a national-popular collective will is impossible unless the great mass of peasant farmers bursts simultaneously into political life. That was Machiavelli's intention through the reform of the militia, and it was achieved by the Jacobins in the French Revolution. That Machiavelli understood it reveals a precocious Jacobinism that is the (more or less fertile) germ of his conception of national revolution. All history from 1815 onwards shows the efforts of the traditional classes to prevent the formation of a collective will of this kind, and to maintain "economic

40. *ibid.* p. 58-59. Note in particular the historical example of the Risorgimento.

corporate" power in an international system of passive equilibrium.⁴¹

If the historical arguments are left aside for the moment⁴², what Gramsci is arguing here is simply the dissolution of fundamental aspects of class reductionism at the level of the political arena and at the same time, identifying a set of political protagonists that operate outside the paradigmatic field of class determination. It is through the actions of these diverse political actors cemented into a higher order unit called "collective will" and in the context of an historically specific framework called "historical bloc" that processes of political transformation take, or do not take, place, as in the case of the example above. In other words, the fundamental locus of political activity must be located outside the paradigmatic field of class determination. The economic field is only one among others and there is no discernible reason, for Gramsci, to privilege its influence in the political arena.

Now it is possible to return to Gramsci's discussion of hegemony. If the interpretation of hegemony as class alliances is accepted, then the historical bloc is merely a political replication of the outcome of the relation between classes at a given conjuncture, and the intellectuals induce either forms of "false consciousness" or "a scientific understanding of reality". The socialist component of the collective will is then the expression of higher levels of class consciousness as represented in the "enlightened" dimension of that unfortunate classical Marxist dichotomy- class in itself, class for itself, and in the various schools of Hegelian Marxism. The Gramscian imaginative richness

41. A. Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 132
boldscript is my own.

42. They will be discussed in the next section of this chapter

and diversity in conceptualising the political arena is then lost to the dogma of an increasingly irrelevant orthodoxy. From the point of view of our discussion of the national question, the national-popular is merely a conjunctural strategic device which will be ditched as the hegemonic proletariat achieves higher levels of "class consciousness".

If, on the contrary, a non class reductionist understanding of Gramscian concept of hegemony is adopted, then it is possible to grasp with the help of the concepts of "historical bloc" and "collective will", how historically specific elements can be successfully incorporated into an analysis of a global international-state situation. In the context of the historical bloc, and through the activities of the organic intellectuals, the hegemonic force develops a collective will that cements, leads and transforms the political arena, transforming its corporate character in the process. It is however clear that in the work of Gramsci that the leading force in the hegemonic relation must always be one of the fundamental classes, severely limiting the flexibility of the concept because the hegemony of the fundamental class is not the result of the circumstantial relation of social and/or political forces, but has an ultimate ontological foundation⁴³ in the privileged position of the process of production. The implication of this reductionist aspect of the conceptualisation of hegemony, is that the hegemonic unit is restricted to be either led by the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. This limitation perhaps makes the Gramscian concept of hegemony less fruitful from the the above discussed imaginative ways of conceptualising the connection between the social and the political arenas - the concepts of historical bloc and collective will. In this sense the seminal work of Laclau and Mouffe represents a welcome move beyond the limitations of the concept of hegemony in the Gramscian discussion.

43. Laclau & Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, op. cit. p. 69

In what follows, the Gramscian conceptualisation of the national question will be discussed, attempting to locate the origin of the concept of *National-Popular* - Gramsci's original contribution to the Marxist analysis of the national phenomenon - in the context of the Italian state's historical development.

The Gramscian conceptualisation of the National Question

It is always important to recall this early phase of Gramsci's astonishing biography. He is the greatest of western Marxists. But it cannot be without significance that he was also a product of the West's most remote periphery, and of conditions which, half a century later, it became fashionable to call "Third World". No comparable western intellectual came from such a background. He was a barbed gift of the backwoods to the metropolis, and some aspects of his originality always reflected this distance.⁴⁴

There can be little doubt that the centrality of the so-called "Southern Question" in the Italian state, as well as his Sardinian origins played a crucial role in Gramsci's thinking on the national question. The crucial argument that runs like a thread through Gramsci's historical work is the manifest failure of the Italian bourgeoisie, from the Risorgimento onwards, to develop the newly centralised Italian state into a homogeneous

44. Tom Nairn -Antonu su Gobbu, in Ann Showstack Sassoon, op. cit. p. 161. The title of the article is in Sardinian language (which is spoken by the majority of the Sardinian population) meaning Antonio The Hump-backed, a reference to a handicap that made him both the object of fear and mockery in the superstitious and fatalistic peasant culture of his country of origin. This bitter experience was undoubtedly important for his subsequent discussions of folklore and popular culture.

national community. According to Gramsci, the northern industrial bourgeoisie subjected southern Italy to the status of "exploited colonies"⁴⁵, creating a deep seated division and antagonism which effectively precluded the crystallization of an Italian national identity. This cleavage between north and south, not only resulted in the exploitation of the southern peasants masses, but also created on the one hand, an attitude of rejection and prejudice among the workers of the north, and on the other hand, a stagnant society and culture that resulted from

...a monstrous agrarian bloc which as a whole acts as an intermediary and overseer for northern capital and the big banks. Its sole aim is to preserve the status quo. Inside there is no intellectual light, no programme, no urge towards betterment and progress⁴⁶

Gramsci is not only critical of the reactionary nature of the "agrarian bloc" in southern Italy, but also of the inability of sections of the northern working class to overcome its "corporative hangovers" and prejudicial attitudes towards the southern peasant society⁴⁷. Gramsci is particularly critical of the support given to the "southernist" views by leading members of the Italian Socialist Party. This "southernist" view shows remarkable similarities with the concept "Orientalism" evaluated in E. Said's noteworthy book, a concept that results from the discussions of some Western "experts" on Middle Eastern societies. These arguments are usually presented in the cloak of

45. A Gramsci, The Southern Question, in The modern Prince & other Writings, International Publishers, New York, 1968 p. 28

46. *ibid.*, p. 45-46

47. *ibid.* p.36

a "culturalist" analysis, and invariably present the "backward" oriental culture as the causal factor for underdevelopment.⁴⁸ This ideology also impregnated the works of Bernstein and other revisionists leaders⁴⁹, and it is probably through the revisionist writings that the Italian socialists became acquainted with these ideas. According to Gramsci, this "southernist" view was also influential in the "political orientation" and "general ideology" of the proletariat itself, through the "multifarious" forms of bourgeois propaganda among the masses of the North. The essential arguments of the "southernist" position are defined by Gramsci in the following way:

...the southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or complete barbarians by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault is not to be found in the capitalist system or in any other historical cause, but is the fault of nature which made the southerner lazy, incapable, criminal, barbarous, moderating his stepmother's fate by the purely individual outburst of great geniuses, who are like solitary palms in an arid and sterile desert....the Socialist Party gave its blessing to the whole "southernist" literature of the clique of the so called positivist writers....who in articles, sketches, stories, novels, books of impressions and memoirs repeated in various forms the same refrain; once again "science" had turned to crushing the wretched and the exploited, but this time it

48. For a penetrating discussion on the concept of "Orientalism" see E. Said Orientalism, Routledge & Kegan, London 1978 and B. S. Turner, Marx and the End of Orientalism, Allen & Unwin London 1978

49. For a discussion of the Revisionist conceptualisation of the national question, see chapter 3 p...

was cloaked in socialist colours, pretending to be the science of the proletariat.⁵⁰

While Gramsci argued that the Turin communists reacted energetically against this ideology, there is no doubt that these views remain influential even today. The *double entendre* phrase quoted by Gramsci as characteristic of the hatred against workers of the north by southern immigrants - *Italy is divided into Northerners and filthy Southerners*⁵¹, continues to be used in contemporary Italian. This sharp north-south divide prevented the consolidation of an historical bloc which, according to Gramsci, must be able to transcend "prejudices and corporative demands" of the working class and constitute a higher unit capable of representing the desires and aspirations of the community as a whole. However, the Italian working class would not be capable of constituting the historical bloc through which the hegemonic higher order unit will come into existence until it transcends its prejudices and constitutes a cultural community through which the subordinated peasants and the "southern masses" will be integrated into the national culture. In other words, the working class must according to Gramsci, construct a new historical bloc that must take the form of the National Community, something that the Italian bourgeoisie conspicuously failed to do.

For Gramsci the hegemonic unit constituted by a fundamental

50. A. Gramsci, The Southern Question, op. cit. p. 31 .

51. ibid. p. 41. The translator of the "Notes on the Southern Question" rightly argues in a footnote that it is impossible convey in English the bitter witticism of the contextual use of the referents *sudici* (southerners) and *nordici* (northerners) in the quoted phrase. This idiomatic peculiarity is highly indicative of the complex and persistent nature of the social problem it represents.

class is an international phenomenon insofar as it represents the development of a particular mode of production. The historical bloc is a national phenomenon insofar as it is the result of a unique historical situation, and it becomes the locus for the formation of a community of culture through which the hegemonic unit comes into existence in a context delimited by an historical, and at times, a geographical situation. In this sense, the cultural aspect is of crucial importance:

Culture, at its various levels, unifies in a series of strata, to the extent that they come into contact with each other, a greater or lesser number of individuals who understand each other's mode of expression in differing degrees, etc....From this one can deduce the importance of the "cultural aspect", even in practical (collective) activity. An historical act can only be performed by "collective man", and this presupposes the attainment of a "cultural social" unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together in a single aim...⁵²

Common culture is then for Gramsci a crucial aspect in the crystallization of a community. In Gramscian terms, no hegemonic unit will emerge in any given society without claiming to represent the society as whole. A fundamental class becomes the organiser of an hegemonic unit when in the context of the historical bloc, the intellectuals and popular masses establish an "organic" link in which culture in the intellectual sense (knowledge) develops a connection with culture in its "anthropological" sense (shared experiences). In Gramsci's terms, the organic intellectuals of the working class must not only "know", but also "understand" and "feel" the link with the popular masses.

52. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 349

If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation, between leaders and led, the rulers and the ruled is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then can there take place an exchange of individual elements between rulers and ruled, leaders (dirigenti) and led, and can the shared life be realised which alone is a social force- with the creation of the "historical bloc"⁵³

The constitution of an historical bloc, implies a radical and novel reconstruction of the relational nature and identity of different units of the social formation under consideration. It implies firstly the constitution of an "organic" link. This link in turn, constitutes a higher order grouping in which participant units merge their cultural identities, forming a higher order common culture that becomes the common denominator of the historical bloc. Consequently, in the same way as for Gramsci a class does not take state power, but it becomes the state⁵⁴, the historical bloc does not take over the nation but it becomes a new national community. .

To understand how this process takes place, Gramsci reverts to analyzing the French revolution, in which he sees a successful case of the formation of a "national-popular" historic bloc, and the case of his contemporary Italy, where he argues that the bourgeoisie had conspicuously failed to constitute this "national-popular" historic bloc.

53. A. Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p 418

54. Laclau & Mouffe, op. cit. p. 69

France...experienced a great popular reformation in the eighteenth century with the Enlightenment, Voltarianism and the Encyclopaedia. This reformation preceded and accompanied the Revolution of 1789. It really was a matter here of a great intellectual and moral reformation of the French people, more complete than the German Lutheran reformation, because it also embraced the great peasant masses in the countryside and had a distinct secular basis and attempted to replace religion with a completely secular ideology represented by the national and patriotic bond. (emphasis added)⁵⁵

According to Gramsci, the bourgeoisie in France emerged as a fundamental class at the economic level, but did not achieve political power directly as a result of this situation. It achieved political power only because it was capable of constituting itself as the "leading class" of the emerging hegemonic grouping before the actual revolution took place. The bourgeoisie achieved, according to Gramsci, its hegemonic position because it transcended its immediate corporate interests and presented itself as the representative of the third estate. In terms of its political discourse the bourgeoisie transcended its "economic corporative" interests by constructing the notion of "popular sovereignty" which gave other subordinated strata a sense of representation. Consequently "national sovereignty" and "popular sovereignty" became interchangeable terms, because the national community became the sovereign through the concept of popular representation⁵⁶. In this sense, the emerging historical bloc constituted the national community and this was done by

55. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 394-95.

56. A. Gramsci, Letteratura e Vita Nazionale, (LVN in the standard abbreviation of the Prison Notebooks) Quaderni del Carcere 5, Einaudi Editore Turin 1966 p. 105

creating an "organic" link between the intellectuals and the popular masses

More than any other national literature there exists in French philosophical literature treatments of "common sense": this is due to the more strictly "popular national" character of French culture, in other words, the fact that the intellectuals ...tend more to approach the people in order to guide it ideologically and keep it linked with the leading group.⁵⁷

The responsibility for the development of national-popular link between the organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie and the popular masses fell upon the Jacobins. Before the revolution the Third Estate was not, according to Gramsci, a homogeneous stratum. Gradually a new intellectual elite emerged, which was not concerned only with the sectarian interests of the bourgeoisie, but tended to construct a political image of the bourgeoisie.

57. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 421. In an enigmatic footnote on the same page, the editors and translators argue that the Gramscian concept of national popular is *...one of the most interesting and also most widely criticised ideas in Gramsci's thought...it is perhaps best taken as describing a sort of "historic bloc" between national and popular aspirations in the formation of which the intellectuals, in the wide, Gramscian use of the term play an essential mediating role.* To this fairly accurate description, the editors add: *...It is important to stress however, that it is a cultural concept, relating to the position of the masses within the culture of the nation, and radically alien to any form of populism or "national socialism"* . It is difficult to ascertain the meaning of this comment. National-Popular is a populist concept "par excellence" and it will be absurd to suggest any connection between Gramsci and "National Socialism".

geoisie as the hegemonic force of all subordinated strata. According to Gramsci, the principal tasks of the Jacobins were to annihilate the counter-revolutionary forces, and more importantly from the point of view of the ongoing discussion on the national question, to enlarge as much as possible cadres of the political grouping led by the bourgeoisie. This meant identifying the specific requirements of all forces that were not in contradiction to the leadership of the bourgeoisie, in order to unite them under the patriotic banners of the revolution, creating in this way a cultural-patriotic link that represented all popular forces, including large sections of the peasantry.⁵⁸ In this way the Jacobins managed to absorb into the revolution most sectors not directly connected with the "ancien regime". There was however, one important exception: the ethno-national minorities. Certain areas within the French state inhabited by non-Parisian-French speaking communities resisted their incorporation into the culture of the emerging French nation under the leadership of the Jacobins. This was particularly the case in the area called today "Euzkadi North" and in Brittany. The "Breton Question" proved to be more important than the drive to create "a single and compact" French nation.

The resistance of the Vendée properly speaking is linked to the national question, which had become envenomed among the peoples of Brittany and in general among those alien to the slogan of the "single and indivisible republic" and to the policy of bureaucratic-military centralisation- a slogan and a policy that the Jacobins could not renounce without committing suicide⁵⁹

The implications of this analysis for the ethno-national

58. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 78

59. *ibid.*, p. 79

minorities will be discussed in a moment. In terms of the Gramscian discussion of the role of the Jacobins in consolidating the French revolution, their main achievement was to develop a "national patriotic" collective will. In the Gramscian terminology, the term "Jacobinism" defines a political movement capable of creating a "collective will" that transcends the notion of a pure class alliances, to constitute a form of political subjectivity that as such has no necessary class belonging. Gramsci illustrates this point by arguing that during the French Revolution the Jacobins were more "advanced" than the French Bourgeoisie at the time, creating irreversible "fait accomplis" and driving the bourgeois forward with "kicks in the backside"⁶⁰. Notions like "La Patrie", and the sense of belonging to the French nation became crucial elements in the formation of the new historical bloc. The energetic actions of these intellectuals created the strongest possible links that paved the way for the a stable hegemonic grouping under the leadership of the Bourgeoisie

For not only did they organise a bourgeois government, i.e, make the Bourgeoisie the dominant class -they did more. They created the bourgeois state, made the Bourgeoisie the leading hegemonic class of the nation, in other words gave the new state a permanent basis and created the compact French Nation.(emphasis added)⁶¹

However, the Italian case presented a different picture. the historical inheritance of the peninsula only allowed the formation of an Italian nation at a relatively late period, and the local bourgeoisie was too weak and had to forge alliances with "cosmopolitan elements" such as the Catholic church, who

60. ibid., p. 77

61. ibid. p. 79

"sabotaged" the formation of a national-popular historical bloc. The ideological causes for this "retarded" formation of the Italian nation was the "unfortunate fact" that the Italian peninsula was both the center of the Roman Empire and the spiritual and political center for the Catholic church.⁶² At the time of the French Revolution the cosmopolitan ideology of the catholic church dominated those parts of the Italian peninsula which were not under the control of foreign powers. This resulted in a cast of intellectuals that were not attached to the national popular culture as in the case of France.

The Italian intellectuals did not have a popular-national character, but one that was cosmopolitan on the model of the church; it was a matter of indifference to Leonardo whether he sold the fortifications of Florence to Duke Valentino.⁶³

Following this situation, the Italian intellectuals according to Gramsci responded to the humanistic and cosmopolitan nature of the Greco-Roman tradition. These intellectuals were oriented towards "encyclopedic" notions of culture, *that invariably put them in a position distant from that of the popular masses*. At the political level, once the process of Italian unification started, the bourgeoisie was too weak to create a Jacobin party modeled in the French experience. *In Italy a Jacobin Party was never formed*, creating instead an historical bloc with the Catholic church, and this greatly diminished the possibilities for the formation of a national-popular historical bloc.⁶⁴ Gramsci devoted a great deal of attention to an analysis of the reasons for the non-existence of a national-popular bloc

62. *ibid.* p. 52-54

63. *ibid.* ff. p.56

64. *ibid.* p. 82

in the Italian peninsula, since he believed that the ensuing national cultural cleavage was partially responsible for the emergence of Fascism.⁶⁵ However the discussion of this interesting issue transcend the objectives of this section which is to evaluate the Gramscian conceptualisation of the national question. It will suffice to note that Gramsci concludes from his detailed historical analysis, that the Italian bourgeoisie failed to construct a "national popular historical bloc" and to generate a "national-popular collective will" as it was the case in France. But, according to Gramsci, the working class must succeed where the bourgeoisie failed. Because of the cosmopolitan nature of the bourgeois Italian intellectuals, because of the failure of the bourgeoisie to constitute itself as the "national class" and the related failure to constitute a "national-popular historical bloc" and a "National Popular Collective Will", The working Class occupies alone the role of the national class.

Here lies the meaning of the quotation at the beginning of this chapter. The working class is called upon to be the fundamental class that builds an hegemonic grouping with the peasants and other subordinated strata, which will make possible a "national-popular historical bloc" and crystallizes a "national collective will" through the activities of the "new Jacobins" the PCI. As Eric Hobsbawn observes

Gramsci's strategy follows from his concept - quite original in Marxism, of the working class as part of the nation. Indeed, I believe that he is so far the only Marxist thinker who provides us with a basis of integrating the nation as an historical and social reality into Marxist theory. He breaks with the habit of seeing it as "the national question", something external to the working class movement, towards which we have to define our attitude.⁶⁶

65. A large part of the volume on the Risorgimento, in the Quaderni dal Carcere is devoted to this issue.

Thus the Communist Party, "the new Jacobins", as heirs of the Machiavellian insights and through their role as "organic" intellectuals of the working class, are the only ones in the Italian context capable of bridging the gap between "National" and "Popular" culture, between culture as "knowledge" and culture as "the collective experience of the community". They are also the only ones capable of reconstituting the dispersed "collective wills" of north and south, peasant and worker, and the intellectuals with all the rest, into a higher order "National Popular Will", a newly created political subject that as such transcends the class location of its participant elements.

The above is the non-class-reductionist reading of Gramsci's work on the national question. It is only possible through a non-class-reductionist reading of Gramsci's work, to derive a theory on the specificity of the national community. If a class reductionist position is maintained, then the "national-popular historical bloc" is only an instrumental and strategic alliance of forces, intentionally designed to secure the leadership of the party of the proletariat in a system of class alliances determined by the paradigmatic positions of the participating political class agents. While both readings are equally possible, the non class reductionist position allows for an understanding that captures the specificity of the multifarious national phenomenon at its cultural and political levels.

66. E. Hobsbawn, "Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory", in op. cit. A. Sassoon (ed.) Approaches to Gramsci, p. 29. It is extraordinary that E. Hobsbawn, the most prominent contemporary Marxist historian, argues that Gramsci was *the only Marxist thinker who provides us with a basis of integrating the nation as an historical and social reality to the Marxist theory*. Why does he ignore the 600 plus pages of the original and pioneering work of his fellow Viennese Otto Bauer?.

The non class reductionist interpretation also provides an image of a more "coherent" Gramsci, particularly at the level of a theoretical discussion on the national question, since the characterisation of "national popular" equally applies to historical blocs that make possible a proletariat or bourgeois leadership of the hegemonic grouping. This conceptualisation is incoherent in a class reductionist discourse because all "superstructural" elements must have a class belonging. It is only through a definition of the national arena that transcends the paradigmatic field of class positions that the above conceptualisation maintains its theoretical coherence.

From the above discussion it appears that Gramsci had successfully transcended the paradigmatic limitations of classical Marxism in evaluating the national phenomenon. However a number of difficulties remain, and these are best exemplified in the way in which Gramsci relates to the ethno national and linguistic minorities in both the French and Italian state. The Gramscian conceptualisation of the national community has the major advantage over the analyses developed by the theoreticians of the Second and Third International (Austro-Marxists excluded), in that it is capable of understanding the political importance of the cultural dimension as well as conceptualising a form of autonomy for the political realm - in itself not an insubstantial achievement. However, by overcoming one form of reductionism - that of economism - Gramsci appears to be privileging another dimension - the political arena - instead of constructing a non reductionist analysis of the national phenomenon. The analysis of the national phenomenon in Gramsci is geared towards the search for mechanisms that will consolidate the cultural uniformity of the national state, rather than towards the evaluation of the plurality of cultural and national existence. The "nation" and the "national popular" are important only insofar as they are vehicles for the formation of a new form of political subjectivity: "The national popular collective will". Similarly, culture, in its various meanings, is only analysed in its

functionality to the political dimension. For Gramsci national state, national language and the organisation of culture are different aspects of the same process:

The problem of the intellectual and moral unity of the nation and the state is to be found in the unity of language⁶⁷

Gramsci castigates the Italian bourgeoisie for the same reason that he praises the French Jacobins: the consolidation of a single national-popular collective will in the form of one nation in one state. Having had first-hand experience of the perils of national oppression in his native Sardinia, an oppression that is adequately documented in the writings on the "southern question", Gramsci then praises the Jacobins for their energy and action in consolidating the French nation and state, choosing to ignore that this consolidation also took the form of a ruthless suppression of national and linguistic minorities. The Jacobin slogan for a "one and indivisible" republic, and the related zeal for the elimination of "Les Patois": Breton, Catalan, Occitan, Euzkera and other languages that vanished without trace, generated a ruthless repression exercised against those mainly landless peasant peoples that spoke a different language from the Parisian French. *Aux Armes Citoyens!*, was not only the battle cry against the nobility and reaction, but also against those unfortunate national minorities whose wish was to maintain a separate language and cultural heritage. In Chapter 2 the pernicious effects of the "Jacobin Model" on Marx and Engels' conceptualisation of the national phenomenon was discussed. It will be sufficient only to recall the Jacobin report on *the need to destroy rural dialects (patois) and universalise the use of the French language*⁶⁸. The net effect of the Jacobin policy was to

67. A. Gramsci, Quaderni 21, 1934-5: 19, quoted by F. Lo Piparo Lingua, Intellectuali, Egemonia in Gramsci, Laterza, Roma 1979 p. 155-56, my own translation from Italian.

create a tradition of intolerance and state centralisation, which caused the almost total cultural obliteration of the non "Parisian-French speaking" national minorities.⁶⁹ To be fair, Gramsci shows some inconsistency over this issue. On the one hand, he argued without elaborating that for the Jacobins to compromise to the demands of the Vendée the slogan of "a single and indivisible republic" was like "committing suicide"⁷⁰.

Except for certain marginal areas, where the national (and linguistic) differentiation was very great, the agrarian question proved stronger than the aspirations to local autonomy. Rural France accepted the hegemony of Paris.⁷¹

On the other hand, in the Italian case, he gave signs of being aware of the "ethnic plurality" of the population of the Italian state, denouncing the the drives towards centralisation of the Socialist party. In a letter written in 1923 to L'Unità, he argued that Italy should become a "Federal Republic of Peasants and Workers", and in 1925 he delivers a letter from the Krestintern⁷², to the congress of the Sardinian Action Party

68. See Chapter .2 p. 54

69. This pattern of tight state centralisation initiated by the Jacobins is not unconnected with subsequent French colonial policies, of which the political euphemism *Territoires d'Ultramer* is an adequate condensation. In this sense the problematic process of independence of Algeria and today's problems in New Caledonia are not unconnected with the slogan of a "one and indivisible republic".

70. See footnote 61

71. A. Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p.79

72. This is the Peasants Communist International

(PSdA), which finishes with the slogan Long Live the Sardinian Republic of Peasants and Workers in the Italian Soviet Federation!", and the Sardinian national slogan *Forza Paris*⁷³.

However, at the level of theoretical analysis, Gramsci's work on the national question is fundamentally geared towards formulating an analysis of the process of consolidation of the cultural and political unity of a national state, in order to conceptualise the conditions for the formation of a "national popular collective will" that has the ability to lead the nationally united social formation into a stable socialist system. Formulated in this way, there is in this conceptual framework little room for national and cultural-linguistic pluralism within the boundaries of the state.

As emerges from the previous discussion, within the confines of the national state, Gramsci attaches great importance to national culture. The historical specificity of the national community is the determinant of its cultural uniqueness. The capacity of the hegemonic grouping to "lead" the national community is crucially related to its ability to incorporate this national uniqueness into its "world view", this is to say, to constitute itself as the "most complete" expression of the identity of the national community. While for Gramsci the leading position in an hegemonic grouping is always played by an "international" fundamental class, the internal relations of the a nation (state) are "original" and "unique"⁷⁴. But from this

73. quoted by S. Salvi, Le Nazioni Proibite, Vallecchi Editore, Florence 1973, p. 576

74. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p.240

emphasis on the national dimension, Gramsci distinguishes between "national" and "nationalism", a distinction that probably emerged out of the specific conditions of Fascist Italy. While half a century later it is no longer necessary to elaborate a conceptual distinction between "nationalism" and Fascism", Gramsci's observation remains relevant. In criticising an article by Julien Benda in the journal Nouvelles Litteraires, who repeats the question asked by an earlier writer: *N'est-ce pas en se nationalisant qu'une littérature prend une signification plus universelle, un interet plus humainement general?*⁷⁵. To this, Gramsci replies:

For Benda, taste which is universal, is best served by being as particular as possible. But one thing is to be particular, another is to preach particularism. This is the mistake of nationalism, and on the basis of this mistake it often pretends to be universalist....to be national is therefore different from being a nationalist. Goethe was a German "national", Stendhal a French "national", neither were "nationalists". An idea is not effectual if it is not expressed in some way, artistically, this is to say, in a particularistic form. But is wit particular insofar as it is national?. Nationality is a primary particularity, but great writers particularise themselves again among their fellow nationals and this second particularisation is not an extension of the first. Renan, as Renan, is not at all a necessary consequence of French spirit; he is in relation to this spirit an original, arbitrary (as Bergson says) unpredictable event. Still Renan remains French, as man because he is man remains a mammal, but his value as that of man, resides precisely in his difference from the group into which he was born.⁷⁶

75. In the original in French, *Is it not true that in becoming national, a literature takes a more universal signification, a more human general interest?*

For Gramsci then the critique of nationalism as an all embracing transcendental category cannot be based on an equally transcendental cosmopolitan (non-national) universalism. National locations are historically "given" attributes, but as such they say little about subjective individual characteristics. So far his observation is not questionable. However, Gramsci appears to imply national culture and subjective individuality are unconnected, he reasons that ideas are national in "form" but their "content" transcends nationality. While at a high level of generalisation this may be correct (but as it will be shown in a moment, not for the reasons sustained by Gramsci), the "form" or to be more precise "the signifier" is not irrelevant to the condition of "the signified" or the "referent". However, as contemporary post-structural linguistics remind us, relations between signifiers, signified and referents are not "fixed", but there is a constant flux through the subversion of boundaries between "meaning" and "content". The fact that signifiers are unfixed, does not mean that they are irrelevant to the condition of the "signified". Consequently, the expression of "abstract ideas" is not irrelevant to to the "national -cultural" conditions through which they are expressed, even if that connection is precarious and circumstantial, and meanings are constantly subverted. It is this constant unfixity of meaning that explains the "transcendentality" of the ideas referred to by Gramsci, not any intrinsic, transcendental "universal condition" attached to them as Gramsci appears to imply.

However, Gramsci acknowledges the different referential meaning in different languages of the concepts of "national" and "popular", which appears to show a certain sensitivity for historically conditioned "subversion" of meanings

 76. A. Gramsci Gli Intelletuali e l'Organizzazione della Cultura, Editore Riuniti, Rome, 1977 p. 87 My own translation from Italian

It must be noticed that in many languages "national" and "popular" are synonyms or almost (this is so in Russian, in German where "volkisch" has a more intimate, racial meaning, the same as in the slavic languages in general; in French "national" has a meaning in which the concept of "popular" is already more politically elaborated, because it is linked to the concept of "sovereignty". Popular sovereignty and national sovereignty have the same value, or they had it in the past). In Italy, the term "nation" has a very restricted ideological meaning, which in any case does not coincide with "popular", because in Italy intellectuals are remote from the people, this is to say, from the "nation". They are instead linked with a tradition of caste, which has not as yet been broken by a popular movement from below⁷⁷

From the above quotation it is clear that Gramsci was aware of the historical determination of the different forms of conceptualising the boundaries of the national community. An understanding of the specificity of national existence is clearly derived from the different ways of conceptualising the relationship between the "national" and the "popular", creating in this way a conceptual space that makes it possible to encapsulate the political specificity of every national community. For Gramsci, the "national popular" appear to be overdetermined by both, a "universal" dimension in the form of the international mode of production and the class that leads the hegemonic grouping, and a "particular" dimension in the form of the historical and cultural specificity that becomes the foundation of the historic bloc.

Is it possible to say that Gramsci broke with the class reductionism of the Marxist-Leninist tradition? The answer to

77. A. Gramsci, Letteratura e Vita Nazionale, op. cit. p. 105. my own translation from Italian.

this question must be inconclusive. It is however possible to say that Gramsci's contribution to the development of Marxist theory is a set of analytical categories that enables us to think a conceptual framework that breaks with class reductionism - but Gramsci himself fell short of this break. The notions of "historical bloc" and "collective will" permits a conceptualisation of the political arena outside the paradigmatic field of class determination, given that their configuration is not ultimately reducible to the determination of any of the fundamental forces in the process of production. This also allows a conceptualisation of the national phenomenon outside the parametrical constraints of class reductionism in the form of the "national-popular collective will", which permits an understanding of the multifarious forms of national existence at both, the political and cultural levels. This two-dimensional understanding is however limited by Gramsci's commitment to a consolidation of a national state that provides the conditions for a process of "expansive hegemony". In this sense, the leading force in every hegemonic situation is a "fundamental class" - the bourgeoisie or the proletariat- and the reasons for this ontological privilege have little to do with the conjunctural analysis, but are the direct result of the an epistemologically defined process of class determination- the essence of class reductionism-. As Laclau and Mouffe argue.

To assert, however, that hegemony must always correspond to a fundamental economic class is not merely to reaffirm determination in the last instance by the economy; it is also to predicate that, insofar as the economy constitutes an insurmountable limit to society's potential for hegemonic recomposition, the constitutive logic of the hegemonic space is not itself hegemonic. Here the naturalist prejudice, which sees the economy as a homogeneous space unified by necessary laws, appears once again with all its force.⁷⁸

78. E. Laclau & C. Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, op.

Given this situation, the interpretation of the work of Gramsci could be equally located in a class reductionist and a non-class-reductionist perspective, since both elements - in a tense and contradictory way - coexist in the work of Gramsci. In terms of the ongoing discussion on the national question, if a class reductionist perspective is adopted, then the discussion makes some marginal advances in relation to the conceptual methodological achievements and problems of the Marxist Leninist tradition. The discussion is focused in Western style democratic states, and the strategic importance of the national arena for the avant garde party is dully established. But the connection of the working class to the nation continues to be an insurmountable problem. However, if a non-class-reductionist interpretation of the Gramscian analysis of the national question is adopted, this analysis offers the possibility of conceptualising the centrality of the national arena in defining the field of political activity for both: the working class and the hegemonic grouping. The strategy for the construction of a new historical bloc is designed to convert this historical bloc into the national community, so that it could be the basis for an integral state and an expanding hegemonic process. But this last aspect points towards one of the most important limitations of the Gramscian discussion of the national question. The national community is important only insofar as it becomes a vehicle for the formation of a new political subjectivity in the form of the "national-popular collective will". In this sense, the national phenomenon is important only to the extent that it becomes the basis for the formation of a cohesive national community that will be able to sustain a national state. The Leninist traces are evident. Gramsci's conceptualisation of the "national-popular" is a decisive and momentous advance on Lenin's theory of the right of nations to self-determination because of its novel

cit p.69

conceptualization of culture and the intellectuals, but at the same time, it remains trapped in the Leninist bias towards "statism"- the achievement and consolidation of a single state encompassing one single national community. If the non-class-reductionist perspective is accepted, Gramsci achieved an important break with key aspects of class reductionism, but this is done at the cost of giving the political arena a privileged position. The logic of the Gramscian theory is to conceptualise the multidimensionality of the political arena, and its ultimate goal is to construct a stable foundation for an historical bloc that sustains a socialist and democratic, but not necessarily plural hegemonic grouping. The logic of political unity requires an "organic" fusion of the elements of the historical bloc, which in most cases means the assimilation of the culture of the minorities⁷⁹ to that of the majorities. Pluralism is lost in the process of "organic" fusion. Thus, the traces of Marxist-Leninism are to be found Gramsci's blindness to those aspects of the national phenomenon that are not connected with the urge to form a cohesive national state, as it is in the case of the ethno national minorities that exist in every Western state. In this sense the plurality the national arena remains outside the Gramscian conceptualisation of the "National Popular", blinding the theory to an important dimension of national existence. This blindness to pluralism is evident in Gramsci's essay with the suggestive title: *Hegemony of Western Culture over the whole World Culture*

Even if one admits that other cultures have had an importance and significance in the process of "hierarchical" unification of world civilisation (and this should be admitted without question), they have had a universal value only in so far as they have become constituent elements of

79. Which are not only "national", but "ethnic" as distinct from national, cultural, sexual, etc.

European culture, which is the only historically and concretely universal culture -in so far, that is, as they have contributed to the process of European thought and been assimilated by it.⁸⁰

Even Antonio Gramsci - *Antonù su Gobbu* from the "backwoods" - could not transcend the west European narcissistic fascination. No theory of the national phenomenon could be sensitive to the multifarious aspects of national existence while remaining trapped in the "insights" of the above quotation. In chapter seven a theory of the national phenomenon that offers a better understanding of the pluralistic dimensions of national existence will be discussed: that of Otto Bauer.

80. A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, op. cit. p. 416

Chapter 6: The Background to Bauer's Theory: Austria and the National Question

The acute nationalities conflict in the turn of the century Habsburg Empire was clearly a crucial factor in directing Otto Bauer's reluctant attention to the national phenomenon, as he himself acknowledges in the preface to the 1907 edition of his monumental work¹. While the nature of the national problem faced by the socialist movement in Austria was clearly a decisive factor in motivating Bauer to conceptualise the national question, the theoretical appraisal that resulted from this conjunctural analysis, transcends the specific configuration of the Austrian situation to become a major contribution to the general development of Marxist theory on the national phenomenon. In order to discuss Bauer's theory, it becomes necessary to first historically situate and contextualise the nature of Bauer momentous but partial break with economism, by evaluating in this chapter the three most important historical and theoretical influences on Bauer's analysis of the national phenomenon: The nationalities problem in The Austro-Hungarian Empire, the nationalities program of the All Austrian Socialist Party (*Gesamtpartei*), and the Austro-Marxist response to the neo-Kantian intellectual offensive against orthodox Marxism.

1. see Otto Bauer, Die Nationalitätenfrage und Die Sozialdemokratie 1924 edition in Otto Bauer Werkeausgabe(OBW), Vienna 1975 Vol 1 p. 49-50

The nationalities problem in the twilight of Austro Hungary

On the eve of the first world war the Austro Hungarian Empire was a dual monarchy with a total population of 53 million of more than 15 different nationalities, occupying an area roughly smaller than Texas or the Iberian peninsula². In 1866 the Habsburg Empire was militarily defeated by Prussia, and as a result of this situation, the Empire was decentralised through the *Ausgleich* or compromise of 1867, which remained the constitutional basis of the multinational empire until its dissolution in 1918. This agreement stipulated that the Empire should be divided into two autonomous halves: one had the curious name of "The Kingdoms and Countries represented in Parliament"³ (Austria) and the other was "The Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen" (Hungary)⁴. While foreign affairs, defense and finance were common concerns, both parts of the Empire had a very large degree of autonomy, which is best exemplified by the fact that there was no joint parliament. This situation in effect consolidated the domination of the of the most centrally located ethno-national community in each of the two parts, the Austro-Germans and the Magyars. The Austro-German side was simply referred to as "Austria" and the Magyar dominated half as "Hungary". Professor Stadler argues that the main compromise

2. B. F. Pauley, The Habsburg Legacy, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York 1972 p. 23

3. Die im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreiche und Länder. For a very good discussion of the nationalities problem in the dual system, see Oskar Jaszi The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy Chapter XVI "The Period of Sham Constitutionalism" op. cit. p. 106 -118 and Robert Kann, The Multinational Empire, two volumes New York, 1950

4. K. Stadler, Austria, Ernest Benn Ltd. London 1971, p. 41

was paralleled with minor "compromises" which resulted in a complicated mosaic of ethno-national and class alliances. Otto Bauer summarized the situation in the following way:

The "Compromise" is an understanding among the ruling classes of the historic nations (German, Magyar, Poles, Croats), against the mass of their fellow nationals (whom the curial franchise excludes from power) and against the newer nations (Czechs, Slovenes, and Ruthenes in Austria, and Slovaks, Serbs and Rumanians in Hungary).⁵

While the Austro Germans and the Magyars were the most numerous nationality in their respective parts of the empire, they were far from being the majority of the population in each of the two halves. In 1910 the Austro Germans were 23.9% of the total population of the dual Monarchy and 35.6% of the population of Austria only. The Magyars were 20.2% of the population of the dual Monarchy and the largest single group in Hungary but not the majority. The Czechs, which according to Bauer lost out in the constitutional arrangement, were the second largest national community in Austria, with 23% of the population and 12.6% of the population of the Dual Monarchy as a whole.⁶ To strengthen their political grip, the Austro German rulers conceded to the Poles of Austrian Galicia administrative autonomy. State officials in that crownland were to be Poles and the Polish language was to be used instead of German in Galician schools.⁷ This situation alienated the Yiddish speaking Jews and Ruthenians

5. O. Bauer, Geschichte Österreichs, Vienna 1911, quoted and translated by K. Stadler, op. cit. p. 41.

6. I. Oxaal, The Jews of Pre-1914 Vienna, Working Paper, Dept. of Sociology & Social Anthropology, University of Hull 1981 p. 62

7. O. Jász, op. cit. p. 109, B. F. Pauley, op. cit. p. 8

(Ukrainians) of Galicia, that together constituted in 1900 54% of the total Galician population.⁸ This concession to the Poles also deeply antagonised the Czech nationalist leadership, since the main demand of the Czech nationalist movement was to recover for Bohemia the status of historical kingdom (*Staatrecht*), with a similar degree of political and national autonomy as the Magyars had in Hungary or the Austro Germans had in Austria. The coalition between Austro Germans and Poles, effectively neutralised the political influence of the Czechs. The problem was also complicated by the fact that within Bohemia there was a large German speaking minority and a substantial number of Czechs residing outside the historical boundaries of Bohemia. In this situation, the Czech nationalists resented the German presence in Bohemia, considering the Bohemian Germans as "colonists", even if their presence in Bohemia dated back several centuries. On the other hand, the Bohemian Pan Germanic (*Deutschnational*) activists considered themselves as the *Herrenvolk* (master race) and according to Pauley regarded the Czech language as "*a mere dialect suitable only for peasants and servants*"⁹. The result of this situation was that the Czech nationalists were often blocking and filibustering legislation in the Austrian parliament, and the pan-Germans were equally bent on obstructing the provincial diet in Prague. When in 1897 it was decided that all civil servants in Bohemia should be bilingual, this brought bitter complaints from the Germans who felt discriminated against by this legislation since a large number of Czechs were conversant in German, but not vice-versa. Another problem was that the demand that civil servants should be bilingual in Bohemia rekindled similar demands by other national communities, particularly the UK-

8. I. Oxaal, op. cit. p. 74. For a detailed analysis of the demographic structure of the Galician population see Oxaal ibid. pp.72-76.

9. B. F. Pauley, op. cit. p. 17

rainians in Galicia.¹⁰ To complicate matters further, towards the end of the century Austria experienced a process of rapid industrialisation and related social change. By the turn of the century, the industries of Lower Austria and Bohemia reached a stage of development similar to those in England and Germany. Austrian coal production increased at a phenomenal rate and on the eve of World War I Austria stood in sixth place in the world production of iron.¹¹ In Austria, during 1903 -1913 the rate of industrial growth was higher than in Great Britain or Germany at the same period, but this apparently high rate of growth concealed a pronounced process of differential industrial development taking place concurrently with a long process of agricultural decline, causing a large internal migration towards newly industrialised areas, in particular towards industrialised areas of Bohemia and the capital, Vienna. This process exacerbated further the unresolved ethno national tensions, for it diluted the territorial concentration of the conflicting national communities. It would, however, be incorrect to say that industrialisation was the cause of national tensions since the problem pre-existed the process of industrialisation. The upheavals of differential development only aggravated an already existing problem. The Bohemian case provides a good example of this. In 1851 in Bohemia there were five towns with over 10.000 inhabitants, by the turn of the century there were forty three. this process of urbanisation and industrialisation had predictably a profound effect in the ethno-cultural composition of Bohemia. as Zeman puts it:

10. Manuel Garcia Pelayo, La teoria de la naci3n en Otto Bauer, Politea, Mexico

11. Z. A. B. Zeeman, The Twilight of the Habsburgs, Purnell & Sons. London 1971 p. 33

Early in the 19th century, Germans and Czechs lived side by side in sharply defined and separate settlements. The Czechs held with the exception of the towns, the central districts; The Germans surrounded them in an arc running through the border territories of Bohemia and Moravia. That situation changed with the growth of the local industries which made no national discrimination in its demand for labour; it was calculated that in 1900 Czech labour was three times as mobile as German. In the Czech districts, the urban population became mainly Czech, and the balance started changing even in the German border areas.¹²

In Vienna, population changes were equally dramatic. In 1857 the population of the capital was 476,220 while in 1910 it was 2,031,498. In other words, the population increased more four times in fifty three years¹³. As Oxaal argues, the process of economic expansion and liberal democratic reform was at the root of this massive migration, which had its symbolic expression in the destruction of the inner city walls in 1858. With the migration of peoples from all four corners of the Empire, Vienna was converted into a lively and cosmopolitan city. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Vienna experienced an intellectual, artistic and aesthetic development with few comparisons in the history of European culture. The names of Strauss, Schoenberg and Mahler in music, Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka in painting, Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos in architecture and town planning, S. Zweig and R. Musil in Literature, Sigmund Freud¹⁴, the

12. Z. A. B. Zeman, op. cit. p. 35

13. I. Oxaal, op. cit. p. 60

14. Bauer was a personal friend of Freud, and his sister was one of the famous patients of the founder of psychoanalysis. She was referred to in Freud's writings with the fictitious name of "Dora".

founder of psychoanalysis, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Ernst Mach in Philosophy, Otto Bauer and Max Adler in Marxist theory - these are just but a few examples of the extraordinary legacy of intellectual and cultural diversity of turn of the century Vienna¹⁵

But turn of the century Vienna also witnessed the erosion of the progressive values that gave way to this extraordinary cultural renaissance. The development of the multi-ethnic and multicultural environment that made possible this cultural and intellectual development was deeply resented by conservative Pan Germans (*Deutschnational*), incapable of adapting to the changing pace of life and nostalgically yearning for a "pure" German past. This nostalgic backlash took the form of bitter controversies over schools in languages other than German (particularly Czech), bilingual notices, and place names. This situation moved Victor Adler, the veteran socialist leader and founding member of the All Austrian Socialist Party, to say that *In Austria, the question of names of railway stations had become one of principle of the most important kind*¹⁶. But for the Pan-Germans, the presence of ethnic minorities in "their" Vienna was a constant irritation and a source psychological insecurity in a multicultural environment.¹⁷ The frustrations and nostalgia of the Pan-

15. For a discussion of this extraordinary intellectual and cultural environment see Carl. E. Schorske, Fin de Siècle Vienna Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London 1980, on Wittgenstein see A. Janik and S. Toulmin Wittgenstein Vienna, London Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1973

16. James Joll, The Second International, op. cit. p. 122

17. K. Stadler, op. cit. p. 67. For the high levels of residential integration of Viennese Jews see I. Oxaal, Aspects of Jewish Social Life in Vienna, in Oxaal. op. cit. pp 55-117 and Peter Schmidtbauer, "Zur sozialen Situation der Wiener Juden in Jahre 1857" in Studia Judaica Austriaca, VI, pp.57-91

Germans were displaced in the form of a pathological hatred of the less cohesive and politically weakest ethnic minority: the Viennese Jews. The multicultural environment of Vienna moved a young Pan-German from the Austrian provinces, Adolf Hitler, to say:

Deutschösterreich muss wieder zurück zum grossen deutschen Mutterlande...Gleiches Blut gehört in ein gemeinsames Reich¹⁸

The sense of ethnic insecurity of Pan-German Austrians vis-a-vis both, the multicultural environment of late imperial Vienna, and the then recently united German state was to become later, in the words of Professor Stadler, *the original home of a particularly virulent and cruel brand of Nazism*¹⁹. But even long before the emergence of the Nazi party, Austrian politics witnessed the emergence of a nostalgic and racist party in the Christian Social Movement²⁰, that was to become the main political rival of the Socialist Gesamtpartei, the only truly multinational political organisation in late Imperial Austria. The virulent anti-semitism that characterised the Christian Social Movement was according to Boyer

18. *German Austria must return to the great German motherland..People of the same blood belong in the same Reich* Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf p. 1 quoted in the original German by K. Stadler op. cit. Austria, p. 70

19. K. Stadler, op. cit. p. 67

20. For a detailed discussion of the Christian Social Movement and its charismatic leader Karl Lueger see John Boyer, Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna, University of Chicago Press, 1981

...an exceedingly complex defense mechanism against unwarranted social change, but one which functioned in very different ways depending upon the actor group involved. It was not the only issue which brought ultimate victory to Lueger and his party in 1896, even if it did provide a useful initial principle of organisation and cohesion in the early days of the movement.²¹

As the study by Oxaal shows, the Jewish population of Vienna was culturally, occupationally and residentially diverse. There was a profound cultural gap between the intellectual and German speaking strata from which major leaders of the socialist party emerged, and the recently arrived Yiddish speaking traditional Jews from the Eastern crownlands, Galicia and Bukovina. There was no Jewish ghetto as such, Jews lived in different parts of the city and in occupational terms

For every one Jew so employed [as money dealers] in Austria in 1900 it appears that four Catholics were engaged in a trade which was fundamental to the perpetuation of the Jewish stereotype....The data on Jewish occupations in Vienna, far from suggesting that they were unique and unrepresentative indicate that many of Jews held positions which were typical of the occupational structure of the city.²²

In other words, "Jewish homogeneity" only existed in the minds of the Viennese anti-semites and the emerging Zionist movement.²³ A large number of prominent leaders of the Austrian

21. J. Boyer, op. cit. p. X-XI

22. I. Oxaal, op. cit. pp 111-112

23. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist Movement was a Budapest born, German speaking journalist working during this

Socialist party were of Jewish extraction (including Bauer himself), and this situation had a profound impact in the contradictory anti-semitic stereotyping, since at times Jews were stereotyped as "greedy capitalists" and on other occasions as "God-less revolutionary socialists" to fit the image of the socialist party.²⁴ Antisemitism has not disappeared in contemporary Austria even if the Jewish population is very small, the "Waldheim affair" is eloquent proof of this.²⁵

period in the Viennese newspaper Neue Freie Presse. The First Zionist congress took place in Basle in 1897, the same year that Karl Lueger, the anti-semitic leader of Christian Social Movement became the mayor of Vienna. For the ideological connection between Zionism and Anti-Semitism see Moshe Machover and Mario Offenberg, Zionism and its Scarecrows in Khamsin 6, 1978 pp 33-59 and N. Weinstock Zionism, False Messiah, Inklinks, London 1978

24. For a detailed analysis of the contradictory nature of the anti-semitic narrative see Jean Pierre Faye, Los Lenguajes Totalitarios spanish translation of Théorie du récit, Introduction aux Langages Totalitaires, Taurus Ediciones, Madrid 1974, and Jean Pierre Faye, Migrations du Récit sur le Peuple Juif, Collection "Eléments", Paris 1974

25. For a controversial discussion of the antisemitic echos of K. Waldheim's electoral campaign, see R. A. Berman, "Fascinating Vienna" in Telos 68, summer 1986 pp. 7-38. On page 30 of this article Berman argues: *...The centrality of anti-semitism in Nazi ideology hardly needs to be pointed out; its virulence in the same turn of the century Vienna which gave birth to the cultural wealth now making way through the museums of the world is more significant. Waldeheim is a direct heir to Lueger, both exponents of an Austrian political anti-semitism framing the Vienna fascination.* While it is important to recognize the anti-semitic dimension of Waldeheim's electoral campaign, the pseudo-psychonalitic explanation offered in Berman's article appears to

The young Hitler detested the multicultural environment of turn of the century Vienna. He often referred to it as *Rassenbabylon* and *Stadt der Blutschande* (City of Incest), which according to Professor Stadler, shows Hitler's lack of competence on the subtleties of the German language, since the term "Blutschande" (incest) denotes the very opposite of what he meant - *The shameful pollution of German blood with foreign*²⁶

As with the contemporary relevance of the ongoing discussion on the conceptualisation of the national phenomenon in the Marxist theory, the debate about the nature of multicultural Vienna is also not without its contemporary manifestations. The following letter to "The Times" from Emeritus Professor F. Hayek on the occasion of Mrs. Thatcher's speech about being "swamped by alien peoples", gives a unique insight into the nostalgic thinking of those who cannot find their place in a pluralist environment. The importance of the argument for both the nationalities question in Late imperial Vienna, and contemporary debates on multiculturalism in Britain and in Australia, merits the full reproduction of this letter.

From Professor F. A. Hayek FBA

Sir, Nobody who has lived through the rise of the violent anti-semitism which led to Hitler can refuse Mrs. Thatcher

be more of an outdated cliché than an original, let alone convincing, argument. For a more interesting discussion of the turn of the century Austrian cultural life, see A. Ajtony, "Vienna and Budapest, Complementary Figures at the turn of the century" in the same issue of Telos, pp 137-150

26. K. Stadler, Austria, op. cit. p. 67

admiration for her courageous and outspoken warning. When I grew up in Vienna before World War I the established Jewish families were generally a respected group progressively merging with the rest of the population and all decent people would frown upon the occasional anti-Jewish outburst of a few popular politicians. In fact the only serious nationalistic agitation I can remember from that time was directed against the Czechs who had been streaming into Vienna in large numbers and were beginning to create their own schools.

It was the sudden influx of large numbers of Galician and Polish Jews, fleeing before the invading Russians, which in a short period changed the attitude through a large part of society. They were too visibly different to be readily absorbed in what was still a fairly homogeneous population. I was shocked on my visits to Vienna in the early 1930's to find people who had not long before regarded as indecent any anti-semitic remark (including a good many people of Jewish descent) arguing that, though they detested Hitler, they had to agree with his anti-semitic policies - which of course, had not yet revealed their most dreadful forms..

I am, etc.

F A HAYEK²⁷

Clearly, even Emeritus Professors of Economics and Nobel Prize winners are not immune to the poisonous curse of European racism.²⁸

27. *The Times* letters to the Editor, Saturday February 11, 1978. quoted in I. Oxaal, op. cit. p. 7

28. Similar arguments are sustained by contemporary nostalgic detractors of Multiculturalism, in the British case this is sustained by Enoch Powell and his associates and in the Australian case by Professor G. Blainey and his associates.

The Specificity of Austrian Socialism

Given this situation of intense ethnic hatred and national confrontation, it becomes clear why the socialist party had to devote a great deal of intellectual and political resources to deal with the problem. An added difficulty for the Austrian socialist movement was that, as was shown in Chapter 2, Marx and Engels developed in the course of the 1848 revolutions a crude, misinformed and uncompromising stance on the nationalities problem of the Habsburg Empire. Marx and Engels professed, to put it mildly, a profound "ethnic antipathy" towards the Czechs, Croats and other slavic national communities lumped together in an imaginary unit called "South Slavs". They used the hegelian concept of "Historyless Peoples" (Geschichtslosen Völker), to conceptualise what they considered to be the "intrinsically reactionary" nature of this unfortunate peoples, whose national existence was considered not "worth surviving" the democratic revolutions. The solutions offered by Marx and Engels to the "South Slavs" was to either totally assimilate to the "superior" German or Magyar nations with "democracy as compensation", or to be "obliterated" in the course of the democratic struggle.²⁹ The problem for the turn of the century Austrian socialists was that the solutions to the nationalities problem in the Habsburg Empire proposed by Marx and Engels circa 1848 were strikingly similar to the positions held by their contemporary Pan-German (*Deustchnational*) movement. This situation required a radical reappraisal of the nationalities problem in

29. for a discussion of the concept of "Historyless peoples" and the way in which Marx and Engels used it in relation to what they called "South Slavs" see Chapter 2, p. 66 ff. and R. Rosdolsky op. cit. F. Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker; R. Kann The Multinational Empire, op. cit. Vol 1 Chapter XVI, pp 40-51

Austria, and this was initially achieved, as it will be shown in a moment, in the party congresses of Vienna-Wimberg and Brno (Brünn).

Socialism in Austria did not begin with the formation of the All Austrian Socialist Party (*Gesamtpartei*). In German Austria, the socialist movement grew out of the *Arbeiterbildungsverein*, or societies for the cultural improvement of the working class. This characteristic of the embryonic socialist movement had, according to Rabinbach, a profound impact in the subsequent development of the party since it never abandoned its pedagogical and educational role.³⁰ At the same time, a number of socialist organisations emerged among the Czech workers and other non-German national communities, who were nevertheless suspicious of the German socialist organisation, given the national antagonisms outlined above. The process of rapid industrialisation experienced by several Austrian regions was a fertile ground for the formation of an All Austrian socialist party, but nationalist and ideological dissensions, coupled with repressive measures of the Austrian regime, only permitted the formation of a united party in Hainfeld, a sleepy village south of Vienna, in 1889, and this thanks to the intense efforts of Viktor Adler.³¹ The socialist party was defined to be "Whole Austrian" (*Gesamtbösterreichisch*), or as it was later called "*Gesamtpartei*" (whole party), in order to indicate the multinational nature of the organisation. With the possible exception of the army and bureaucracy, the

30. A. Rabinbach, The Crisis of Austrian Socialism, University of Chicago Press, 1983 p. 7

31. Kurt L. Shell, The Transformation of Austrian Socialism State University of New York, 1962 pp.8-9, A. Rabinbach, The Crisis of Austrian Socialism, op. cit. p. 10, W.M. Johnson, The Austrian Mind, University of California Press, 1972 p. 99, Manuel Garcia Pelayo, op. cit. p.15. R. Kann, op. cit. Vol 1, p. 104

Gesamtpartei was the only truly multinational entity in the final years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was also, according to Kann, the only example in Austrian history of the emergence of a major political party that came into existence beyond national loyalties³². In the course of its first decade of existence the socialist party became an important parliamentary force, after the abolition of restrictive ordinances and the establishment of male universal suffrage in 1896.³³ However, from the moment of its formation, the party had to cope with the difficult problems of ethno-national divisions within its ranks. In particular, the Czechs socialists resented the high profile of the Germans within the party and demanded the establishment of their own trade union commission.³⁴ Initially the demands of the Czech sections of the party were resisted by the respected leader Viktor Adler, but by 1897, the situation became unsustainable, and the Party as a whole began to recognise that the resolution of the national question could not be postponed until "the victory of the working class" and the need to clearly delimit the position of the party vis-a-vis the national question.³⁵ In this sense, the burdening nationalities problem of late imperial Austria, impelled the socialist party to relinquish the economic reductionism prevalent in most turn of the century socialist parties, and to adopt a

32. R. Kann, op. cit. Vol 1 p. 104

33. Kurt L. Shell, The Transformation of Austrian socialism, op. cit. p. 11

34. M. Sully, Continuity and Change in Austrian Socialism, The Eternal Quest for the Third Way, Columbia University Press, New York 1982 p. 13

35. Hans Mommsen, Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat, Vienna Europa Verlag 1963 p. 175-76

position more sensitive to national demands. In 1897 the biannual congress of the Gesamtpartei took place in the Wimberg Hotel in Vienna. Following Czech demands, the party decided to transform itself into a federative organisation of six national parties (Ukrainian; Czech, Polish, German, Italian and Slovene), with a common executive committee³⁶. This new organisational arrangement gave way to an intense and prolonged discussion of the theory and strategy of the nationalities question, which culminated two years later, in the biannual historic congress 1899 in the Moravian city of Brno (Brünn). In this congress an unusually thorough theoretical and strategic debate on the national question took place, which culminated in a number of unprecedented theoretical and organisational decisions that subsequently sent shock waves through the international socialist movement. The protocols of the conference make fascinating reading,³⁷ since in terms of the economic reductionist logic then prevalent in the socialist movement, it made no sense to devote an almost entire biannual congress of a working class party to discuss the national question. However, in the political circumstances of Austria this was the main topic of the conference, and the discussion represented a serious attempt to discuss the political cultural and theoretical dimensions of the national phenomenon. The tension between economic reductionism and the

36. J. R. Recalde, La Construcción de las Naciones, Siglo XXI de España Editores, Madrid, 1982 p. 279

37. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich Brünn*, Vienna 1899. All references in this work are from the spanish translation by Conrado Ceretti in op. cit La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, pp 181 -217. There is a good English summary of the discussion in A. G. Kogan, "The Social Democrats and the Conflict of Nationalities in the Habsburg Monarchy", Journal of Modern History 21, 1949 pp. 204-217.

wish to come to grips with the elusive national problem, is best exemplified in the opening speech of the official speaker on behalf of the executive committee of the Gesamtpartei, J. Seliger. He initially argued that it is an "apparent contradiction" for the congress of "International Social Democracy in Austria" to try to find a "theoretical solution" to the nationalities problem in the multinational Empire³⁸, but he then goes on to argue that the party's interest in the nationalities question was wholly legitimate. It was "the workers who suffered most as a result of national strife", and those conditions of national strife "prevented the workers from uniting against the bourgeoisie"³⁹. In the congress itself there were three detectable positions on the national question. The first was the epiphenomenalist position maintained by Prähauser, a delegate from Salzburg, the most ethnically homogeneous German city in Austria. Prähauser supported Luxemburg's position that the origin of national strife is "economic", a dispute among the different sections of the bourgeoisie, and as such is of no importance for the workers movement that must concentrate on class issues. He was supported by the Italian delegate from Trieste, Gerin, who argued that the only task of Social democracy is to "continue the class struggle" and not to indulge on discussions on the national question. On the language question, Prähauser argued that German will continue to be the language of "culture and communication" regardless of the opinions of the "Czech comrades"⁴⁰. This position was however, a minority view, and was of no consequence for the final resolution. The second the position was sustained by the Slovenian delegate Etbin Kristan from Trieste. Kristan argued for the com-

38. Verhandlungen...spanish translation, op. cit 184

39. A. G. Kogan, op. cit p 207, Verhandlungen... spanish translation op. cit. 184-185

40. ibid, pp. 192 and 200

plete separation of the concept of nation from any form of territorial organisation: *The executive demands autonomous national territories, we demand national autonomy regardless of territory*⁴¹, this position was almost identical to the argument sustained by Karl Renner under the pseudonym of "Synopticus" in a booklet published in Vienna that same year⁴². This position was known as the "personality principle"⁴³; it demanded the organisation of national communities regardless of the place of residence, with a strong emphasis on cultural institutions, coupled with non national forms of territorial organisation. This position was on the whole supported by delegates from ethnol national communities that were territorial minorities. Also, according to its proposer, this form of national organisation accounted for the widespread geographical mobility of workers within the boundaries of the Austrian state, that resulted from the process of differential industrialisation. This position was influential beyond the borders of Austria. It was later adopted by the Jewish Bund in Czarist Russia, since it best suited the minority status of Jewish communities. This was the principle of "national cultural autonomy", so severely attacked by Lenin and Stalin, who wrongly believed as will be shown in a moment, that this was the final resolution of the socialist congress at Brno. Viktor Adler, the respected leader of the Gesamtpartei opposed the motion arguing that while he believed that it was a "very ingenious idea", the practicalities of implementing such a complex two tier organisational principle was a bureaucratic nightmare.

 41. *ibid* p. 198, A. Agnelli, Questione Nazionale e Socialismo, Contributo allo studio del pensiero de K. Renner e O. Bauer, il Mulino, Bologna 1969, p. 67

42. Synopticus, Staat und Nation, Vienna 1899

43. In the Russian debates, it was called "National-Cultural Autonomy".

He also believed that the resolution presented by the slovenian delegate was self contradictory, because it demanded a federal state, and federalism could only be organised on the basis of territory. The motion was put to a vote and rejected.⁴⁴ The third position was presented by the executive committee of the Gesamtpartei, which demanded in essence that Austria should become a democratic federation of autonomous national states. This was the position that was finally adopted after the incorporation of a number of amendments introduced by the Czech delegates concerning the German language. The Czechs objected to the original executive proposal that German should be considered the common language out of practical necessity, because they were unwilling to grant any special status to German. The final resolution read as follows

- 1 Austria should be transformed into a democratic federation of nationalities (*Nationalitätenbundestaat*)
- 2 The historic Crownlands shall be replaced by nationally delimited, self-governing areas in each of which legislation and administration should be entrusted to national chambers elected on the basis of universal suffrage.
- 3 All self-governing regions of one and the same nation shall jointly form a single national union which shall manage the national affairs on the basis of complete autonomy.
- 4 The right of minorities should be protected by a special law.
- 5 We do not recognise any national privilege and therefore we reject the demand for an official language. Parliament will decide as to whether and in what degree a common language is necessary.⁴⁵

44. Verhandlungen... spanish translation, op. cit. p. 193, A. Agnelli. op. cit. p. 67-69, A.G. Kogan, op. cit., p.209

From the above it is possible to see why Lenin and Stalin were so wrong about the Brno programme. The decision of the conference was to campaign for the formation of an autonomous and multinational federal state, rather than to implement the concept of "national cultural autonomy". (Ironically, the Brno programme appears to be closer to the letter of the Soviet Constitution, than to any other existing form of state organisation). The source of the Bolshevik confusion was the so called programme of "national cultural autonomy". This last idea was the basis of the minority motion of the Slovene delegate Kristan, and it was masterminded by Karl Renner, who with Otto Bauer became later recognised as the main theoretician on the national question of the Gesamtpartei. There are however, a number of significant differences between Bauer and Renner. Not only did Bauer belong to the left wing of the party, while Renner aligned himself with the position within the Gesamtpartei closest to Revisionism, but more importantly for the ongoing discussion on the marxist conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, Renner's project was directed towards conceptualising the constitutional rights of national communities in multinational states, while Bauer's work was directed towards the historical and theoretical conceptualisation of the national phenomenon.⁴⁶ K. Renner only offi-

 45. Verhandlungen... op. cit. p. 211., A.G. Kogan, op. cit., p.210, H. Konrand, Nationalismus und Internationalismus, Europaverlag, Vienna 1976 p. 70

46. The discussion of the constitutional work on the nationalities question of K. Renner is beyond the scope of the present work, for an evaluation of Renner see R. Kann, op. cit. Vol 2 pp. 157-167 and R. Kann "Karl Renner", Journal of Modern History, 23, 1951 pp.243-249. In contrast to Bauer, Renner most significant work has been translated into English see K. Renner, The Institutions of Private Law and their Social Functions, London, Routledge & Kegan 1949, reprinted 1976

cially joined the socialist party after the Brno congress, and because he was a civil servant barred from political activity, he published his early works under the pseudonym of "Synoptikus" and "Rudolf Springler". In his famous book "The Right of Nations to Self Determination" he considered as his main task:

to explore and present this internal state order and supranational order of law, which should replace the political struggle of the nationalities for power with the orderly procedure of court and parliamentary transactions...[the purpose is to] materialise the legal concept of nation, first within the narrow framework of the nationalities state, and thus present an example for the future national order to mankind.⁴⁷

Consequently, the main task of Renner's work was not to conceptualise the nation as such, but as Agnelli argues, to find a solution to the constitutional problems of Austria on the basis of a strictly federalist position, carefully separating the territorial state from national identities.⁴⁸ In the congress of

47. K. Renner, Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen in besonderer Anwendung auf Oesterreich, Vienna, 1916, p. 36, quoted by R. Kann, op. cit. Vol 2 p. 157. No connection with Lenin's work of the same title.

48. A. Agnelli Questione Nazionale e Socialismo...op. cit. p. 74. While this is undoubtedly a most interesting problem, it unfortunately falls beyond the scope of the present work. The author hopes to return to this discussion in the near future on a work on ethnocentrism and the national state. For the moment it will be sufficient to say that Renner's conceptualisation of the constitutional arrangement in a Multinational State, curiously resembles the Ottoman Millet system. In a period in which new forms of struggle against state centralisation are constantly emerging, Renner's project on ethno-national decentralisation

Brno, Renner's ideas were only supported by a minority.

In summarising the positions of pre-Bauer Austrian socialism on the national question, it is possible to say that the class reductionist Marxist analysis prevalent in the socialist world of that time, also found its echo among the leaders of the Austrian Socialist Movement. On the one hand, the deep rooted national confrontations of the dual monarchy and their paralyzing impact in the Austro-Hungarian political life, and on the other hand, the profound impact of nationalist ideals in large sections of the socialist rank and file, forced the leadership to move out of the "traditional" socialist terrain of the political dimension of the class struggle to the theoretically virgin and politically unknown national arena. This was done reluctantly, to judge from the utterances of a number of leading Austrian socialists. It is possible to find a kind of impatience, almost an angry reaction to their "bad fortune" in comparison with other "more fortunate" socialist parties, particularly in Germany. The Austrian socialists deeply resented that they were obliged to devote their precious intellectual and revolutionary energies to a problem that in their perception had little to do with the stated goals of working class politics. As N. Leser argues

Austrian socialists like all other, were primarily concerned with the emancipation of the working class, but their day-to-day political work compelled them to acknowledge the overwhelming importance of the nationality issue within the context of the Habsburg empire. To the bulk of the population these questions were at least and of equal immediate concern as the tactics of the class war.⁴⁹

deserves a fresh reconsideration.

49. Norbert Leser, Austro-Marxism, a reappraisal, Journal of Contemporary History, 11, 1976, p.134

There is a profound paradox in this situation. From the Austrian Socialist Party's reluctant engagement in an intellectual and political debate with nationalism, and from their not less reluctant but concerted effort in coming to grips with the national phenomenon -instead of the more "normal" issues of working class politics -a theoretical and political analysis of unparalleled sophistication emerged. While the conditions of "combined and uneven development" produced in Czarist Russia highly innovative ways in conceptualising the political struggle in the Marxist tradition, the political nightmare of the national struggles in the collapsing dual monarchy, produced some of the most theoretically sophisticated Marxist discussions of the national phenomenon. This was not the result of unqualified support for the national causes, as the Bolshevik detractors were quick to argue - there was, in fact, no love lost between the Austrian socialists and nationalist movements. It was rather that the Socialist Party of Austria (Gesamtpartei) realized that without tackling the national question head on, without developing a thorough political and intellectual understanding of the national phenomenon, an understanding that was so conspicuously absent in the classical Marxist tradition, they were condemned to political paralysis and oblivion under the rising tide of nationalism.

In tackling this burdensome problem, Austrian socialism prepared the ground for the development of a theory of the nation in the work of Otto Bauer - a theory of the nation that transcended the political and intellectual limitations of the nationalist bickering of the decaying Habsburg monarchy, to become the patrimony of the universal heritage of the Marxist

tradition. As it be shown in chapter 7, in order to think a theory that encapsulated the multidimensionality of the national phenomenon, Bauer had to implicitly break with the fundamental canons of economism. Thus in the introduction to his monumental work Bauer argues:

The national community is one of the most complex social phenomena, with a vast array of different social manifestations. For this reason, to understand how linkage to the national community shapes the will of the working class on struggle, it becomes essential to consider the problem from different angles. If we do not wish to relinquish such a task, we must risk venturing beyond our narrow disciplinary boundaries.⁵⁰

From this it is clear that for Bauer the political impossibility in locating the multidimensional national phenomenon in terms of the traditional corporatist politics of turn of the century Marxist socialist movement, as well as the intellectual impossibility of conceptualising this elusive phenomenon in terms of the orthodox canons of classical Marxist thought, created the condition for a decisive but never explicitly acknowledged - let alone conceptualised - break with all forms of economism. In order to understand the intellectual conditions for the development of this unacknowledged break with economism, a brief discussion of the "Austro-Marxist" debate with neo-Kantianism is required.

50. OBW, Vol 1, op. cit. p. 49

The Theoretical Impact of Austro-Marxism⁵¹

The theoretical development of Austro-Marxism is perhaps one of the most interesting political paradoxes taking place in fin de siècle Vienna. For as M. Sully perceptively argues,⁵² in Vienna a curious combination of cultural and intellectual creativity symbiotically co-existed side by side with an obsolete and decaying social and political order. Bauer himself locates the emergence of the Austro-Marxist tradition, in the response developed by a young generation of intellectuals and political activists to the theoretical criticism of classical Marxism in turn of the century in Austro-Hungary.⁵³ In this sense it is very important not to confuse Austro-Marxism with the Austrian Socialist Party since the development of the two does not coincide. During the formative years of the party the most influential current of thought was Kautsky's orthodox interpretation of classical Marxism, a position they shared with the majority of socialist parties affiliated to the Second International.⁵⁴ The

51. According to O. Bauer the term "Austro -Marxism" was first coined by an american socialist L. Boudin who in 1907 published The Theoretical System of K. Marx, a book defending classical Marxism from Revisionism and the Austrian marginal utility school of economics. See Bottomore, op. cit. Austro-Marxism, op. cit. p.1 and p. 45

52. M. A. Sully, Continuity and Change in Austrian Socialism, The Eternal Quest for the Third Way, op. cit. p. 1

53. O. Bauer, "Was ist Austromarxismus?", in the organ of the Austrian Socialist Party Arbeiter-Zeitung on 3 November 1927. translated and reproduced by T. Bottomore (ed.) Austro-Marxism, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1978, p. 45. see also G. Marramao, Austromarxismo e Socialismo di Sinistra fra le due Guerre, La Pietra, Milan 1977, p. 11

emergence of Austro-Marxism as a distinctive intellectual approach within the Marxist tradition must be understood equally as a generational reaction against the ossification of the "traditional orthodoxy" of Kautsky, as critical reaction to Bernstein's revisionism and the powerful intellectual critique of orthodox Marxism from the neo-Kantian "ethical socialists" of the Marburg School, and as a response to the criticism of Marxist economic theory from the Viennese "Marginalist School" of economics. The leading Austro-Marxists grew up in the socialist student movement of the university of Vienna, and it is from there that they engaged in the political activities of the Austrian Social Democratic Party⁵⁵ Bauer locates the origin of the school in the activities of

A group of young Austrian comrades active in scholarly research ...They were united not so much by a specific political orientation as by the particular nature of their scholarly work. They had all grown up in a period when men such as Stammler, Windelband, and Rickert were attacking Marxism with philosophical arguments; hence they were obliged (felt the need) to engage in the controversy with the representatives of modern philosophical trends....living in the old Austria rent by national struggles, they had to learn to apply the Marxist conception of history to very complicated phenomena which defied analysis by any superficial or schematic application of the Marxist method. Thus there developed within Marxism a narrower (spiritual) intel-

54. G. Marramao, Austromarxismo e Socialismo di Sinistra..., op. cit. p. 13

55. T. Bottomore (ed.), Austro Marxism, editor's introduction p. 3, G. Marramao, Austromarxismo e Socialismo di Sinistra.., introductory essay, op. cit. p.10

lectual community (Geistesgemeinschaft) which has been called "Austro-Marxism" . This is intended precisely to distinguish itself on the one side from the (previous) generation of Marxists represented above all by Kautsky, Mehring and Cunow, and on the other side, from contemporary schools of Marxism in other countries, above all the Russian and the Dutch schools...(emphasis added)⁵⁶

The Austro-Marxists operated as an influential theoretical and political grouping within the party up to World War I. After the war Otto Bauer became the general secretary of the party and the members of the group took different positions in the context of the then ongoing debates within the socialist movement. The term Austro-Marxism then became in the usage of Austrian politics a term of abuse, equivalent to "extremism" and used mainly by the right to vilify the Austrian socialist movement. Professor Bottomore argues the first decade and a half of the twentieth century was the most brilliant intellectual period in the history of Austro-Marxism⁵⁷ . In 1903 Max Adler and other members of the group constituted in the educational tradition of the Austrian Socialist Party, the *Zukunft-Verein*, an educational academy for workers. The Austro-Marxist Group also began to hold regular meetings in the Cafe Central. In 1907 Bauer and Renner founded the journal Der Kampf to give expression to the innovative views of the Austro-Marxist *Geistesgemeinschaft*. The publication of Der Kampf also denotes a political and theoretical distancing from the editorial policies of Kautsky and the Neue Zeit, since

56. Otto Bauer, Was ist Austro-Marxismus? in Arbeiter Zeitung, 3 November 1927, translated into English by T. Bottomore in op. cit. Austro-Marxism, p. 45-46 and into Italian by G. Marramao, in op. cit. Austromarxismo e Socialismo di Sinistra, p. 12. Words in parenthesis appear only in the Italian translation.

57. T. Bottomore, op. cit. p. 13

all members of the group had been regular contributors to that journal. This distancing will be later reflected in Kautsky's polemics with Bauer over the national question. But above all, it was in the Marx-Studien series edited by Max Adler and R. Hilferding, that most influential works for the theoretical development of Marxism were published. In volume 1 Max Adler's *Causality and Teleology* and Karl Renner's *Social Functions of Juridical Institutions* were published, Volume 2 was Otto Bauer's *Nationalities Question*, Volume 3 was Hilferding's *Finance Capital* Volume 4 was Max Adler's *The Marxist Conceptualisation of the State*. It will be impossible in the context of this work to do justice to the richness, originality and variety of the Austro-Marxist contribution to the development of Marxist theory, but in a very general sense it is possible to say that what characterises Austro-Marxism is not so much an homogeneous approach to crucial problems for Marxist theory, but, as Bauer argues, the awareness of the complexity of the problems under discussion, which defied monocausal or one-dimensional explanations. The second important characteristic of Austro-Marxism was that it attempted to engage in a serious debate with non-Marxist political and philosophical schools, such as the Austrian marginalist school of economics and the neo-Kantian philosophical tradition. The third characteristic of Austro-Marxism was its rejection at the political level of the dichotomy reform-revolution as exhausting all categories of political activity. In this sense it is possible to see in Austro Marxism a discussion of the complexities of the political arena which necessarily leads to a break with epiphenomenalism and class reductionism, and is only paralleled in the Marxist theory in the work of Gramsci.⁵⁸ As

58. A number of contemporary discussions of Austro Marxism understand its intellectual heritage as crucial for building a "third way" strategy between Revisionism and Marxist-Leninism. This interpretation supported by the contemporary emergence "Eurocommunism" which inevitably draws a number of parallelisms with the political project of Austro-Marxism between the two

it will be shown in a moment, the debate with the "Ethical Socialism" of the Revisionists and socialist Neo Kantians was crucial in this endeavor. As Ananiadis argues:

What constitutes the originality of Austro-Marxism is the supercession of the theoretical configuration (economism, instrumentalism) that informed the themes of pre war debates and fixed their terms in oppositional couplets (reform/revolution, parliamentary democracy/dictatorship of the proletariat). It is this restructuring of the theoretical terrain that made it possible for the Austro-Marxists, in the light of the new experiences of the labour movement, to pose the problem of the relation between socialism and democracy in novel terms.⁵⁹

From the point of view of the ongoing discussion on Marxism and the national phenomenon, the Austro-Marxist debate with Neo Kantianism was crucial in providing the critical categories of analysis that permitted Bauer to devise the novel conceptualisation of the national phenomenon developed in the *Nationalitätenfrage*, which, as indicated above, was originally published as the second volume of the Marx-Studien. In many

world wars. This explains in part the popularity of Austro-Marxism in Italy. see D. Albers (ed.) Otto Bauer und die "Dritte Weg" Campus Verlag, Frankfurt 1979. and D. Albers Otto Bauer und Antonio Gramsci. for an excellent discussion in English of the issues involved in Austro Marxism and the "third way" strategy see G. Ananiadis, Austro Marxism and the "Third Way" to Socialism, unpublished thesis Dept. of Government University of Essex 1981.

59. G. Ananiadis, Austro Marxism and the Third Way to Socialism, op. cit. p.1

ways, Adler's vigorous debate with Neo Kantianism in *Causality and Teleology*⁶⁰, in volume 1 of the Marx-Studien series paved the way for the conceptual framework of Bauer's discussion. But in order to contextualise Adler's arguments, it becomes necessary to briefly review the neo-Kantian criticisms of classical Marxism.

The Neo Kantian Critique of Marxism and Adler's Response

The turn of the century witnessed a powerful intellectual and political attack on classical Marxism. The characteristic of this attack was not that it came from reactionary forces, but on the contrary, from groups that were in part genuinely interested in socialism and saw in the socialist idea a desirable political project. Within the organisational context of German socialism, Bernstein's revisionism challenged the central tenets of historical materialism⁶¹, and at a more sophisticated level outside the organisational framework of the socialist movement, in the works of the "ethical socialists" of the neo-Kantian Marburg school.⁶²

60. Kausalität und Teleologie im Streite um die Wissenschaft
Marx Studien 1, Vienna, Wiener Volksbuchhandlung 1904. all references in this work are from the Italian Translation Causalità e Teleologia nella Disputa sulla Scienza, with an introduction by R. Racinaro, De Donato Editori, Bari 1976

61. for a discussion of revisionism see chap. 3 and P. Gay, op. cit. The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism.

62. As P. Gay correctly argues, there is a difference between Bernstein's revisionism and Neo Kantian socialism in spite of the fact that Bernstein claims adherence to the principles of Kantian philosophy in the last chapter of "Evolutionary Socialism". For Bernstein "science is free from bias", and "ethics is not a Wissenschaft", this is, a subject of disciplined and rational understanding. Both claims could be hardly accepted by Neo Kantians. see P. Gay, op. cit. p.159. However, it is probably the

The neo-Kantian tradition emerged in Germany in the later part of the last century. The movement grew rapidly in size to become the "nouvelle vogue" of German Philosophy and the basis for philosophical training in German universities. The tradition itself had little in common besides a reaction against irrationalism and materialism, and the idea that philosophy could acquire a "scientific status" if it returned to the methodological premises of Immanuel Kant. After World War I, the movement rapidly declined, defeated in part by the emerging tide of romanticism and irrationalism. In terms of the critique of Marxism and the Austro-Marxist response, the Marburg school and the so-called "Southwestern" or Baden school developed the most influential arguments. While most members of the Marburg school professed a form of "ethical socialism" which made them sympathetic with some of the goals but not the practice of the socialist movement, this was not the case with the Baden school. They, however, professed a greater interest for the historical and cultural sciences than other branches of neo-Kantianism, and were a major influence to Max Weber and his sociological tradition. This situation made the encounter with Austro-Marxism unavoidable.

The Marburg school was initiated by Hermann Cohen and his disciples, P. Natorp; R. Stammler, whose work is discussed by Adler and Bauer; and E. Cassirer. Following the Kantian tradition, they understood history and politics as a process of education guided by reason and the moral idea of "free men" exercising rights and responsibilities in a constitutional state⁶³. They

 case the Bernstein confuses Neo Kantianism with Empiricism, since Epistemological issues had never been Bernstein's strength, and this perhaps explains his eclectic approach to Politics. In other words, it seems that Bernstein did not properly understand the Neo Kantian critique of Marxism.

63. T. E. Willey, Back to Kant, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1978 p. 103

were "bourgeois humanists" and rationalists, and therefore opposed to violent revolutions, believing in human "good nature" and reformability. The Marburg school proposed a form of "democratic evolutionary socialism" and as such it had a certain appeal to revisionist intellectuals. The work of Cohen, the founder of the school was directed to prevent the subordination of consciousness to what he called "undifferentiated experience" and to protect the "free individual" from all forms of "monism and determinism"⁶⁴ of which "Historical Materialism" was one of its most important forms. Cohen firmly believed that truth was always in agreement with reason and that the laws of reason are independent from experience. As Willey argues, in this situation "being" is transformed into the problem of validity, metaphysics is replaced by logic, and the realm of being is replaced by the realm of values⁶⁵. Cohen's theory of knowledge is the core of his humanism because the conditions for producing general human culture are found in logic. According to his student, E. Cassirer, what distinguishes critical thought from dogmatic thought for Cohen, is the fact that the former never expresses itself in a merely static way. It is a "living and dynamic effort that must always be prepared for a new start". Thought is not *gegeben* (given) but *aufgegeben* (propounded). It is not an immovable center of our intellectual universe, but a continual process and endeavor.⁶⁶ A common characteristic of both Marburg and Baden Neo Kantians was that they agreed in the priority of the ethical "Ought" over the phenomenal "Is". One of

64. *ibid.*, p. 108

65. *ibid.*

66. E. Cassirer, "Hermann Cohen", Social Research, 10, 1943 p. 220

Cohen's most influential disciples, Rudolf Stammler, became one of the leading legal philosophers in the German world and his philosophy of law was criticised by Adler and Bauer. For Stammler, ethical philosophy begins with the Kantian separation of "Is" and "Ought", but he argues that the goals of the "ought" are not less real because they cannot be known in experience. They are like *The polar star that guides the mariner*⁶⁷. Willey argues that the neo-Kantians went beyond Kant by giving ethical ideas a "quasi-ontological status". In this sense, for Cohen, Moral law has two meanings "The idea of humanity and the idea of socialism". In sharp difference with Marxist socialism, Cohen argued that these two ideas have no determinate content since they possess the character of "purpose". Humanity and Socialism belong to the "Ought", they exist as a mission for man's "moral will". The essence of socialism is to be found in the integrity of persons and their purposeful role in unfolding moral order. For Cohen "Society itself is a moral idea" is the reforming guide and principle of world history. Socialism thus becomes in the Kantian fashion, a postulate of practical reason, indispensable to the coexistence of humans in industrial societies. The discrepancy between social reality and moral existence is thus only overcome through the aim of achieving socialism.⁶⁸ From the above brief synthesis of Cohen's idealism, the profound divergences from Marxism become apparent. Cohen and the neo-Kantians in general deplored what they called "Marx monism", since Historical Materialism ignores the all-important separation between the "Is" and the "Ought". Since in orthodox Marxism human beings do not strive for "ethical goals", but act on behalf of their class interests, Marxism represents for the Neo Kantians a "flat denial of moral freedom", an odious anathema to their core values. For Natorp, a disciple of Cohen, *Socialism cannot be*

67. *ibid.*, p. 125

68. T. E. Willey, Back to Kant, *op. cit.* p. 113

produced by fiat; it is only through spiritual and social education aimed towards the "free" development of the individual spirit that socialism will be achieved. In a clear reference to avant-gardist theories, Natorp argued that the "building of socialism" cannot be the monopoly of any special elite, but it is a process involving "the organic community", of which each individual is an integral part.⁶⁹ . The following description by Cassirer of Cohen's rejection of Marxism, is highly symptomatic of the Marburg School's general critique of Historical Materialism.

He [Cohen] had the deepest sympathy for the working class; he was aware of its needs and he defended its claims. In this respect he was always a "socialist", even at a time in which a profession of socialism was very dangerous at a German university. But he could never adopt an "orthodox" socialism. His whole philosophy was in strongest opposition to the fundamental views of Marxism, to "economic materialism." "Who could ever have thought", he remarked in one of his papers, "that the great political party which fights out the social problem in all its consequences, should regard materialism as its true basis and principal dogma?. This program and this party grew from the soil of idealism. Historical Materialism is the strongest contradiction to that ethical idealism in which socialism has both its theoretical and historical roots. (emphasis added)⁷⁰

This criticism of orthodox Marxism had, in spite of claims to the contrary by Kautsky, a genuine appeal to many Marxists, given that the Marburg neo-Kantian tradition hoisted the banner of social justice in what it vaguely defined as "ethical

69. *ibid.* p. 122 .

70. E. Cassirer, Hermann Cohen, *op. cit.* p. 232.

socialism". This was particularly the case among those disenchanted by the lack of fulfillment of the epiphenomenalist prophecy of the impending and necessary collapse of capitalism. True, Marburg neo-Kantians, were denounced as "petty bourgeois ideologues" and "metaphysical idealists", but it was only in the works of the Austro-Marxists that a serious counter criticism beyond stereotypes and cliches was attempted.⁷¹

Max Adler attempted a defense of Marxism at very philosophical terrain in which this school emerged, the Neo Kantian philosophy. But before evaluating Adler's argument a brief review of the Baden school of Neo Kantianism is required.

In sharp contrast with the Marburg school, the Baden or Southwestern Neo Kantian school had almost no interest in concrete socialist problems, and their involvement in concrete political issues was kept to a minimum. In spite of this, their methodological discussions had a not insubstantial impact in the future development of history and the social sciences, particularly in major methodological and epistemological issues that subsequently became the point of departure the Weberian tradition in sociology. The founder of the school was Wilhem Windelband, who became the most eminent historian of philosophy in the German world of his time. The other important figure of the Baden school was Heinrich Rickert, the great systems builder of the school, who became Windelband's successor in Heidelberg. In his previous appointment, in Freiburg, he developed a long and intellectually influential friendship with Max Weber. The main concerns of Windelband and Rickert was to develop a theory of values that will delineate the boundaries between what in German is called *Natur-*

71. Lenin's main philosophical work Materialism and Empiricism, only makes passing references to the Neo-Kantians, since the bulk of the work is directed to polemise with Russian followers of Avenarius and Mach, who where not strictly speaking, neo-Kantians.

wissenschaft and *Geisteswissenschaften*⁷², However, Windelband himself referred to what in English is normally called natural sciences as "nomothetic sciences"; and the humanities and social sciences he called "idiographic sciences". As opponents of historicism and relativism, the two founding members of the Baden school argued for the "universal nature" of values. In this sense, in producing guidelines for the historians, Windelband states that the historian should ask: *Through what impulses of thought in the course of historical movement are the principles, which we use today to understand and judge man and his world scientifically, brought to consciousness and improved?*⁷³. This question is directed to dispel the influence of the Hegelian logos in historical analysis by developing a form of "empathetic understanding", and in this sense it shows remarkable similarities with Dilthey's "Verstehen" method. However, in -----

72. This terms are normally translated as "natural sciences" and "cultural sciences", however the english translation is only an approximation since the words "Wissenschaft" and "science" are not exactly equivalent. The word "Wissenschaft" is far more comprehensive than the English equivalent normally used. P. Gay correctly argues *the German term refers to any discipline which attempts to establish a system, generality, or some definite method. "Science" on the other hand is largely limited to the natural sciences of physics, chemistry, etc. with their special methodology which stresses induction and empirical content* Peter Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic socialism, op. cit. p. 157 see also H. Stuart Hughes Consciousness & Society. The Harvester Press, 1979 p. 195. Consequently "ethics" and "logic" are *Wissenschaften* but not "sciences". This situation is symptomatic of the intellectual paradigms that dominated the German and English intellectual life at the time of the consolidation of their respective languages.

73. quoted in T. E. Willey, op. cit., Back to Kant, p. 134

spite of important similarities, the Kantian rationalism of the founders of the Baden school prevented a full agreement with Dilthey over this issue. Both Dilthey and the Baden neo-Kantians, believed that a methodology of history first required a critique of consciousness, and they also agreed that the historian seeks "meaning" and "significance" in the events under historical analysis. But there is an important difference of emphasis: for Dilthey "meaning" is the fundamental category, so he attaches great importance to "Verstehen"; for Rickert and Windelband "valuing" is the fundamental category. In this sense, for the Baden neo-Kantians the conceptualisation of universal values is of primordial importance, and a careful analysis of the role of "value" (*wert*) is required. In their discussions, the concept assumes a double function: it is the principle that defines the unity of all "scientific knowledge", and at the same time it is also the principle that defines the scope of "meaning" of that scientific knowledge. In this sense, a system of values not only reflects the presuppositions of the sciences, but also their goal⁷⁴. Windelband goes then to argue that within the framework of what we may call today "social sciences" historical and human facts are not only singular and unique, concerned with unrepeatable phenomena; they are also teleological. They always relate to "meaning" and "purpose" because as single, never recurring events they possess inherent value. The task of "human sciences" is not to explain "human facts" but to understand them in terms of the motives and experiences of the human beings concerned. This last idea had a profound impact on the work of M. Weber. Max Adler in "Causality and Teleology" subsequently criticised Windelband's arguments about the teleological nature

 74. P. Heintel, "Neo Kantianism" in C. D. Renning (ed.) Encyclopaedia of Marxism, Communism and Western Society, New York, Herder & Herder, 1972 p. 101, H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, op. cit. pp. 183-200., T. E. Willey, Back to Kant, op. cit. p. 137

of the historical sciences. Kolakowski argues that according to Windelband and Rickert, the teleological viewpoint applies to natural sciences too, but in a more restricted sense.⁷⁵ Crucial to the arguments of the Baden school was the idea that all knowledge involves the adoption and rejection of judgments, the attainment of "truth" being the supreme objective. Against all forms of relativism Rickert argued that to recognise truth, is also to recognise general obligation. The value of "truth" does not derive from science, but on the contrary, it is a precondition to it. The work of Rickert was also of great intellectual influence on Max Weber, particularly on the arguments about meaning and value. He defined cultural values in the following way:

In regard to values considered in themselves, one cannot ask whether they are real, but only whether they are valid. A cultural value is either actually accepted as valid by all men, or its validity...is at least postulated by some civilised human being. Furthermore, civilisation or culture in the highest sense must be concerned not with values attached to objects of mere desire, but with excellences which...we feel ourselves more or less "obliged" to esteem and cultivate for the sake of the society in which we live

76

In "Causality and Teleology", and other works on the epistemology of the social sciences, Max Adler criticises both the works of the Neo Kantians of the Marburg and Baden Schools as well as the orthodoxy of classical Marxism. His criticisms are developed at two levels: one directed against the economism of

75. L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, op. cit. Vol. 2 p. 259

76. H. Rickert, Science and History: a Critique of Positivist Epistemology, translated by G. Reisman Princeton, 1962, p. 19; quoted by T.E. Willey, Back to Kant, op. cit. p. 147

the Second International, and in the later works, of Marxism-Leninism; and the other against the transcendental idealism of the neo-Kantians. This is done by using the Kantian "critical" methodology to criticise epiphenomenalist notions of economic determination and rejecting classical notions of historical materialism. At a second level of analysis, Adler criticises the idealist transcendentalism of the Neo Kantians by sustaining the non reducible specificity of social processes; in particular, by arguing that the fundamental neo Kantian concepts of "truth" and "value" are meaningless outside an "a priori" socialised existence. Adler's work represents a major contribution to the development of Marxist and sociological theories and as such it is regrettable that no English translation is available.⁷⁷

The point of departure of Adler's analysis is what he considers to be the neo-Kantian misinterpretation of Marxism as a form of "materialist economic history". In this sense, he rejects Rickert and Stammer's accusation of "one sided materialism" and that "historical materialism conceives ideological phenomena as a by product of economic relations" by arguing that Marxism by virtue of being a "science" (*Wissenschaft*) rejects every form of essentialism. Marxism is a "sociological" theory, meaning by this a theory of the social processes, and as such, according to Adler, incompatible with any form of "materialist metaphysics" - a position that privileges "material" over "social" relations.⁷⁸ For Adler, Marxism has

77. A good summary of Adler's work could be found in L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, vol 2 op. cit. pp 258-268 and in T. Bottomore Austro-Marxism, op. cit. p. 15-22 and excerpts from "Causality and Teleology" and other works in pp. 57-78

78. Peretz Merhav, "Marxismo e Neokantianismo in Max Adler" in Storia del Marxismo Contemporaneo, Istituto Feltrinelli, Turin 1974 p.394

nothing to do with materialism as a metaphysical system. He thought that this was a misunderstanding that resulted from the unfortunate use of the term "historical materialism" and because Marx himself developed a "certain tactical alliance" with eighteenth century materialism, against the abuses of idealistic speculation.⁷⁹ Adler firmly believed that every essentialist definition of the social arena, be it "materialist" or "spiritual" is arbitrary and teleological, because neither "matter" nor "spirit" in themselves can be known outside the realm of socialised experience. He further argued that experience is not an "a priori" because it is unthinkable outside socialised existence, and therefore stands in a relation of "dependent causality" from social relations. In this sense, Adler returns the original accusation "philosophical monism" against the Neo Kantians, by maintaining that they themselves are falling into the forms of essentialism that they supposedly criticise in Marxism, by wishing to separate the problem of "objective validity" from the "reality of experience" allowing *validity like a new sort of Platonism to shine upon the world from an inaccessible beyond*⁸⁰

From the point of view of the ongoing discussion of the Marxist analysis of the national phenomenon, Adler's criticism of the neo-Kantians in term of the irreducibility of social forms is of enormous importance, since it is the basis for Bauer's subsequent discussion of the specificity of national existence. For Adler, social experience is a "transcendental" condition of human existence, because it is based on a form of human cognitive capacity, whose "formal existence" is not amenable to causal explanations. For Adler, a non-societalised individuality is mean-

79. L. Kolakowski, Main currents of Marxism, op. cit. p.260

80. M. Adler, Kausalität und Teleologie in Streite um die Wissenschaft, quoted by P. Heintel, op. cit. "Neo Kantianism" p. 104

ingless concept because individuals always require social referents to assume autonomous existence. Thus the "forms of individuality" are inherent to the "form of the social" and the formal relation between the two cannot be deduced causally, in the same way as no causal explanations are able to clarify general notions of time and space⁸¹. What emerges from Adler's argument is that the arena of the social implies always a form of relationship between the "individual" and the "collective" and the formal configuration of this relationship is not reducible to what Adler calls "scientific" laws of causality.

Thus, the debate of Adler with neo-Kantianism is a useful point of departure for the formulation of a multidimensional theory of the national arena in two respects. Firstly, because Adler through the use of a Kantian critical methodology rejects any a priori positional privilege in the process of social causality. Neither "the process of production" nor "the national spirit" are in themselves valid points of departure. Secondly, because the notion of the irreducibility of the forms of the social permits us to theoretically delimit the relation "national identity of subjects" - "national community" by referring to Adler's concept of "societalization". In the analysis of the social arena, the point of departure for Adler is neither "abstract individuals" nor "society", which he considers "empty abstractions"⁸² but, what he calls a "societalised men", i.e. the idea that the basis for all sociation is to be found in "individual consciousness". The individual consciousness is not a transcendental abstraction, but an indivisible aspect of the existence of the social arena. In this sense, it could be argued

81. M. Adler, Causalità e Teleologia nella disputa sulla scienza, op. cit. p. 176-77

82. M. Adler, "The Relation of Marxism to Classical German Philosophy", in T. Botomore, op. cit. Austro-Marxism, p.65

(as Bauer does) that "ethno-national" identities are one of the many individual manifestations of that societalised subjectivity. In a nutshell, the idea that the national community is a form of societalised subjectivity is precisely the core of Otto Bauer's theory, as it will be shown in the next chapter.

Adler's second critical path is directed against all forms of economic reductionism of the Second and Third International. In later writings it was also directed against the reductionist nature of the of Marxist-Leninist discourse. Adler found Lenin's philosophical criticism of the works of Avenarius and Mach⁸³, philosophically deficient and with *a musty aroma of philosophical and theoretical necromancy*. For Adler, Materialism in Lenin's hands becomes a dogmatic world view in which "dialectic is a mere sham and cover for unresolved problems"

It is no longer possible in this fashion, as habit, opinion or philosophical standpoint may dictate... simply to begin with either spirit or matter, nor can the so-called external world just be set up independent of our consciousness without falling, as Lenin did, into precisely what he accuses the idealists of, namely "the most thickheaded fideism"⁸⁴

As it will be shown in the next chapter, the specific configuration of the nationalities problem in Austria, the original response of the socialist party, and the productive theoretical debate that resulted from the neo-Kantian critique of Historical Materialism, were all contributing factors for the development of the nationalities theory of Otto Bauer.

83. see V.I. Lenin, Materialism and Empirocriticism

84. M. Adler, Lehrbuch der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung, quoted by Peter Heintel, op. cit. p. 104

Chapter 7: Otto Bauer and the National Question

...so in a socialist society, no new or foreign element of culture will be able to gain access to a nation without fusing with the culture of that nation, without entering into a transformative relation with it, and without being deeply influenced by it. The autonomy of distinctive national cultural communities will mean that the cultural differences between them will become more pronounced after their socialist transformation, despite the elimination or reduction of material differences.

Integration of the totality of peoples (*völkern*) to their national cultural community, full achievement of self-determination of nations, growing spiritual differentiation of nations - this is the meaning of Socialism.¹

In contrast to the reductionist analysis of the national phenomenon represented in all mainstream theoretical discussions on the national question in the Third and Second international, Bauer's assertion that the fulfillment of socialism will imply "growing spiritual differentiation of nations", represents a glaring contradiction. This is because in the above mentioned paradigms, national existence cannot transcend considerations of class position, and therefore cannot be located outside the paradigmatic boundaries of class determination. In the economic paradigm, socialism is required by definition to both transcend and abolish the process of class determination in all forms of societalised existence. From this perspective socialism and national existence are clearly incompatible. A Gramscian analysis will go along with Bauer's argument only to the point in which this growing spiritual differentiation of nations results

1. Die Nationalitätenfrage und Die Sozialdemokratie, 1924 edition in Otto Bauer Werkeausgabe (OBW), Vienna 1975 Vol 1 p. 168-

from the presence of a politically hegemonic force that coalesces the national community with the aid of a strong "Jacobinian" collective will. The aim of this is to articulate the "national" with "international" dimensions of cultural and political existence. Would this imply that the work of Otto Bauer provides a definitive break with both branches of economism in the analysis of national communities? . In this chapter it will be argued that Bauer develops a far reaching discussion of the national question that permits the conceptualisation and definition of the national phenomenon outside the paradigmatic field of class determination - an almost unique event in the Marxist tradition. But at the same time, this analysis is undermined by Bauer's contention that the most important causal factors of the process of national transformation are crucially influenced by events that take place at the level of the economy.

The Context of Bauer's work

The nationalities theory of Otto Bauer has been unjustifiably omitted from many contemporary discussions on the theoretical and empirical aspects of the process of national formation. In the English-reading world Otto Bauer's work has been until recently almost completely ignored.² While Bauer's monumental book Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemok-

2. For a recent refreshing discussion on the work of Bauer see R. Munck, "Otto Bauer, towards a Marxist Theory of Nationalism", in Capital and Class, 25 pp. 84-97; R. Munck, The Difficult Dialogue, Marxism and Nationalism, Zed Press, London 1986. prior to the publication of this work, L. Kolakowski in op. cit. Main Currents of Marxism, Vol 2, pp 285-297 and H. Mommsen and A. Martiny's article in op. cit. Encyclopaedia of Marxism, Communism and Western Society pp.39-45 were some of the very few publications in English with correct interpretations of the work of Bauer.

ratie is considered *Epochemachend* in the Marxist theory of the National Question, it has so far not been translated into English, except for some subsections of paragraphs 10 and 30.³ In French, there is also no available translation of Otto Bauer's work, but some chapters have been published in translation in the excellent reader Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale⁴, and it is only recently that the Spanish-reading audience had the opportunity to read Bauer's complete book.⁵ There is also a partial translation into Hebrew.⁶ However, not only is Bauer's work not available in English or French, but most contemporary works on nations and nationalism ignore Bauer's work or only make passing references to it which, as Kolakowski argues, are "generally incorrect"⁷.

3. in T. Bottomore, op. cit. Austro Marxism, p. 102-117.

4. Francois Maspero, Paris, 1974

5. La Cuestión de las Nacionalidades y la Social Democracia, Siglo - Veintiuno Editores S.A., series Biblioteca del Pensamiento Socialista, edited by J. Aricó Mexico 1979

6. Hashela Haleumit, Sifriat Hapoalim, Tel Aviv 1943

7. L. Kolakowski op. cit. p. 285. For example, in his stimulating book Theories of Nationalism, London, Duckworth London 1971, 2nd edition 1984, A. D. Smith only has a passing reference to Bauer, and in a recent article, Smith wrongly equates Bauer's work with the voluntaristic theory of E. Renan. See "Nationalism and Classical Social Theory" British Journal of Sociology, vol 34, n. 1 Mar. 1983 p. 23. On the same misinterpretation see H. B. Davis. Socialism and Nationalism, op. cit. p. 151 and A. Touraine, "Sociological Intervention on the internal Dynamics of the Occitanist Movement" in E. Tiryakian and R. Rogowski, New Nationalisms of the Developed West, Allen & Unwin London 1985, p. 167. Bauer in fact, explicitly rejects Renan's theory by arguing

In spite of the challenge to contemporary Marxism posed by the recurrence of nationalist movements the highly original contribution of Bauer appears to have been forgotten. This omission is all the more puzzling when the prominent role of Bauer's arguments in the debates around the turn of the century is taken into account⁸. Some contemporary writers acknowledge the exceptional quality of of Bauer's work: Kolakowski considers that Bauer's work is *...the best treatise on nationality problems to be found in Marxist literature and one of the most significant products of Marxist theory in general*, while H. B. Davis argues that Bauer's book remains to this day *the most pretentious Marxist treatise in the field*⁹ . In light of the above comments, Bauer's absence

that this theory is *unsatisfactory* because it ignores the all important question of *why we wish to link our fate with one group of human and not with others* and that is equally incorrect to say that *all human beings that wish to belong to a nation" are ipso facto a national community*. Besides for Bauer, awareness of nationhood is not an essential aspect of belonging to a national community. OBW, op. cit. vol 1 p. 229. For an English translation of E. Renan's essay "Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?", see J.Figgs & R.Laurence (eds.) The History of Freedom and other essays, London MacMillan 1919

8. K. Kautsky wrote an article in Die Neue Zeit to polemicise with Bauer's work. See "Nationalität und Internationalität, to which Bauer wrote a rejoinder "Bemerkungen zur Nationalitätenfrage", Die Neue Zeit, March 1908. Both articles have been translated into Spanish and included in op. cit. La segunda Internacional y el Problema Colonial. Stalin's monograph, op. cit. Marxism and the National Question, was mainly written to counteract Bauer's influence in Russia. Lenin also repeatedly takes issue with Bauer, see "Critical Remarks on the National Question", op. cit.

from contemporary theoretical debates is puzzling.

So why was Bauer forgotten? This form of "theoretical amnesia", appears to be related to the abortive theoretical problems of the Marxist tradition in trying to come to grips with the national phenomenon. In this context, it is possible to detect three causes, firstly, the theories of Bauer are perceived by some historical commentators to be primarily devoted to the discussion of the nationalities problem in the context of Austro-Hungary. Consequently, the argument ceases to have any relevance after the collapse of the dual monarchy. While it is clearly the case that from 600 or so pages of Bauer's work, roughly half is devoted to the analysis of the development of national communities within the context of Austro-Hungary, it is also clear that the theoretical conceptualisation used for the discussion of the case studies, goes far beyond the limitations of the Austrian case. Secondly, Bauer's main programmatic proposals in the context of the Habsburg state, (The notion of "cultural national autonomy") are confused with his theoretical analysis, to the point that the failure of the programme of national cultural autonomy is considered tantamount to the failure of Bauer's theory. This is the line of argument taken by most Marxist Leninist critics of Bauer, who are anxious to criticise the notion of "national cultural autonomy" because it contradicts Lenin's theories of both, "democratic centralism", and the "Right of Nations to Self Determination". The Jewish "Bund" and other Social Democratic parties of oppressed national minorities in Czarist Russia were inspired by the programme of national cultural autonomy in their demands for self rule in the context of Czarist Russia. Given that the Bolsheviks opposed the demands for national and political decentralisation sketched in the "cultural autonomy" programme, it was for them a matter of great political urgency to refute these arguments.¹⁰ This understand-

9. L. Kolakowski, op. cit. p. 255; H.B. Davis, op. cit. p. 149

ing of Bauer's position is incorrect in a number of ways. The Austrian Gesamtpartei main programmatic proposals on the national question (The Brno programme) must not be confused with Bauer's theoretical analysis, and also the project of "national cultural" autonomy should not be attributed to Bauer.¹¹ As was shown in previous chapters, this confusion results from the Bolshevik debate on the national question in the context of Czarist Russia. It was Karl Renner and not who Bauer originally developed the programme of national cultural autonomy, and it was first discussed in the Brno congress of 1899 when Bauer was too young to attend. The third source of confusion is that the programme of national cultural autonomy is not a theoretical analysis, but a programmatic political position developed in the context of the bitter national struggles of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bauer himself was critical of aspects of the programme, as Lenin was always quick to quote. Bauer's reservations related to the position of the workers' organisations vis-a-vis national organisations, and the rights of non territorial national minorities.¹²

The third element that contributed to Bauer's unpopularity with classical Marxists had to do with the dogmatic rigidities of epiphenomenalism and class reductionism. In the previous chapter

10. See V. I. Lenin "The Right of Nations to Self Determination" and "Critical Remarks on the National Question" in Collected Works, vol 20. On the Bund, see H.Tobias, The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905, Stanford University Press, 1965

11. for the essential arguments of this mistaken criticism, see Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, op. cit., sections on Bauer and "Cultural National Autonomy".

12. See OBW, Vol 1 pp. 571-582

it was argued that Max Adler in the course of his double debate with Neo Kantianism and classical Marxism sustained that the forms of the social cannot be ascertained through mediating causal laws. Bauer's "Nationalitätenfrage" represents, as will be shown in a moment, a concrete elaboration of these postulates in the analysis of the national question. An economistic epistemology can hardly encapsulate Bauer's conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, since he deviates from the postulates of economism on the crucial issues of the non-reducibility of the forms of the social, and refuses to apply the methodological logic of the natural sciences to the understanding of social relations of causality. Given the paralyzing impact of economism in the theoretical development of the Marxist tradition, it is not surprising that the "heretical" ideas of the Austro-Marxists were consigned to oblivion. In recent years, serious attempts have been made to rethink economistic categories of analysis and to sensitise the Marxian tradition to non-economic agents and to the plural nature of the social process of causality¹³. Given this novel way of understanding the social arena, this would appear to be appropriate time to resuscitate the Austro Marxist tradition from its undeserving hibernation, and in particular to critically examine the insights that Bauer may offer to the understanding of that elusive and recurrent problem called nationalism.

The conceptualisation of nations in Bauer's work

In sharp distinction to most Marxist discussions of the national phenomenon, Bauer does not begin his work with the evaluation of the role of the bourgeoisie, nor from the mode of production, not even from the point of view of the class struggle. Also

 13. See among others the pioneering works of E. Laclau and V. Mouffe, op. cit. Hegemony and Socialist Strategy and op. cit. A. Cutler et al., Marx Capital and Capitalism Today

in a clear rejection of any form of essentialism, Bauer does not provide an initial definition of the national community, and in his new introduction to the 1924 edition, he warns the reader that the definition that he will subsequently provide is not the important part of his conceptualisation of the national phenomenon.

As a matter of fact, the center of gravity of my theory of the nation is not in my definition of a nation, but in the description of the integrative process out of which the modern nation emerged. If my theory can claim any merit, it is that it derived that process of integration for the first time from economic development, from the changes in the social structure and from the articulation of classes in society.¹⁴

As G. Haupt argues,¹⁵ Bauer's purpose in embarking in his detailed analytical discussion, is to try to understand the national community as a discrete unity resulting from a complex and multidimensional ensemble of social forces, and to elaborate a theory that is both argued from a Marxist standpoint and capable of grasping the nature of the national phenomenon not as a static unit but as a dynamic process of transformation and continuous change. In order to do this, Bauer begins his analysis from what he considers to be the "concrete expression" of the existence of the national community in each individual member of the nation. This what he calls the "National Character"

The question of the nation can only be explored on the basis

14. OBW, op. cit., Vol 1 p. 66

15. G. Haupt, "Les Marxistes face à la Question Nationale: l'histoire du problème", in G. Haupt, C. Weill, M. Lowy Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, op. cit. p.47

of the notion of a "national character". If we were to take any German to a foreign country, e.g., to sojourn among the English, he would immediately realize that these people are different, with a different way of thinking and a different way of feeling... provisionally we shall call the set of physical and spiritual features that distinguish one nation from another its "national character".¹⁶

The concept of "national character" does not, according to Bauer, exhaust all the possibilities of grouping human beings. Besides national characteristics, all human beings have a common sense of humanity, while classes, professional groups, interest groups, oppressed groups, etc. have common characteristics that transcend national differences. However, Bauer attaches a distinctive quality to national identities, and in a moment it will be shown why. He also acknowledges in the spirit of Marxism that ties of solidarity unite workers from different nations, but carefully differentiates this solidarity from the concept of "national character". For Bauer the question of cultural bonds between the working class and the bourgeoisie of any given nation is not connected with the question of the attitude of workers to their own bourgeoisie, or to the workers of other national communities.¹⁷ The question of solidarity between workers is an ethical and political issue, which as such is not connected with the alleged intensity of the national community of character.

One of the main difficulties with the concept of "national character" is that the term has been so successfully monopolised by ethnocentric and racist theories, to the point that in many contemporary discussions the concept lost its previous polysemic nature, to become a code word for the justification of some type

16. OBW, op. cit. Vol 1, p. 70

17. OBW, op. cit. Vol. 1 , ff. p.71-72

of inherent superiority of one national community over another. In this sense, it is possible to find in most discussions of the national phenomenon, particularly those that take place within the Marxist tradition, a studious avoidance of any positive use of the term, perpetuating in this way its conceptual monopoly by racist and ethnocentric theories. Yet the curious fact remains that historians,¹⁸ as much any branch of the social sciences including Marxism constantly use the concept. The terms "French Structuralism", "German Marxism", "Austro Marxism", "British Labourism", "American Jingoism" have a precise meaning which is often put to use by people who at the same time will strenuously deny any significance to national characteristics. On the other hand, the term "character" is distinctly polysemic, as Metzger shows in his interesting but somewhat dated article. In German scientific discourse, the term Charakter generally refers to a sum of traits, and sometimes to their configuration¹⁹. In English, in addition to this, it could either show a high degree of individuality (s/he is a great character) or alternatively a collective generalisation closely connected with will power ("strong" or "weak" character). In classical Marxism, the notion "the character of the working class" is used to conceptualise the configuration of traits and characteristics that result from the common position of the proletariat in the capitalist mode of production. When classical Marxism sustains that "workers have more in common with each other than with the bourgeoisie of their respective nation", it is not to deny the specific character of the working class or the national community, but it is merely to

18. W. P. Metzger, "Generalizations about National Character: An Analytical Essay" in L. Gottschalk (ed.), Generalization in the Writing of History, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1963, p. 77

19. W. McDougall, Character and Personality, quoted by W. Metzger, op. cit. p.79

assert as an ontological certainty the necessary condition that one set of characterological traits derived from an economic position supersedes others derived from national existence. This argument is as absurd and undemonstrable as its ontological mirror image, the equally absurd notion that "national identity always transcends class loyalties". To use terminology borrowed from Max Adler, both assertions portray a static metaphysical essentialism incompatible with the dynamic specificity of the social arena. It is against both forms of paralyzing essentialism that the Bauer's theory is directed.

Bauer is also aware that he is marching on dangerous ground, since he agrees that the concept of "national character" has been almost exclusively the area of concern of trans-historical and idealistic approaches, which maintain that the "national character" is a metaphysical essentiality from which causal explanations of national behavior are derived. To avoid what he considers to be "transcendentalist distortions", Bauer argues that it is always essential to locate the notion of "national character" in an historical perspective:

Above all, the national character has unjustly been ascribed a durability which can be refuted by historical evidence. It cannot be denied that German tribes shared a great number of characteristics at the time of Tacitus. These common characteristics distinguished them from other peoples, e.g. from the Romans of the same period. Equally, one cannot deny that the Germans of our time have certain common characteristics which differ from the characteristics of other peoples. This is true irrespective of the way in which these characteristics might have developed. However, no educated person will contest that a contemporary German has more in common with other contemporary civilised peoples (Kulturnationen) than with the Germans at the time of Tacitus.²⁰

For Bauer then, national character is not understood as an abstract metaphysical essence, but as an historically modifiable characteristic, which culturally links the members of a national community over a given historical period and is transformed from generation to generation. What links one generation with another is not the immutable transference of a mythical national spirit but the fact that contemporary generations do not operate in a vacuum, but enter a social arena shaped by the historical circumstances of previous ones. In this sense, as with any other social characteristic, the national character is modifiable by historical forces, while at the same time, it cannot be referred back to previous generations since contemporary experiences change beyond recognition the nature of the phenomena under consideration. Both dimensions, the historical and the contemporary, are an essential ingredient for determining the logic of the present configuration of the national character. The national character is then, a discrete unit of contemporary and historical forces, none of which can be seen in isolation as a determinant factor, while both of them are always present in forming national identities.

Another important source of the misinterpretation of the concept of "national character" is that even explanations that accept the historical relativity of the term, refer to it as a causal explanatory concept.

When we describe the national character, we do not explain with it the causes of any given actions, but we only describe the common characteristics of a great number of actions ...this is not at all a causal explanation but a mere generalisation, a mere recognition of already observed common features of different individual actions.²¹

20. OBW, Vol 1. op. cit. p. 71

The important consequence that Bauer derives from this argument is that national character is not the causal factor in national existence, but on the contrary, the concrete, descriptive expression of the latter. Consequently for Bauer a national character is an historical construct, and as such is the empirical expression of national existence at a given historical period. It is not the point of departure for the analysis of the nexus that links the national community, but on the contrary, it is the concrete embodiment of such a nexus. As such it is not an explanation, but the very element that has to be explained in trying to understand the nature of the "national character".

The concept of national character is not a explanation, but rather something to be explained. By identifying the diversity of national characters science (Wissenschaft) has not solved the problem of the nation, it has merely formulated it.²²

For Bauer, then, the community of character is emphatically not what constitutes the cultural specificity of national communities, but it is only a concrete, empirical expression of the latter. Once the set of empirical characteristics that originates what he terms *the community of character* has been identified, the task of trying to understand the nature of the national community only begins. For Bauer, a correct understanding of the historical and contemporary processes that delineate the specificity of concrete national communities requires the formulation of causal explanations of the empirically and observable elements that con-

21. OBW, Vol 1, op. cit. p. 72

22. OBW, Vol 1, op. cit. p. 74

stitute what he calls the national character. In this formulation it is possible to detect the impact of Max Adler's dual debate with neo-Kantianism and classical Marxism in the work of Bauer. Crucial to Adler's critical stance in relation to both neo-Kantians and classical Marxists, was a strict denial of any form of essentialism in the definition of the scope and nature of forces that give content to the social arena. The neo-Kantian distinction between "is" and "ought" is refuted by Adler by a strict reference to relations of causality, thereby rejecting any teleological inference in the analysis of the social arena. On the other hand, the "iron laws of necessity" of classical Marxism are equally rejected through the same logic, because they postulate unacceptable forms of what Adler calls metaphysical essentialism. Relations of causality are to be ascertained through what we today recognize as a strict "deconstruction" of the social phenomena under consideration, rather than through ontologically privileged relations of determination.²³ Following Adler's logic, Bauer is on firm grounds in his attempt to demystify the equivocal notion of national character by strictly relativising and contextualising its existence. He however runs the risk of falling into the opposite form of essentialism, that of epiphenomenalism. Not in the concrete manifestation epiphenomenalism sustained in the ongoing discussion of Marxism and the National phenomenon- the transparency of economic forces- but in the more general sense of negating any form of autonomous existence to a social construct. To entirely account for the existence and character of any empirically given social phenomena in terms of strict relations of causality, implies seriously undermining the scope for autonomous existence of the phenomena under consideration. In this sense it is useful to refer to a similar problem in structural linguistics, that of the status of

23. Max Adler, Causalità e Teleologia nella Disputa sulla Scienza, italian translation of Kausalität un Teleologie im Streit um die Wissenschaft, op. cit. pp.20-22

the sign in the relations between signifier and the signified.

To briefly summarize a complex and protracted discussion, earlier interpretations of the concept of "the sign"²⁴ as a form of signification, attributed to the "signifier" the status of the unequivocal carrier, in which each signifier denoted a single signified, except in clearly defined cases of polysemy. This situation proved to be inadequate to understand the dynamics of the sign, since not every signifier responded unequivocally to the configuration of the signified, and this required the acknowledgment of a certain lack of correspondence between the signifier and signified. This made possible a more autonomous notion of the signifier, which had to eventually depart from the original De Saussurean configuration of relations of causality by conceptualising the notion of "free floating" signifiers. The conceptual problem here resulted from the inability of the one-dimensional relation of causality between signified -signifier to theoretically encapsulate the the dynamic nature of the process changes in meaning. In other words, it became impossible to conceptualise a static or "fixed" relation of attribution of meaning. Thus the relation of attribution of meaning between signifier and signified is never complete, and the gap opens the way for the existence of autonomous or "free floating" signifiers.²⁵ The implication of this for Bauer's discussion of the national character is that the requirement to constantly identify the causal dimension of the national character not only implies its lack of autonomy, but also its intrinsic status as a

24. See for example Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, Fontana edition, London 1974

25. For a thought provoking discussion of the political consequences of this gap see E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist strategy, Ch. 3 "Beyond the Positivity of the social: Antagonisms and Hegemony" op. cit. pp. 93-148

vehicle for the expression of something else, namely the elements that shape the historical dimension of national existence. Thus the concept of "national character" as defined by Bauer appears to lack any autonomous existence, and this may create some ambiguities in the use of the concept. The difficulty here arises at two levels: firstly, Bauer does not clearly indicate the difference between "national character" and what it is called today "national identity" meaning by this the positional subjectivity of national agents.²⁶ Secondly, the initial relation of causality between on the one hand national existence, and on the other hand national identity and national character, is often subverted by a polysemic configuration of the latter elements. While in some cases it is possible to detect paths of causality to observed concrete features of national character, these features cannot always be referred back to the causal agents in view of their dynamic interplay with other aspects of social existence. To provide brief example; even if one is to accept the likelihood that the centuries long colonial encounter was one contributing factor in the configuration of the Anglo-British and French "national identity" before World War II, it will a profoundly erroneous simplification of the problematic of national character to argue that because of this causal factor, both the Anglo British and French National characters are irrevocably moulded to enter into relations of domination. Bauer's attempt to strictly relativise and contextualise what he calls the national character is not yet sufficient to explain its fluidity. In addition to that contextualisation and relativisation, it is also important to recognise the permanent unfixity of relations of causality between national existence, national identity and national character and the likelihood of an autonomous configuration of the elements involved, including the

26. Bauer, at will be seen in a moment, refers to a form of "subjective selectivity", but this is not an "identity" in the sense of a subjective positional definition.

need to redefine of relations of interiority and exteriority in all dimensions in a way that permits the development of an analytical logic that allows us to transcend the original relations of causality. The definition which Bauer bases on strict relations of causality severely restricts the autonomous features of the phenomena under consideration, and impairs the understanding of the multidimensional existence of the national phenomenon.

Bauer also criticises the idea that national character is a tangible and empirical manifestation of the "spirit of the people" (Volksgeist). This idea is derived from the Hegelian tradition which as we have seen, which dichotomizes national communities between "historical" and "non historical" nations, according to the abilities of their respective "national spirit" to build independent national states. Marx and Engels took over this idealistic and metaphysical consideration, transforming the concept of "national spirit", to the more materialist, but not less metaphysical notion of the ability of the national community in question to enter the capitalist mode of production". Bauer argues that the national spirit cannot be used to explain the national community because it is nothing else but the transformation of the national character into a metaphysical essentiality.²⁷ But while categorically rejecting the causal validity of the notion of "spirit of peoples" (Volkgeist), Bauer nevertheless accepts as a point of departure for his analysis, the Marxian dichotomy between "historical" vs. "non historical nations". This done by strictly qualifying the position of Marx and Engels, as it will be shown in a moment, through the notion of "the historical awakening of nations without history".

For Bauer then the common national character is not what constitutes the national community, but is only its concrete expression. The national character is one of the expressions of

27. OBW, Vol 1, op. cit. p. 77

"societalised" existence, it is the expression of the representation of what Bauer calls "social reality" in each national subject. What distinguishes a national community is that its members are the result of the same historical forces operating in a given "society"²⁸. Once the national character has been identified, Bauer argues that it must be explained in terms of the social and historical conditions that lead to its emergence. In order to do this, Bauer narrows the descriptiveness of the term by arguing that the national character is a determining factor in the sphere of what he calls "Will" (*wille*). For Bauer "will" is exteriorised in every cognitive process through which a plurality of subjects commonly perceive certain characteristics of a given observable phenomenon, attaching importance only to those commonly perceived characteristics, and ignoring or giving secondary importance to others.²⁹ In other words, "will" is the concrete expression in every "individual" subject of the "societalised"³⁰ nature of human experience. Once this definition of the sphere of "will" has been established, Bauer proceeds to conceptualise the notion of "national character" in a less descriptive manner. The notion that the national character is the set of physical and spiritual connotations that characterise the co-nationals is thereby enlarged by the idea that the mechanism that permits the

 28. M. García Pelayo, La Teoría de la Nación en Otto Bauer, op. cit. p. 31

29. OBW, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 170

30. meaning the constitution of human subjectivity out of the social forms of existence (interaction). In this sense individuality is strictly unthinkable outside the social arena. The concept of "socialisation" used in main stream sociology, refers to the same process but from the opposite point of view, namely that of an "individual" that pre exists society but "learns" social attitudes.

presence of the national character in every single member of the national community is the common orientation of "will". Consequently, the empirical generalisation called by Bauer "national character", is in fact the tangible expression of a "collective will" resulting from the historical experience of the national community, and exteriorised in each member through a societalised selective perception of external reality. This is, according to Bauer, what explains the fact that different national communities have different perceptive criteria, develop different forms of morality, of law, different aesthetic criteria, different notion of "beautiful" and "ugly", different ways of perceiving religion, and even different ways of understanding scientific thought.³¹

In the new introduction written for the 1924 edition of the "Nationalitätenfrage", Bauer expands the this notion of the perceptual differences of different national communities. After arguing that it is not difficult to understand the "strong resistance" that his use of the notion of national character generated in the marxist tradition- given the abusive and "shameful" use given to the concept by nationalists during the war, Bauer goes on to further justify the use of the concept with a number of examples. For this purpose, he heavily relies on what he defines as a "highly stimulating" book by the French philosopher of science Pierre Duhem, Objective and Structure of Physical Theories³² . In this book Bauer argues that Duhem compares the way in which the most important "English" (englishcher) and French physicist conduct their research, and finds, in Bauer's words "remarkable national differences". The French are interested in coherent, clear and non-contradictory systems. They develop verifiable hypothesis from fundamental laws through a

31. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 171

32. The edition quoted by Bauer is the German translation published in Leipzig in 1908. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. pp. 53-54

deductive method. In opposition to this, Bauer argues following Duhem, the "English" develop mechanical models from which they deduce a conglomerate of empirical laws. They are not too disturbed if the hypothesis they use to construct their empirical models are not connected, or even if they contradict each other. For the "English", the goal is to grasp their research in a comprehensive, understandable and graphic way. For the French, the goal is to understand in a clear and orderly way. Quoting Duhem, Bauer argues that the French have a "superior capacity" for abstraction and generalisation; the English for representing graphically complex equations, and to explain them through simple and clear representations.³³

Duhem also argues that there are differences in the way in which French and English physicists use algebra. For the French, physical theory is a logical system, and algebraic equations are only an auxiliary device to put in evidence the fundamental hypothesis. For the English, algebraic calculus is like a mechanical model, it exactly reproduces the movements of the researched phenomena; they are not too concerned in establishing a narrow equivalence between the idea and the algebraic symbol. They leave that to intuition. They have however, a "superior capacity" to understand very complex combinations in a fast and graphic manner and they are very efficient in using condensed methods of calculus. The French use classical algebra, while the English use modern algebraic symbols with numerous intermediary operations, but which require a large number of symbols and complex rules³⁴. According to Bauer, Duhem himself suggests that the differences in formulations of physical theories are the result of what he calls the "spiritual diversity" of both nations, which according to Bauer (and presumably Duhem), could

33. *ibid.*

34. *ibid.* p. 55

also be found in other branches of spiritual sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), such as the development of French philosophy from Descartes and the development of "English" philosophy from Bacon.

Bauer argues that Duhem also found differences of national character in literature. The heroes of Shakespeare and Corneille, reflect different national models. The attitudes of Auguste and Rodrigue differ significantly from the attitudes of Lady Macbeth and Hamlet.³⁵ The same logic is used by Duhem to explain the difference between "English" and French law. In France civil law is systematic, based on "abstract but clearly defined concepts". English law is less coherent, but more in tune with the needs of every day life. Bauer agrees that capitalism has "leveled the material and cultural content" of the different national communities, but in spite of this, "national specificities remain influential" in the way in which those national cultures appropriate new developments. The same criteria applies to the working class movement.

The same working class movement emerges in all industrialised states, but when confronted with the same facts of capitalist exploitation, the Italian working class reacts differently from the Scandinavian. This is what I have in mind when I refer to the "national character". I do not mean by those fallacious images of nationalist demagoguery which only discovers only heroes among its own people and only traders among others. I rather wish to express those diversities only accessible to a far more sophisticated psychological analysis which appear in the basic spiritual structure, in intellectual and aesthetic taste, in the manner of reacting to the same stimuli - in all those things we take into account if we compare the spiritual life of dif-

35. *ibid.*

ferent nations, their science and philosophy, their poetry, their music, their fine arts, their social and public life, their life-style and habits.³⁶

Bauer goes on to argue that what he calls "the nationalist interpretation of history", is based on the idea that national characters are the "essential substances" that determine historical content.

We cannot overcome that nationalist conception of history by negating either the incontestable fact of national peculiarities, or the equally incontestable fact of the diversity of "national characters". Only if we strip the national character of its substantive appearance, thereby showing that the eventual "national character" is nothing but a precipitate of past historical processes that will be further modified by the following historical processes, will we be able to overcome the nationalist conception of history.³⁷

From this Bauer defines his main task as being to explain and derive national specificities from the very history of the national community.³⁸ From this position Bauer proceeds to a narrower definition of the national character; it is not only the physical and spiritual connotations of nations, but more fundamentally the similarity in the orientation of will. The national character is a commonality of "volitive orientation" that results from the previously discussed societalised subjectivity. The diversity of historical conditions, the diverse forms of so-

36. OBW, Vol 1, op. cit. p. 56-57

37. *ibid.*, p. 57

38. *ibid.*

cial organisation as well as the diverse geographical and physical conditions of existence are liked together to produce the specificity of national existence. Thus, the historically determined conditions of existence is what creates the "causal" variables that give shape to the specificity of the national community.

But for Bauer the national community is not only the result of the historical determination of the conditions of existence, but is above all a form of both, "common" and "communitarian" experience emanating from the latter. This aspect is crucial for understanding Bauer's conceptualisation of the national community. In order to explain this last dimension Bauer introduces the conceptual elements that will shape his definition of the nation. In order to capture the contemporary dimensions of the historical legacies which have shaped the various national communities, Bauer introduces the idea that the Nation is a "Community of Fate" (Schicksalsgemeinschaft)³⁹. This concept was not invented by Bauer; it was used by Nietzsche and by Eduard von Hartmant to denote a series of events that are not actively sought or desired, but that take place outside or beyond the willful action of a group of subjects, who are nevertheless influenced by its outcome.⁴⁰ For Bauer, however, the term has a

39. For reasons that will be discussed in a moment, the concept of "Schicksalsgemeinschaft" is notoriously difficult to translate. Professor Bottomore translates it as "common destiny", see T. Bottomore, op. cit. Austro Marxism, p. 107. "Community of fate" or "commonalty of fate" appears to be a better way of translating this ambiguous notion, given that the term "Gemeinschaft" (community) is used by Bauer not in its current sociological meaning, but to denote the collective experience that finds its concrete expression in the societalised "individual" subjectivity of social agents.

40. M. García Pelayo La Teoría de la Nación en Otto Bauer, op.

related, but different meaning in the sense that it equally implies the presence of a set of historical circumstances that precedes and influences subjective awareness and is consequently "given" to subjects, but over which they can nevertheless exercise a form of transformative control resulting from their contemporary existential experience. In order to clarify the concept, it becomes necessary to provisionally embark on separate evaluation's its two interlinked dimensions: the path of historical determination and its projection to the future, and the somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term "community". The first aspect was already touched upon in the preceding discussion of the "national character".

On the second aspect Bauer sharply distinguishes two related concepts, that of community and that of homogeneity, and to illustrate the difference, he provides an historical example. England and Germany faced in the nineteenth century a similar process of capitalist development. The same historical forces crucially influenced the collective experiences of both national communities, but despite similar experiences England and Germany remained separate national communities. An "Homogeneity of Fate" implies therefore being subjected to the same historical forces. Bauer uses the example of the working class to clarify this point. Wherever the capitalist mode of production becomes dominant, an industrial proletariat emerges which experiences the same conditions of exploitation under capitalism regardless of national location. Displaying the full optimism of turn of the century class-reductionist Marxism, Bauer goes on to argue that "the proletariat of every capitalist nation" has an "homogeneous character". The same class location conferred upon them a type of character which is expressed in the same commitment to struggle, "the same revolutionary mentality, the same class morality, the same political will". But in this case it is the homogeneity of

cit. p.31

fate and not the community of fate that generated the common character.⁴¹ Even if in certain circumstances the proletariat class could be considered a community, it is certainly not, in Bauer's terminology, a Community of Fate. To be part of a "community of fate" is not the same as been subjected to the same fate. A "community of fate" signifies not only the experience of the same historical circumstances, but the experience of those circumstances in a situation of common reciprocal interaction (*durchgängige Wechselwirkung untereinander*)⁴². A national community is form of communitarian life that has a specific configuration, in that the identity of the collective is constituted by the interactive relation of its members, which is in turn replicated in the individual identity of the members. The element of "interactive reciprocity" (*Wechselwirkung*) is what distinguishes a "community of fate" from any other form of communitarian life. In this sense, the concept of "Gemeinschaft" used by Bauer is of Kantian origin, denoting two different dimen-

41. OBW, op. cit., vol 1. p.173

42. OBW, Vol. 1. op. cit. p. 172. This is derived, as Bauer acknowledges from Kant's Third analogy of experience: the principle of community. *All substances so far as they coexist, stand in thoroughgoing community, that is, in mutual interaction* I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason Random House, New York, 1958 p.131. In the introduction to the second edition of the "Nationalitätenfrage" Bauer argues that in his student years (this work was his doctoral thesis written at the age of 24!), he was "fascinated" by the critical philosophy of Kant, but subsequently overcame his "kantian childish illness" (*kantianischen Kinderkrankheiten*, *ibid.* p. 53). However, over this crucial aspect of his work -the definition of community- the Kantian influence as well as the impact of Max Adler's work is clear, and Bauer still sustained the validity of this conceptualisation in the above mentioned new introduction and in later works.

sions of community life. One of "common homogeneous characteristics" which is best denoted by the latin word *Communio*, which means a quality of equality of circumstances and homogeneity, and the latin word *Commercium* which denotes a dynamic process of interaction.⁴³ While every "*Commercium*" is a "*Communio*" not every "*Communio*" is a "*Commercium*", and this is what Bauer has in mind when he distinguishes between "Community of Fate" and "Homogeneity of Fate". Following from the above discussion, Bauer conceptualizes the nation in the following way:

Consequently, it is possible to define the nation as a community of character that it is not born out of an homogeneity of fate, but out of a community of fate. This is also the significance of language for the nation. With the human beings with which I am in closest communication I manufacture a language, and with the human beings with which I have a common language I am in the closest communication.⁴⁴

In this unusual way of understanding the concept of community, Bauer is also crucially influenced by the previously discussed work of Max Adler on causality and teleology. In the last chapter it was shown how Adler conceptualised the notion of the irreducibility of the forms of the social through his debate with the neo-Kantians. According to Adler, social links logically precede the existence of the "individuality" and "society", without which both are strictly unthinkable. Consequently, it is the very process of interaction that determines the configuration

43. A. Agnelli, op. cit. Questione Nazionale e Socialismo., p. 135; M. Garcia Pelayo, op. cit La Teoria de la Nación en O. Bauer, op. cit. p. 32

44. OBW, op. cit. vol 1 p. 174

of the social arena as well as the constitution of subjective identities. In this sense, Bauer argues that the process of common reciprocal interaction lived in a permanent mutual relation generates the national community and expresses itself in an inter-subjective bond that crucially shapes each "individual national identity".

...the nation constitutes a social phenomenon. It is not a sum of individuals, but each individual is the product of the nation; the fact that they are all the product of the same society makes them into one community. Those characteristics that appear as distinguishing features of individuals are, in reality, a social product -and indeed for all members of the nation they are the same social product- that is what makes a collection of individuals a nation. In this way nations do not exist as creatures of a formal [legal] convention (*Satzung*), rather they logically, but not historically, pre-exist every formal convention.⁴⁵

45. OBW, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 185, M. Adler Kausalität und Teleologie im Streit um die Wissenschaft, quoted by Bauer from Marx-Studien Vol 1, p. 369 ff., in the italian translation op. cit. Causalità e Teleologia.., p. 166 ff. While the term "Satzung" ethimologically translates as "statute" or "standing rule", in this case it is derived from the work of the neo-Kantian legal philosopher R. Stammler, Wirtschaft und Recht nach der materialistische Geschichtsauffassung, here it means the formal convention that makes possible the rule of law. Stammler's work was a critique of Historical Materialism against wich Adler took issue in Causality and Teleology. (see previous chapter). Stammler uses the concept of "Gemeinschaft" to indicate "the final expression of unity under the law" (T. E. Willey, op. cit. Back to Kant, p. 125). Bauer strongly disagrees with Stammler's interpretation of Gemeinschaft. see OBW, op. cit. vol 1. p.185

From the above it is possible to infer that for Bauer the question of how the boundaries between national communities come into existence is quite different from the question of how the national community is constituted. Historical and/or political circumstances can link or separate groups of people, and the explanations for this are to be found in a more comprehensive analysis of the historical conjuncture, and not in the theory of the formation of nations. Also from the ensuing discussion it is possible to notice that Bauer's use of the concept of "community" is substantially different from the way in which it is used in mainstream sociology following Tönnies. Bauer knows and highly rates the work of Tönnies "Gemeinschaft and Gessellschaft", but he nevertheless gives the concepts of "community" and "society" a "different meaning".⁴⁶ In his usage of both terms, Bauer explicitly follows Adler's critical discussion of Stammler's neo-Kantian legal terminology. For Stammler "the essence of society" is the process of co-operation of human beings under an external formal convention (*Bussere Satzung*). In sharp distinction with this however, the "essence of the Community" (in the sense of "commercium") is that the individual, in his/her "physical and spiritual being" is the product of the numerous interactive relations with other individuals, and therefore expresses in his/her individuality concrete manifestations of the "communitarian character". Consequently, what distinguish the nation from all other communities of character (in the sense of *communio*), is that the nation is not a mere homogeneity of fate, but on the contrary, it only comes into existence and develops as a community of fate (in the sense of *commercium*). Bauer immediately qualifies this statement by arguing that communities of fate cannot emerge unless a given "external formal convention" delimits

46. Bauer praises Tönnies' book as "an excellent work", OBW, op. cit. vol 1, p. 186. One of the various English translations of the work of Tönnies, is Community and Society, translated and introduced by P. Loomis, Michigan State University Press, 1957

their boundaries. This is to say that the boundaries of the national community are set by an external framework and the explanation as how that external framework comes into existence is different from the question of what constitutes a national community. The separation however, is not as clear cut as Bauer appears to suggest.

If say, the Finnish Language is the formal framework that constitutes boundaries of the Finish nation as an interactive community, and the Argentinian state is what constitutes the formal framework through which the Argentinian nation as an interactive community comes into existence, Bauer is right in saying that the interactive relation in both cases could be conceptualised outside the framework that brought both national communities into existence, since the interactive relation is replicated in each "subjective position". However, in the long run the "subjective positions" will tend to disintegrate in the absence of a framework that makes possible the existence of an "interactive community". Consequently both communities could only continue to exist on condition that the framework that delimits their interactive relation is maintained, replaced or reproduced. While it is possible to think of an "Argentinian cultural community" outside the framework of the Argentinian state, and a "Finish cultural community" that exists outside the framework of the Finnish language, both subjective positions will on the long run disintegrate and be transformed into something else unless an "external framework" is found to preserve the specific form of interactive relation that permits the existence of their "subjective positions". Also as it will be seen in a moment, Bauer neglects one of the most important "external frameworks" in forming national communities: the state. Consequently, while it is possible to separate the interaction from the framework that generates the interaction, the interactive relation will eventually cease to function outside that framework. According to Bauer, in the case of the national community this function of "external framework" is often given by language.⁴⁷ However, in keeping with his non essentialist

stance, Bauer argues that it would be misleading to hold that language is the causal factor in the formation of national communities, and this puts him in a direct collision course with K. Kautsky, whose key argument in his epiphenomenalist theory of the national question is that language is the determinant factor in the formation of Nations. In a critical review of Bauer's book in the Neue Zeit, Kautsky argues that in Bauer's work *the crucial mistake from which all others are derived* is that Bauer *refuses to recognise the strongest link* between members of the national community which is *evident for everyone to see: their common language*.⁴⁸ To this criticism Bauer responds in a later article by arguing that at a superficial level there is no disagreement between Kautsky and himself, empirically observable nations are communities of language. But this trivial, superficial observation is not yet sufficient to provide a conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, for Bauer feels that he cannot be contented by the observation that every nation uses a common language:

I may rather ask, why precisely this particular group of human beings and not another, or indeed, why not a narrower group makes use of the same language? The question of which force delimits the boundaries of communication leads to the concept of community of communication, and if we wish to causally determine the boundaries of communication we will eventually reach the concept of "community of fate" through

47. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. p. 186

48. K. Kautsky, Nationalität un Internationalität, Ergänzungshefte zur Neuen Zeit, 1, January 1908, translated into Spanish by U. Köchmann in op. cit. La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, vol 2, p. 127

the concept of community of culture.⁴⁹

In fact, the central theoretical chapter of Bauer's book represents a meticulous attempt to provide an answer to this question.⁵⁰

As a consequence of Bauer's emphasis on the process of interactive relation as the basis for the formation of the national community, a careful discussion of patterns of communication is an essential dimension of Bauer's work. In spite of Kautsky's assertion to the contrary, for Bauer language is the principal medium of communication through which the national community is constituted.

...even if there are patterns of communication that link German and English workers, they are much more diffuse than the patterns of communication that link the English worker with the English bourgeois. Both live in the same cities, both read the same murals, the same newspapers and participate in the same sporting or political events....Language is the instrument of communication. If there were stronger links of communication between English and German workers, they would have the same language in common, and the community of language would not be between the English bourgeoisie and the English working class.⁵¹

49. O. Bauer, "Bemerkungen zur Nationalitätenfrage" in Die Neue Zeit, 26, vol. 1, March 1908, translated into spanish by C. Ceretti in op. cit. La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, vol 2, p.175-76

50. "Der Begriff der Nation" (the concept of the nation), in op. cit. OBW, vol 1, pp. 170-197

51. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 173

Consequently for Bauer, language is the "great medium of communication", the need for communication generates common languages, and when the linguistic patterns of communication disintegrate, so does the national community, for it is "unthinkable" for a national community to maintain its cultural commonalty without a common language.⁵² Up to this point it superficially seems that Bauer is replicating the epiphenomenalist discourse of Kautsky. However in the introduction to the 1924 edition Bauer attempts to dispel the Kautskian idea that the community of language is the concrete expression of the process of economic development and the constitutive causal factor in the formation of national communities.

...the community of language is the product of a very complex process of integration and differentiation. The dissolution of the community of fate leads to a cultural, and consequently, linguistic differentiation; the articulation of a community of fate leads to cultural and consequently, linguistic integration. The community of language is only a partial manifestation of the cultural community and a product of the community of fate.⁵³

Consequently, if a common language is an important factor for the unity of the national community, it does not mean, as Kautsky argues, that language in itself generates the process of cultural and national unity, but that the latter is the result of a complex process of articulation of the other cultural, social and political factors that participate in the configuration of what Bauer calls "the community of fate". Consequently, while Bauer accepts that a national community cannot in the long run

52. *ibid.* p. 175

53. OBW, Vol 1, *op. cit.* p. 62.

subsist without a common language, this last single factor is not in itself sufficient to constitute a national community, and this is certainly the case of those different national communities that share the same language.⁵⁴ The main difference between Bauer's argument and the position taken by Kautsky and Lenin on the role of language is that for Bauer language is not the causal variable that configurate the national community, but is rather the channel or medium through which the interaction that shapes the national community takes place. Contrary to the arguments developed by all forms of economism, for Bauer language is not a causal factor in the formation of national communities. It is only an important consequence of the process of communication that results from Bauer's definition of a nation as community of fate resulting from a process of "common reciprocal interaction". If however, this process of communication could take place outside language, and if an alternative medium of communication could be found through which the national community is constituted, then it is possible to think of a national community lacking a common language. If, for example, in the case of Switzerland it is possible to show that the centuries long experience of living under a very peculiar form of decentralised state apparatus creates a stronger bond of communication than a common language, it is possible to argue that the Swiss are a national community without necessarily having a common language. This may be also the case, according to Bauer, of Jewish communities in medieval Europe. Following Marx analysis of the Jewish question in "Zur Judenfrage"⁵⁵ Bauer argues that the patterns of strict segregation that Jews were subjected to through residential separation and the confinement to monetary occupations in a non-

54. M. Garcia Pelayo, La teoria de la Nacion en Otto Bauer, op. cit. p. 33

55. K. Marx, "On the Jewish Question" in Early Writings, introduced by L. Colletti, Penguin Books, London 1975 pp. 211-241

monetary social order, created a strong interactive link between various European Jewish communities despite not been concentrated in one geographical area and despite the partial existence of common language.

..the link through economic exchange that related the Jew with the peasant was much weaker than the more intimate communitarian interaction with other Jews. The difference between the culture of monetary economy and that of natural economy was incomparably stronger than the commonality produced by the mutual interaction that took place in completing a purchase, a sale or a loan. In this way the Jews remained a separate nation in the midst of of other peoples.⁵⁶

However, the development of the capitalist mode of production, dramatically changed the position of Jews in society. A part of the Jewish population joins the industrial bourgeoisie. This change in the class position of a part of the Jewish population gives way to a revolutionary change in lifestyles, and consequently the "new Jewish bourgeoisie" began to distance itself from the traditional Jewish population, and finds a closer affinity with "their fellow christian class members"(*christlichen Klassengenossen*).⁵⁷ While Bauer's discussion of the Jewish

56. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 416

57. *ibid.*, p. 417. While this is a valid description of the process that affected Bauer's paternal ancestors, the middle class Jewish population of Vienna, it is not valid as a general description of the Jewish population of Eastern and central Europe. Besides the obvious class reductionist analysis of Jewish life, it is clear that an important group of Yiddisch speaking Jews of Eastern Europe remained a national community long after the emergence of capitalism, fulfilling all of Bauer's theoretical criteria for national existence, with a strong working class

question in Eastern and Central Europe is not without some interesting insights, he is at times inconsistent in his overall theoretical discussion, as Stalin was quick to point out.⁵⁸ In summarising the discussion of the connection between language and the development of the interactive process that constitutes the national community, the two examples presented above show that in

base and a combative socialist party (The Bund). This characterisation of Jewish national life in Eastern Europe, should, of course be carefully confined to the geographical area and the period under consideration. To include the predominately urban and culturally assimilated Jewish communities of Central and Western Europe- let alone Jews from other parts of the world with a vastly different ethnic cultures- under this national criterion, is an metaphysical and transcendentalist tergiversation of the process of national development. This is in essence the Zionist position. For a critical analysis see M. Machover & M. Offenbergh. Zionism and its Scarecrows, op. cit.

58. In a nutshell, Bauer attributes the persistence of Yiddisch-Jewish national community in Eastern Europe to the relative "underdevelopment" of that part of the world, particularly when compared with Western Europe where Jews were no longer a national community, given that they lost a common language and became therefore more and "assimilated" through a greater interactive relationship with the national communities they lived with. While Bauer's description of the differences between Eastern and Western European Jews is undoubtedly correct, it does not follow, particularly in view of his own insightful conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, that the Yiddisch speaking Eastern European Jews will experience the same developmental path as the Western Jews and cease to be a national community. See *Nationale Autonomie der Juden?* (National Autonomy for Jews?) OBW, op. cit. vol 1, pp. 414-435

exceptional circumstances language is not an essential factor in the formation of national communities, while in most cases it becomes the communicative medium through which the national community is constituted; while on its own, it does not necessarily indicate the presence of a national community.

Having discussed the various aspects of the process of national development in Bauer's theory, it is possible now to see how the various dimensions of the problematic of national formation are put together in Bauer's definition of the nation. In doing so, it is important to remember that the aim of the earlier work of Adler in the series "Marx- und Studien" was directed to reject the forms of essentialism present in both class reductionist Marxism and the transcendentalist essentialism of the neo-Kantians. Bauer's emphasis in understanding the formation of the national community as a process rather than a derivative category from what he calls the "Materialist" or the "Spiritualist" theories of history, is a direct result of the above mentioned Adlerian task, which became in more than one way, the hallmark of the theoretical distinctiveness and richness of the Austro-Marxist tradition. In refusing to accept any essentialist point of departure in his conceptualisation of the national community, Bauer opened the way for that important overall condition for understanding the nature of the national community, the ability to capture the multidimensionality of the phenomenon under consideration. This is perhaps another important reason why Bauer's theory has been so consistently misinterpreted. A superficial reading of Bauer's theoretical chapter of his voluminous work is not enough to understand the intellectual aim of his analysis. There are no clichés and ready made formulae that are applicable to every circumstance, Bauer's definition of the Nation as "the totality of human beings bound together through a community of fate into a community of character"⁵⁹, is

59. *Die Nation ist die Gesamtheit der durch Schicksalsgemeinschaft zu einer Charaktergemeinschaft verknüpften*

perfectly meaningless if one does not follow the painstakingly essential process of reviewing the different dimensions that participate in the complex, resilient and not well understood process of national formation. In this sense, Bauer locates his work in direct opposition to the three main currents of thought that dominated the conceptualisation of the national phenomenon, what he calls the "metaphysical theories" a term derived from Adler's work on "Causality and Teleology" and includes what Bauer calls "national materialism" and "national spiritualism". The second current of thought is what he calls "Psychological Theories", meaning by this those theories *that seek to discover the essence of the nation in the consciousness of, or the will to, solidarity*⁶⁰. This are the so-called "voluntaristic" theories of the nation with which Bauer is mistakenly associated with in a number of important works on nations and nationalism.⁶¹ Third group of theories that Bauer analyses and rejects are the "Empirical" theories, i.e., those theories that enumerate the elements that characterise national communities and whose addition in observable cases constitutes nations.⁶² In discussing those theories Bauer argues that "Common descent and common culture" are basically derivative categories of the notion of "common history" in the process of constructing the national character. A common territory is an important condition for Bauer only insofar as it allows for the conditions of interactive

Menschen, OBW, op. cit. Vol. 1 p. 194

60. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. p. 170. English version in op. cit. T. Bottomore (ed.) Austro Marxism, p. 102

61. see footnote 7.

62. *ibid.*, and M. Garcia Pelayo op. cit. La Teoria de la Nacion en Otto Bauer pp. 26-27

relationship to take place. Territorial separation disrupts the unity of the national community because the inter-subjective process required to develop the community of fate cannot take place. However, Bauer acknowledges that "in the age of printing, the post, telegraph, steamships this is much less the case than formerly"⁶³. It is possible to safely infer from the logic of Bauer's argument, that the territorial dimension is even less important in view of the phenomenal contemporary expansion of all means of communication. However, the common territory becomes important in a different way, in that it becomes the basis for a related important phenomena: the National State. This will be discussed in a moment. A common language is for the reasons that were discussed earlier, "a second order means". In Bauer's conceptualisation the common language is the medium through which the community of culture is maintained, re-creating the national community in each subjectivity through common interaction. However, in an interesting footnote, Bauer qualifies this understanding of the role of language to dispel any possible interpretation that language is a "neutral medium".

Language, of course, is not simply a means of transmitting a culture, but is itself an element of culture. A Frenchman does not differ from a German only because his language conveys a different culture, but also because the language itself is a cultural element which has been transmitted to him and determines, by its specific qualities, his speech, thought, and character. The difference between French and German rhetoric is due in part to the difference of language.⁶⁴

63. OBW op. cit. vol 1. p. 192. English translation T. Bottomore, op. cit. Austro Marxism, p. 105

64. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 190. English version from T. Bottomore, op. cit. Austro Marxism, p. 103

The above mentioned review of the different theories that attempt to explain the nature of the national community, allows Bauer to present the specific originality of his argument. For Bauer, the nation cannot be understood by enumerating a set of categories or by referring to some essential quality. For Bauer the national community is the end result of systemic process in which different dimensions are brought together through a common historical development in dialogue with the main facets of contemporary experience. This is the meaning of Bauer's definition of the national community as *human beings bound together through a common fate into a community of character*. Subjective positionality is the expression of societalised existence, the content of societalised existence results from the structural linkage of a process of "common reciprocal interaction", and a process of historical development.

For us society is not a mere addition of individuals, but each individual is the product of society. In the same way, for us the nation is not an addition of individuals that enter into a mutual relation through a common language, but the individual him/herself is the product of the nation. His/her individual character did not emerge in any other way than through a continuous interaction (*Wechselwirkung*) with other individuals, in the same way as the character of those individuals emerged from the continuous interaction with him/her.⁶⁵

For Bauer the national community exists independently from national consciousness. National subjects are part of the national community even if they are not aware of their belonging. National consciousness is however, the result of the awareness of the existence of other nations, since the subject becomes con-

65. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 187

scious of his/her national dimension by comparison with others. This is why, according to Bauer, national consciousness became a generalised perceptive mechanism only as a result of the process of "Modernity". This last aspect acquires great importance in the political arena. Given that the national community manifest itself in the *individual character* of every member of the national community, *every attack on my national community is like an attack upon myself and every glory of the national community is like my own.*⁶⁶ While Bauer is on firm ground in arguing that national consciousness is not a necessary ingredient of national existence, the second part of the argument stands on very slippery ground. While it is true that the national sentiment is often associated with "basic sentimental representations" of great importance to individual identity, as Bauer convincingly argues in a style reminiscent of the verses of a famous Argentine tango,⁶⁷ it does not follow that this link is automatically translated into the political arena in a single ideological format. In this sense, the political understanding of the role of the national sentiments described by Bauer, is best served if these sentiments are perceived as "floating ideological forms" capable of being articulated with concrete ideological positions. Thus "nationalism" in general it has been argued, is neither "left" nor "right", while all concrete forms of nationalism can

66. OBW, op. cit. vol 1 p. 202, M. Garcia Pelayo, La teoria de la nacion en Otto Bauer, op. cit. p. 35

67. *If I think of my nation, I remember my beloved motherland (Heimat-Patria), my parental home, my first childish play, my old schoolteacher, that young woman that gave me happiness with her kisses, and from all those representations a feeling of pleasure overlaps the representation closely linked to it, that of the nation that I belong to* OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 201-202. The nostalgic verse of Carlos Gardel, the famous Argentinian composer of tangos, would have been left wanting on this one.

be located in a conventional political spectrum, opening in this way the possibility for understanding the political dimension of national existence as an ideologically contested field .68

From the general discussion of Bauer's conceptualisation of the national community one fundamental aspect appears in the discussion of every aspect of the national phenomenon, the perception of the development of the national community as a multifarious process in which the various dimensions are linked not in a fixed manner, but in a dynamic relation that permits the understanding of the nation as a process rather than a fixed one-dimensional relation of causality. As it was argued earlier, a multidimensional understanding of the national community is essential to dispel the deforming influence of economism. Does this mean that Bauer decisively broke with all forms of economic reductionism? Unfortunately no. While Bauer is indeed close to break with the distorting logic of economism in the conceptual discussion of the national community, he relapses into the classical Marxist categories of analysis in conceptualising another important aspect of national development, the historical dimension of national formation. In doing this Bauer tries to formulate universal laws of national development which are closely connected with the various stages of development of the productive forces, as conceptualised in the classical forms of Eurocentric evolutionism in classical Marxism. This argument can be best shown in his treatment of a) The theory of National Evolution, b) The use of that unfortunate dichotomy "Historical" vs "Non Historical" Nations. c) The connection between the Nation and the State.

68. For a discussion of this idea in a different context see E. Laclau, "Towards a Theory of Populism" in Politics and Ideology in the Marxist Theory New Left Books, 1977, p. 143 ff.

Bauer's theory of National Evolution

In discussing the historical dimension of Bauer's work, and in particular, in evaluating the validity of Bauer's generalisation from his case studies, one important aspect must be taken into account: the historical and political context in which Bauer embarked in his monumental study of the national question. As was argued in the previous chapter, the final years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were marred by heated national confrontations, which consumed much of the political and intellectual energies of Austrian socialists. Given their determined effort to try and transcend the bitter national differences, in their partial success in doing so they became the only political organisation in the troubled Empire that truly reflected its multinational character. . Bauer's theoretical and historical discussion was directed towards making a decisive contribution to the debate over the national question and the resolution of the multinational tension, believing at the time (as many other socialists did) that it was possible to save the multinational nature of the Austrian Monarchy by radically transforming its structure into a decentralised multinational federal state. It is important to keep in mind the previously discussed attempts by the Austrian socialist party to come to grips with the national question, since Bauer's work through the Marx Studien series, was initially a contribution to the ongoing debate directed towards clarifying the main historical and theoretical issues of the national question for party workers and activists.

In his historical analyses, the main case studies discussed by Bauer were those of the Austro-German and Czech national communities, since much of the tension in Austria related to them. He also used other national communities that lived in Austria and the Ottoman Empire, but the main thrust of his historical discussion was directed to the German and the Czech case. What characterises Bauer's historical analysis of the national phenomenon is the assertion that in every "historical nation" there are two

classes or two groups of classes. The first category truly participates in national life, creates and enjoys national culture and the process of national development takes place only within its ranks. This is the class or classes that hold political power, and more crucially dominate the means of production. The second group, which are normally the subordinated classes, are excluded from national life, although their toil sustains the lifestyle and culture of "national classes". There are two exceptions to this rather crude dichotomy. The first is what Bauer calls the "primitive clanic communism of the German tribes"⁶⁹ and the second is the socialist society of the future. The reason for this is that in both cases there is no private ownership over the means of production, which through the class mechanism separates in all other cases the dominant national classes from the subordinate classes excluded from national life. The crudity of this epiphenomenalist analysis stands in marked contrast with Bauer's sensitive discussion of the process of national development evaluated above, at times it seems that there are "two Bauers" writing, one sensitive to multidimensionality, the other committed to class reductionism.

In terms of his historical analysis of the case studies, Bauer calls the subordinated classes that do not participate in national life *Hintersassen der Nation*⁷⁰ (tributary classes of

69. OBW, op. cit. vol 1, p.92 ff.

70. This term is also difficult to translate. Garcia Pelayo argues that it is a juridical term of medieval origin to designate all those who did not have property rights and were in a servile relation to the feudal landlords. At a later period, it denoted the lower and poorer classes that only had restricted rights to citizenship and property. The term was used up to the nineteenth century. M. Garcia Pelayo, La teoria de la nacion en Otto Bauer, op. cit. p.40. In translation, "tributary classes" is hesitantly used in the absence of a better term. This is

the Nation), whose *exploitation sustains the proud building of national culture from which they are excluded*⁷¹. Given that for Bauer what constitutes the nation is the cultural unity of the dominant classes, the history of the national community is simply the history of the linear developmental succession of different dominant classes and strata with a parallel development of the tributary classes. Feudal landlords, manufacturing bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie in the first case and serfs, free peasants artisans, and workers in the second. As Garcia Pelayo rightly argues, the validity of these analytical categories is doubtful even if they are confined to the German example used by Bauer.⁷² From this analysis Bauer derives two conclusions, firstly the process of national integration and separation can be explained through the developmental logic of the forces of production. In the German case, the separation of the Dutch tribe from the main Germanic group is explained through the process of sedentary settlement of the Germanic inhabitants of the Lowlands. In this situation the dominant classes of the Dutch tribes lost contact with other germanic peoples, developing in this way a separate community of fate. The second conclusion drawn by Bauer from this analysis is a thesis about the progressive expansion of the national community. Through the historical process of linear historical development, different dominant classes incorporate groups or strata that were previously "tributary" into the national community, and during the capitalist period the working class will be progressively integrated into the national community through the army, the ballot box and the educational

also the way in which the term is translated in the Spanish edition.

71. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. p. 115

72. M. Garcia Pelayo, La Teoria de la Nacion en Otto Bauer, op. cit. p. 41

system.⁷³ This process will culminate in the total integration of the population into the national cultural community with the emergence of socialism and the abolition of class societies. This is the meaning of the quotation on the first page of this chapter. The *growing spiritual differentiation of nations* will result from the disappearance of the non-national "tributary" classes. There are also no "tributary classes" under "primitive clanic communism" because there is no surplus production to generate class divisions. This is not a "national cultural community", but a mere "community of descent". Under socialism, as happened under clanic primitive communism, the whole population will belong to the national community, but the crucial difference is that this time it is not a "static community of descent", but a dynamic cultural community resulting from the socialised enjoyment of the fruits of production. Thus, the main difference is that during the period of primitive communism the national community resulted from a biological community of descent, in the socialist society, the national community will result from the cultural integration of all members of the community into national life. The clumsiness of this historical formulation is truly puzzling when compared with the sophistication of Bauer's arguments evaluated in the first part of this chapter.

Another conceptual discussion directly relevant to Austria is Bauer's critical use of that unfortunate Marxian dichotomy, "Historical vs Non Historical Nations".⁷⁴ Bauer takes from Marx

73. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. p. 151

74. For a discussion of the notions of "historical vs Non Historical nations" in Marx and Engels, see Chapter 2 of this work and R. Rosdolsky, op. cit. Friederich Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker, C. Herod op. cit. The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought.

and Engels the main components of their conceptualisation of that dichotomy while severely criticising its deterministic slant. Bauer incorporates the main arguments into his historical evolutionary model, while at the same time maintaining that modern capitalism had caused the "awakening of non historical nations" and through this conceptual tool he tries to explain the "national revival" of the Czech national community and other national communities in Austria. Consequently, it is important to understand this part of Bauer's work not so much as a theoretical contribution in its own right, but rather as an attempt to politically evaluate the process of "national awakening" in the context of late imperial Austria and to provide some theoretical and political ideas for discussion within the Austrian socialist party, addressing the politically explosive issue of national rights in that country. Thus, in evaluating Bauer's use of the unfortunate Marxian dichotomous characterisation of nations, it is important to keep in mind the debates within Austrian socialism over the nationalities issue.⁷⁵ In commenting on the articles written by Engels in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung⁷⁶ Bauer argues that those articles are not *just ephemeral journalistic works* but denote the *historical vision* of its author. However, it is important to notice, Bauer argues, that those articles were born out of the *storm of the revolution*, and their author failed to perceive that as a result of *circumstantial events* the "non historical nations" were driven to the reactionary camp. This last situation was not, according to Bauer "a permanent feature",

75. see Chapter 7 and A. Kogan, The Social Democrats and the Conflict of Nationalities in the Habsburg Monarchy op. cit., R. Kann, The Multinational Empire, op. cit. p. 154-168, and O. Jaszi, The dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, op. cit. p. 177 ff.

76. Bauer refers to "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Panslavism", K. Marx and F. Engels Collected Works op. cit. Vol 8. for a critical discussion of those articles see chapter 2

but the result of transient revolutionary circumstances. Engels (following Hegel) thought that this was the fundamental intrinsic feature of those unfortunate national communities, and this is, according to Bauer, *the fundamental error* of those articles. Engels opinion, that *nations without history have no future has proven to be incorrect*, but on the contrary, the *historical method of investigation thought out by Marx and Engels permits us today to understand the causes of the awakening of non historical nations to historical life under the influence of capitalism, democracy and the revolution.*⁷⁷ Later, Bauer goes on to argue that precisely opposite to Engels prediction, *today the representatives of the nations without history had become revolutionary, while those of the historical nations became more conservative*⁷⁸ .

In Bauer's analysis there are two types of "non historical" nations. The first type comprises those national communities that lack a "high culture" and consequently had never "surpassed the primitive stage" of development. The second type is comprised by those national communities that achieved in the past a "higher level of development" but as a consequence of the collapse or disappearance of their upper (national- cultured) classes, they had "lapsed" into a state of stagnation and "lack of historicity". In order to document this view, Bauer embarks on a detailed historical analysis of the main national communities that constituted the Austrian side of the dual monarchy. Bauer's arguments could be briefly summarised in the following way: at the beginning of the 19th century Cisleithan Austria included three historical nations, the Germans and Italians who had nobility and middle classes, and the Poles who only had their own nobility. To demonstrate how an "historical nation" is transformed into a "non-historical nation", Bauer discusses the

77. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 323-24

78. ibid, p. 324

changes experienced by the Czech nation. After the defeat of the Bohemian army on the hands of the Austrians, the Bohemian leaders were executed or fled abroad and the Emperor's soldiers settled in Czech areas. The lands of the Czech nobility were confiscated and the nobility exterminated. The few remaining Czech nobles were promptly assimilated into the class of new settlers. After the Thirty Years War the Czech population was decimated to a third of its original size. All that remained of the Czech nation was a few craftsmen and a large peasant population. According to Bauer, these classes could not "develop the Czech culture" and without a nobility and an autochthonous middle class, *the Czechs lost their culture and vanished from the historical stage*. The Czech language according to Bauer, became a language of *despised and exploited classes*. Everyone who advanced into the upper layer of that society, *was ashamed to admit knowledge of the language of the unfree Czech peasants*. The national Czech culture "died" and consequently the Czechs became a "non historical nation"⁷⁹.

Another example of the a "non historical nation" are the Slovenes. According to Bauer, the Slovenian peasants did not form a "cultural community". What united the peasant villages was "the inertia of a peasant culture transmitted from generation to generation". This is for Bauer "very different" from the dynamic development that characterises "modern national communities of culture".⁸⁰ In Cislethian Austria not only Czechs and Slovenes, but Ruthenians (Ukrainians) and Serbs were "nations without history". This situation was however dramatically changed by the revolutionary impact of the capitalist mode of production.

79. OBW vol 1, p. 245 ff., summarized by C. Herod, op. cit. The nation in the History of Marxian Thought, op. cit. p. 50-51

80. OBW, op. cit. vol 1, p. 247

This picture had been completely altered by the developments of the last 120 years. Capitalism and its surrogate, the modern state, effected everywhere a widening of the cultural community, in that it freed the masses from the fetters of an all powerful tradition, and called them to participate in the regeneration of a national culture. We refer to this process as the awakening of the non historic nations (*Das Erwachen der geschichtslosen Nationen*).⁸¹

Consequently, the role of industrial capitalism has been to "awaken the non-historical nations" to historical life. The bourgeoisie and their allied intellectual groups were in Bauer's terms the "historical agents" of this regeneration. The development of industrial capitalism led to the popular spread of certain basic skills, and therefore in terms of Bauer's argument on "the progressive expansion" of the national community, incorporated large *tributary* sections of the population of "historical nations" into national life. This same process also "awakes the non historical nations into historical life". Bauer tries to show through detailed historical analysis how industrial capitalism was the most important cause for the "re-entry of the Czech nation into cultural life". Briefly, a new proletariat developed out of the Czech peasants, who hated the German bourgeoisie and mistakenly included in this form of hatred the German working class. The Czech cottage industry and artisans were also affected by the development of industrial capitalism and joined the Czech workers in their hatred of Germans. A similar process takes place among other national communities. Consequently for Bauer in Austria:

81. OBW, vol. 1, op. cit. p. 270-71, bold script is my own also quoted and translated by C. Herod, op. cit. The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought p. 49

All social antagonisms manifest themselves as national antagonisms because the dominant classes had long since become German. The hatred against bureaucracy, nobility and the capitalist class...had to take the form of the hatred of Czechs against Germans.⁸²

Initially the Austrian state developed a few primary schools for the Czech peasants, but the main impulse for national revival came from the Czech intelligentsia, especially teachers and clergy, who began to revive the national language and culture.

In terms of the Austrian situation, the important side effect of this process was to intensify the national antagonisms, since with the development of industrial capitalism and its intricate relations between nations and classes, *national hatred is a form of transformed class hatred*.⁸³ Given the dominance of German culture in Austria, German workers were better protected, educated and had at their disposal a "more advanced" industrial organisation. This generated a hatred of "the privileged German majority", which in turn, generated the *German hatred of the minorities*.

It is possible to summarize Bauer's analysis by arguing that for Bauer "historical nations are those that have "normal" class structure, while "non-historical nations" are those national communities that are entirely located within certain subordinated classes or strata and whose segmental position differentiate them from others by class or political factors. Consequently, for Bauer non-historical nations exist in multinational societies

82. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p.284, M. Garcia Pelayo, op. cit., La teoria de la Nacion en Otto Bauer p. 65

83. "Nationaler Hass ist transformierter Klassenhass" OBW, vol. 1 op. cit. p. 315

based on the coercive juxtaposition of different national communities, in which national existence is epiphenomenal to a subordinate class location. The development of capitalism "requires" the development of communicative cultural skills, and consequently the proletariat, the middle class and the new intelligentsia, "revive" the national culture and "awake" the national community into national life.⁸⁴ Bauer's analysis of the process of "awakening of non historical nations" is considered by C. Herod as a *valid historical model through which the fall and renaissance of certain of the central European national groups could be intelligently explained*⁸⁵, and R. Rosdolsky argues that, *it conceptualizes in a very correct manner the situation of many oppressed populations in Central and Eastern Europe in the 18th and 19th century*⁸⁶. However, and in spite of the above eulogy by distinguished scholars, if Bauer's conceptualisation of the "awakening of non historical nations" is put together with the connected discussion on the exclusion of "the tributary classes" from the national culture, and the one-dimensional evolutionism

84. This argument was also influential in the development of the ideology of the Poale Tzion so-called "Left Wing Zionism". The work of Ber Borochov, Nationalism and Class Struggle, reflects a similar interpretation of the situation of Jews in Europe. While Bauer himself, like most Austro Marxists, was a decided Anti Zionist and recommended "Jewish Assimilation", Max Adler expressed a distant sympathy for "Poale Tzion" see J. Jacobs, "Austrian Social Democracy and the Jewish Question in the First Republic" in A. Rabinbach (ed.) The Austrian Socialist Experiment, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, USA 1985, p. 161-162

85. C. Herod, The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought, op. cit. p. 47

86. R. Rosdolsky, op. cit. F. Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker, p. 191, spanish translation p. 130

of his historical conceptualisation of the national community, what emerges is a picture of a one-linear epiphenomenalist analysis of his historical case study, a situation which is in remarkable contrast with the perceptive multidimensional discussion of the process of national formation. It seems that in Bauer's work there is an almost unsustainable tension between the imaginative and innovative analysis of the nation as a community of fate, and the narrow one-sidedness of the case study, which is trapped in the class reductionist perspective dominant in the socialist movement of his time. In some ways it seems as if there are two Bauer's writing this book: one Bauer fresh out the intellectual environment of fin de siècle Vienna, with brilliant and innovative ideas matured through Max Adler's and his own debate with the Neo Kantians and classical Marxism; and another Bauer, the party man, loyal to the dogmas of economistic Marxism, and severely restrained by the need to constantly demonstrate his allegiance to the doctrinal teachings of Marx and Engels.

Before concluding this evaluation of Bauer's work, a brief review of another aspect of Bauer's ideas is necessary, that of the connection between the national community and the state. According to Bauer, the modern "national state" emerges out of the development of mercantile capitalism. However, Bauer qualifies this statement in two ways. Firstly, this does not mean that every form of state organisation represents the domination of the bourgeoisie, for according to Bauer, there are certain historical periods in which no class clearly dominates the state apparatus.⁸⁷ Secondly, and more directly relevant to the ongoing discussion on the national phenomenon, Bauer argues that there is

87. This idea was developed above all in Bauer's later work Die österreichische Revolution, Vienna 1923 English abridged translation The Austrian Revolution, L Parsons, London, 1925 p.183 ff. Unfortunately it is impossible to discuss this point for lack of space.

no intrinsic reason for a capitalist (bourgeois) state to be "national". National states Bauer argues, are not the causal result of the development of capital mode of production, but rather of a specific configuration of historical events in Western Europe. In order to substantiate this claim, Bauer argues that the modern state emerged in Italy, the country that could claim the "oldest mercantile form of capitalist production"⁸⁸ Here, in the rich Italian city states, for the first time the dominant classes learned to use the state "as an instrument to further capitalist interests". Once established, one aspect was crucial for its survival, the ability to constitute a mercenary army to sustain its generally small area of dominance and extract the taxation that made the whole operation profitable. In this case, according to Bauer, there was no reason for the state to become "national". However, in "the great western nations" the process of mercantile state development followed a different path, it became "entangled" with the feudal state.⁸⁹ At this point Bauer develops a detailed historical discussion to substantiate the rather pedestrian argument that in France, absolutism used the mercantile bourgeoisie to eclipse the power of feudalism. In Germany, Bauer argues, the situation was rather different and as a result of this, the German nation was dismembered into a series of small states. Consequently, for Bauer the emergence of a national state in France, and the fragmentation in Germany had nothing to do with mercantile capitalism as such, but was rather the result of a different historical configuration of class alliances within a collapsing feudal order.⁹⁰ However, the 19th century witnessed a dramatic change, which Bauer calls "the nationality principle". This is the notion that every national

88. OBW, op. cit. vol 1. p. 223

89. ibid, p. 224

90. ibid. p. 228

community must have its own separate state. After lamenting that in "modern political sciences" the concepts of "nation" and "state" are hopelessly confused, and after giving examples of the improper use of the term nation to designate the population of a state, Bauer rhetorically asks the question *Why it seems so "natural", so "rational" that every nation and only one nation, should form a political community?*⁹¹ Bauer answers this question in two ways; firstly he argues that all movements for national emancipation are the result of a real or alleged fear of foreign domination. In certain cases according to Bauer, this is undoubtedly correct. Many national independence movements overthrow a heavy foreign yoke and the emerging national state is a welcome advance to the previous state of affairs, "this is a straightforward case and requires no explanation", Bauer argues. But in not a small number of cases, the movement for national emancipation greatly advances the position of the upper classes of the oppressed national community under foreign domination, while the change makes little difference to the oppressed classes. In this situation Bauer reasons that only in very few cases is the struggle for independence perceived with indifference by the subordinated strata. Bauer also quotes a number of cases, when the subordinated strata were "better off" under foreign domination than under the yoke of "their own upper classes". *What causes,*

91. *ibid.* p. 231. Eighty years after it was first formulated, this question has neither lost its urgency nor has it been satisfactorily answered (including in Bauer's work). For recent attempts to answer this question see E. Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, B. Blackwell 1983 and, B. Anderson, Imagined Communities Verso 1983, the latter thought provoking, but with a overdose of "third worldism", the compensatory but not less distortive mirror image to "Orientalism". Also, Anderson joins the long list of scholars who dismisses the work of Bauer without properly understanding his theory. see p. 101-102. Gellner ignores Bauer completely.

asks Bauer, *this curious phenomenon of the popular masses struggling against foreign domination in cases where they have nothing to lose or to win?*

Petty bourgeois, peasants and workers are under alien domination in every state, including national states. They are exploited by landowners capitalists and bureaucrats. But this form of alien domination is not readily apparent but must be grasped conceptually. However, foreign national domination is evident, immediately visible. If the worker goes to a public service office, or attends a court hearing, s/he may not understand that the latter are an alien powerthey appear to be an organic part of his/her own nation. But if the Judge or civil servant are from a different nation, if they speak a foreign language, the subordination to the alien power becomes clearly visible and consequently unbearable.⁹²

For Bauer this is the main explanation of the "popularity" of national states, the fear, real or imagined, of foreign domination. A people being ruled by a foreign nation rapidly discover that this makes oppression and exploitation "evidently clear and therefore unbearable". The conclusion that Bauer draws from this is that the desire to avoid foreign domination is thus the trigger of all movements for national - state emancipation during the 19th century. There is, however, another dimension to widespread existence of national states, and this results from the functionality of the national state apparatus for the development of the capitalist system. This second aspect of this problem is, according to Bauer, related to the centralising tendencies of capitalism, and here he reproduces Lenin's and Kautsky's arguments without any major innovation. The consequence of this centralistic tendency is that according to

92. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 233

Bauer, *powerful economic forces operate against the fragmentation of the economic area of the national community*⁹³. Consequently for Bauer, two powerful forces combine to give birth to that symbiotic creature called "the nation state". A political desire to be free from foreign national rule, and the economic functional requirement of mercantile capitalism to enlarge as much as possible the area of a homogeneous market. If Free Trade was a widely accepted philosophy it would have been possible, according to Bauer, to tolerate the political fragmentation of the same national communities into autonomous states. However, in world in which there are powerful trade barriers, the national state is the best defense for the national mercantile classes.⁹⁴ Consequently for Bauer, "Mercantile Capitalism" exercise a dual contradictory effect on the development of the national community. On the one hand, a centrifugal political effect based on the demand for democratic self determination and the rejection of foreign rule, but on the other hand, a centripetal effect based on the economic requirements of what he calls "mercantile capitalism".

Bauer concludes from the previous discussion that it is very important to understand the "nationality principle" (the idea of the nation state) as an historical construct generated by the bourgeoisie in struggle. Following the classical Marxist conceptualisation of the importance of the modern centralised state for the hegemonic success of capitalism, Bauer argues that the triumphant bourgeoisie required a universally accepted principle to delimit the geographical area of the the state. If the use of Gramscian terminology may permitted at this point, what Bauer argues is that the triumphant bourgeoisie required a "hegemonic principle" that will allow the incorporation of all strata of the

93. OBW, vol 1, op. cit. p. 234-235

94. ibid. p. 234

"society" into the newly created social order. But how will the borders of the new bourgeois state be delimited? And what is more important, what mechanism will generate the widest possible support for this new form of state?. This is the point in which the national community enters into the picture. But before making his position explicit, Bauer must dispel an important misunderstanding resulting from the class reductionist analysis of orthodox Marxism. He must explain why "certain social forms" have autonomous existence, while others not. Here Bauer makes a clear distinction between social forms that exist as "external" and "internal" mechanisms. External mechanisms are in general "formal" organisations, often but not necessarily coercive, such as the state. These forms are not autonomous because they cannot subsist outside a given juridical order that gives them meaning. The second type of "social forms" also originate in a specific economic and political conjuncture, but are nevertheless capable of transcending the original relations of causality because "they do not exist as an external force", since they constitute part of the configuration of the subjectivity of the participating subjects. In Bauer's words "they survive because they are not alive in an external power, but in each individual"⁹⁵. From this it is not difficult to discover Bauer's understanding of the nation as a "community of fate". *When the Czech leader Palaký states in a outburst of anger that the Czechs were here before the Austrian state and will be here after the dismemberment of the Austrian state.* Or if one is allowed to use a more contemporary example, when a Palestinian leader states that "Palestinians were here before the creation of the Israeli state and will be here after its dismemberment", s/he is expressing an idea central to the nationality principle:

...the community, which is an indestructible force operating in each individual, is, after its emergence, independent of

95. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. p.242-243

every positive right and independent from every existing power. The national community is alive even if the state collapses, because it is alive in every single individual member.⁹⁶

This is, according to Bauer the potency of the idea of the national state. The state as an external power, could be physically destroyed. The bourgeoisie destroys the feudal or absolutist state, but it cannot so easily destroy the national community because it is "alive" in each individual member. So according to Bauer, very rapidly the bourgeoisie realised the national community was the best possible substratum on which to implement is economic and political project. In a way in which remarkably resembles Gramsci's thinking Bauer argues:

When the revolutionary bourgeoisie wishes to annihilate and replace the traditional state hostile to its goals... it confronts the hostile external power with the durable internal national community. In this way it appropriates the demand that the very internal community should be the holder of the external power and that the external power should protect the internal community. This is the root of the nationality principle.⁹⁷

In other words, the effectivity of the struggle of the bourgeoisie, and as Gramsci argues, the working class, is that in order to develop its political project, it does not co-opts the national community, but it simply becomes the national community by identifying the bourgeois state with the national community. However, Bauer qualifies the previous analysis by arguing that the above is not a general theoretical principle, but a result of

96. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. p. 243

97. *ibid.*

the relationship bourgeois state-national community at a given historical period in Western Europe. As much as the nationality principle was in Bauer words a "powerful device" of state formation, it is not at all a universal principle as the existence of multinational states appears to indicate. This last point is initially directed towards understanding the history of Cisleithian Austria and advocating the radical transformation of the Habsburg Empire into a federal state of nationalities along the constitutional lines suggested by Renner and the principles of the Brno Programme. So subsequently Bauer devotes a large chapter to discuss the historical development of Austria, which is beyond the scope of this analysis. It is, however, important to notice that Bauer's point is not entirely wrong because it is directed to legitimize the existence of that Multinational state that subsequently ceased to exist. As Walker Connor rightly argues, in spite of the strength of the above discussed tendency to create national states, the vast majority of states registered as members of the United Nations are not "national" but "multinational".⁹⁸ The theoretical argument developed by Bauer

98. W. Connor. Nation Building or Nation Destroying? World Politics, 24 p.319. In this most interesting article Connor argues that of the 132 states represented in the U. N. in 1971, 9.1% were ethnically homogeneous, 18.9% have a single ethnic community representing more than 90% of the population. In 30% of all states represented in the U.N. the largest ethnic community is less than 50% of the population, while in a total of 40% of all states represented in the U.N. there are more than 5 significant ethnic communities. On Connor's figures, Bauer is not that mistaken by arguing that the National State is an historical exception. In sharp contrast with the quality of his articles on nationalism, W. Connor wrote a theoretically ill-informed and politically slanderous work of Marxism and Nationalism, See W. Connor, The National Question in Marxist Leninist Theory and Strategy Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984

after his lengthy discussion of the Austrian situation, closely resembles Renner's ideas and bears a certain similarity to the Millet system in the Ottoman Empire. According to Bauer, following the centralising principle that was initially developed by the Absolutist state and taken over by the bourgeoisie, and whose politico philosophical expression is to be found in Rousseau, state and society in contemporary states are an all engulfing centralised totality. In this sense there are two politico juridical entities, one the individual and the other the sovereign "völkische general". This is what Bauer and Renner call the atomistic-centralist structure of modern states. This totalising tendency fails to acknowledge what we may call today the pluralistic structure of the civil society, and in the case of the national question, the ethno national identity of the dominant groups becomes associated with the state, to the economic, cultural and political disadvantage of national and ethnic minorities. To counteract this tendency, Bauer and Renner suggested a careful decentralization of the state apparatus coupled with the juridical institutionalisation of the "personality principle", which was later vilified by the Bolsheviks under the name it took in Russia, the principle of "national cultural autonomy". This political system guarantees certain cultural and political rights to every national community, by organising autonomous national corporations of co nationals regardless of territory of residence, in a similar way as it was done under the millet system in the Ottoman Empire, but carefully guaranteeing equal rights to every national community.⁹⁹

99. Limitations of space do not unfortunately permit a discussion of this interesting programmatic proposal. It was initially proposed by K. Renner under the pseudonym of "Synopticus" in op. cit. Staat und Nation spanish translation in op. cit. La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, vol 1 pp. 145 -

Another important issue that must be resolved before attempting to summarise Bauer's argument is the question of national boundaries. What delimits a national community from another? Why, say, is "England" and not "Yorkshire" or "Lancashire" a national community or why "Germany" and not "Bavaria", or indeed why are the people of Andalusia not considered a national community as the people of Catalonia are?. To this question Bauer answers in two ways, firstly, there is a tendency in each "narrower community of culture" as the ones mentioned above, to become separate national communities. Consequently, each of the above mentioned cases represent "developmental stages" in the process of national formation. However, there is a counter tendency to this process of differentiation, which is related to the idea of the "progressive expansion" of the national classes. "Modern Capitalism begins gradually to distinguish the lower classes of each nation sharply from each other, for they gain access to the cultural life of the nation and to the national language"¹⁰⁰ In other words, for Bauer, the delimitation of one national community from another cannot be established in the abstract but only after the concrete evaluation of the process that led to the formation of the national communities under analysis. For the same reason, it cannot be theoretically established if "Yorkshire" or "Lancashire" are separate national communities. It all depends if the "community of fate" that links Yorkshire subjects is stronger than the "community of fate" that links English people as a whole. All the mentioned groups are potential national communities, it is an "empirical" test to prove whether they are or not. This is not a very convincing answer since the evaluation of the elements that constitute a "community of fate", is a matter of contention. What "empirical" indicators would Bauer use to ascertain whether the population of the Valencian community in the Spanish state are

100. OBW, vol 1 op. cit. pp.192-94, T. Bottomore (ed.) op. cit. p. 106

"Catalans" or "Valencian"? This is a matter of fierce debate among the the population of Valencia.

Finally, it is time to evaluate Bauer's contribution to the analysis of the national question in the Marxist tradition. From the previous discussion it is not difficult to agree with Kolakowski that Bauer's *Nationalitätenfrage* is "the best treatise on nationality problems to be found in the Marxist theory"¹⁰¹, even if the distortive rigidities of the economistic model used for the discussion of the case study are taken into account. The theoretical conceptualisation developed by Bauer represents a fine attempt to come to grips with the multidimensionality of the elusive phenomena under consideration, by analyzing the national community as a developmental process, that cannot be reduced to any single, ontologically defined, mechanism of causality. While the term "community of fate" seems today dated and far-fetched, the characteristics of the phenomena as described by Bauer seems illuminating to understand the national community as an ongoing process. This conceptualisation makes it possible to think of the national community as a intersection or as the "overdetermined" result of the interactive relation of subjects through a given historical context, and allows for the necessary flexibility to explain the multidimensionality of the phenomena under consideration. Also the notion of the "national character" discussed by Bauer seems a useful point of departure for a discussion of this aspect of the national phenomenon. The idea of a "national character" has been neglected by most Marxists discussions to the subject, to the point that it became completely monopolised by racist discourses that perceive it as the essence of some trans-historical and metaphysical quality. As Bauer rightly argues, if one is to demonstrate the falsity and the perverse wickedness of this widespread understanding of the national character, it is crucial to maintain the effectivity of the argu-

101. see footnote 9

ment by not falling into the opposite form of essentialism, the ontological denial of the existence of national characters. However, Bauer's account of causality must be treated with caution. In their zeal to dispel the teleological notions of social existence propounded by the neo-Kantians, Adler and Bauer take at times the discussion of causality too far, negating thereby any transformative autonomy of the phenomena under consideration. Bauer's discussion of the relations between nations and states is overshadowed by the the Austrian socialist debate of the future of the Austrian Empire. In many ways, the conceptualisation of the relation between nation and state is overshadowed by the bitter Austrian debate. Bauer neglects the role of the state in structuring the national community, because he was eager to suggest a political solution to the Austrian predicament in terms of a Federation of Nationalities. However, Bauer's argument about the historic relativity of the national state is worth pursuing. Bauer is right in arguing that there is nothing intrinsically "national" in the form of contemporary states, as there is nothing intrinsically "etatist" in the form of the national community. The relation between the two is a heuristic construct that needs to be explained in more detail, and Bauer's account of the historical relativity of the relation is a useful point of departure. The old Austrian socialist project for a multinational federal state is treated with derision nowadays, for the ideology of the national state has become a "normative yardstick" in the analysis of the national community. The ideals of the national state, particularly the notion that every state should engulf a single and entire national community provided the breeding ground for the most wicked of European creations: Racialism. It is only a small exaggeration to argue that the perverse ideas that stand behind racially motivated immigration laws and behind the notion of "Judenreines" (Jew cleansed) Europe or "Palästiniensreines Israel"¹⁰² are connected to the reactionary paranoia that every

102. The turgid scenario of a possible Israeli pogrom, expulsion of Palestinians or both, is not anymore the monopoly of marginal

state should comprise an entire, exclusive and homogeneous nation. For if, as W. Connor argues, 92% of all states registered in the U.N. are multi ethnic then the discrepancy between the theory and the practice of the national state becomes a permanent source of ethnic tension.

The dual debate of Austro-Marxism with neo-Kantianism and Orthodox Marxism had a liberating effect on the sensitivity of Bauer's theory to complex issue of the national phenomenon. In this sense it is puzzling that the same openness was not translated to the analysis of the concrete case study. The work of Bauer results in an interesting theoretical analysis that becomes a useful point of departure for rethinking the national phenomenon and moving to a more multifarious understanding of the national arena. Without this, the national question will continue to be *Marxism's Great Historical Failure*.

The development of modern national communities tends, on the whole, to validate important aspects of Bauer's theoretical conceptualisation. His theory and methodology could be profitably applied for the study of complex modern national formations. In this context it is interesting to notice that recent Soviet ethnographic studies tend to validate some of Bauer's arguments implicitly in spite of the "stigma" imposed on him by Lenin. Victor Kozlov of the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow observed in a recent article that

In the course of ethnogenesis, various factors, including the specific natural features of ethnic territory lead to the emergence of common features of material and spiritual culture¹⁰³

left groups, but is also considered by "respectable" members of the Israeli liberal establishment. see Zeev Schiff, "The Spectre of Civil war in Israel" Middle East Journal Vol 39, 2 1985 p. 240

This conception of communal national character is certainly closer to Bauer than to Lenin, as is a recent attempt to redefine the Stalin's old concept of "psychological make up".

The old concept of psychological make-up of a nation if taken in its full sense, represents all the areas of social psychology and not just national peculiarities. Even if we confine the concept of psychological-make up to these peculiarities alone, we should find that they are embodied not only in the culture but also in the consciousness, life style, ethics and traditions. Lastly, the psychological make up may be regarded as a supra class conception, which, however it cannot be in a class society.¹⁰⁴

But perhaps the greatest Bauerian legacy is the substantiation of the argument that the vision of a non-national world is a sham and that the national specificities are an integral part of societalised life.

103. V. Kozlov, "The classification of ethnic communities, the present position in the Soviet debate", Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol 3 2, 1980

104. Leninism and the National Question, Progress publishers, Moscow 1977 p. 26

Conclusion

The aim of the present study of the classical Marxist European heritage on the national question has been to establish the causes for the recurrent intellectual and political inability of this tradition to conceptualise and explain the nature of the national phenomenon.

In trying to account for this "Great Historical Failure"¹, it has been argued that European Marxism has no specific theory on the national question and that, in any case it is impossible to provide a coherent theory of the national question, given the elusiveness and multi-dimensionality of the phenomenon under consideration.

Contrary to this position, the aim of this work has been to argue that the most influential European Marxist discussions on the national phenomenon show a recurrent "thematic unity" and a relatively cohesive line of argument, despite important political and intellectual differences between them. The theoretical and epistemological basis of this thematic unity have been called the Marxist parameters of analysis of the National Question. These are: a) *the theory of the universal evolution of the forces of production*: this is the position that understands the process of social transformation as universally explicable in terms of developmental laws, and capable of expression in universal and hierarchically defined stages of transformation. b) *The theory of economic reductionism*: this is the epistemological stance that defines the privileged causal status of the economic arena and establishes that all meaningful processes of social change occur through changes in the process of production which is topographi-

←~2-----

1. T. Nairn, The Break up of Britain, op. cit. p. 329

cally located in the economic arena. The Marxian metaphorical dichotomy "Base - Superstructure" represents a sharp conceptual distinction between causal factors and residual categories designed to secure the conditions of existence of causal factors.

c) The *Eurocentric bias* in concrete discussions of the universal process of change. This is the construction of developmental models which universalise observed categories of social transformation that result from the distinctive and specific rationale of Western European societies.

These parameters of analysis are not specific to the discussion of the national phenomenon. Nor they constitute a unified and explicitly conceptualised theoretical corpus of literature. They do however, permeate and give meaning to the most influential European Marxist discussions of the national phenomenon reviewed in this work, constituting in this way a paradigmatic strait-jacket that limit the ability of historical materialism to deal with the multifarious nature of the phenomenon under consideration. These parameters also represent an obligatory point of departure for various attempts to evaluate the political and class dimensions of national existence. The works of Bauer and Gramsci show a greater sensitivity towards the multifarious forms of national existence because of their ability to partially break with the limiting paradigms of "classical Marxism". A richer and more sensitive analysis of the multifarious forms of the national arena is intimately connected with a break with the parametrical rigidities of "Classical Marxism"²

Contrary to the generalised opinion that Marx and Engels' discussions of the national question were "ad hoc" positions in-

2. both, in the sense of a tradition that sees social classes as privileged actors in the process of social transformation, and in the sense of the "traditional" and "original" theoretical stance of historical materialism.

formed by circumstantial events, it was argued that it is possible to detect a certain coherence and sense of purpose in their work. The apparently contradictory positions of the founding fathers of historical materialism is expressed, in their sympathetic support for the demands for state independence of the Irish and Polish national movements on the one hand, and their adamant refusal to grant any such concessions to the "Czechs" and other "South Slavs" on the other. In evaluating these positions it has been argued that, far from being contradictory, they represent a coherent expression of the analytical stance of Marx and Engels on the national question. What configured the Marxian and the Engelsian positions in both cases was the perceived developmental logic of the forces of production within the capitalist system. Polish and Irish independence were at the time "progressive" because they helped to unfold the logic of historical transformation of the Capitalist Mode of Production³. Czechs and other "South Slavs" required, in the judgment of Marx and Engels, the perpetuated "backward" developmental conditions - since neither could survive as an independent state in a system of capitalist production. The categorical use of the metaphysical Hegelian dichotomy of "historical" vs. "non historical" nations was stripped from the mythical notion of *Volksgeist*, but at the same time, reinvigorated by the unilinear developmental logic of the evolutionist view of the founding fathers of historical materialism. This was conceptualised as the "ability" of na-

3. This of course did not prevent Engels from arguing a few years later in a letter to Marx that...*"the more I think over the business the more clear it becomes to me that the Poles as a nation are done for and can only be made use of as an instrument until Russia herself is swept into the agrarian revolution."* F. Engels, "Engels an Marx" 23 May 1851, Enclosure 94, Vol 1, Dritte Abteilung, Marx Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA), Berlin 1930, p. 204 ff. quoted by C. Herod, op. cit. The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought, p. 34

tional communities to "enter" into capitalist relations of production. This analytical stance represented an epistemologically coherent, but profoundly insensitive and deterministic analysis of the national question. Much in the spirit the Calvinist dualism of Weber's "Protestant Ethic", this approach appears to argue that some national communities were were afforded the privilege of entering the capitalist era while other were damned for ever. For Marx and Engels, the "Modern Nation" was a coherent historical phenomenon; it represented a mechanism for consolidating and securing the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie and the Capitalist Mode of Production. Consequently, the theory of "non-historical nations" is not a curiosity, a slip of the tongue or a regrettable mishap. It is, rather, the result of the formulation of rigid universal laws of social evolution that define the precise historical location of the "modern nation" and, by default, render obsolete the existence of national communities unable to fulfill this Eurocentric criterion.

The second aspect of the analytical stance of the founding fathers of historical materialism was the requirement that every "modern nation" should form its own separate state, which made the formation of national states the only "real" and "valid" *raison d'être* for the existence of nationalist movements. National communities unable to form such states should "assimilate" to more "vital" and "energetic" nations, with democracy as compensation. The model of national development upheld by Marx and Engels was that of the "large" Western European national states, particularly France and "British England". The latter considered a "successful case" of assimilation of the Celtic Fringe, with the important exception of Ireland - an "historical" nation deserving a national state. This conceptualisation of the national question constituted the nucleus of the misleading heritage of European Marxism, and informed the positions of the main debates of the Second and Third international on the national question.

In his influential work on the historical development of Marxist theory, L. Kolakowski argues that during the period of the Second International, Marxist theory was not codified as a rigid orthodoxy.⁴ Contrary to this assertion, it was argued that the plurality of thinkers and debates in the development of the Marxist theory - including the national question - did not prevent the ossification of the theoretical stance of the Marxist tradition under the effect of the previously discussed parameters of analysis. During this period the debates on the national question were both common and thorough, reflecting the importance of the subject for the fin-de-siècle socialist movement. But with the important exception of the works of the Austro-Marxist tradition - they did not break with the parametrical rigidities imposed by the thought of the founding fathers. In evaluating the most influential contributions of the competing Marxist schools of the period, it is possible to recognise a genuine attempt to come to grips with a problem that was perceived to have been insufficiently discussed by Marx and Engels. However in the works of K. Kautsky and R. Luxemburg, the very real possibilities of conceptualising the national phenomena in a novel and imaginative way were silenced from the start by the dogmatic rigidities of the epiphenomenalist paradigm. In spite of profound and lasting disagreements over important conceptual and strategic issues, Luxemburg and Kautsky were equally confined to a partial and limited understanding of the national phenomenon by the theoretically crippling epistemological stance of epiphenomenalism. This situation rendered an autonomous theoretical analysis of the national phenomenon a conceptual impossibility.

However, in the context of the Second International not all political and theoretical stances were equally shaped by economic reductionism. The work of E. Bernstein, attempted to

4. L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, Vol 2, op. cit. p. 1

challenge the dominant epiphenomenalist discourse by attempting a "revision" of the parameters of economic determination in the works of Marx and Engels. Bernstein believed that the most significant characteristic of Marxist theory was not the conceptualisation of the economic determination of the forces of production - the "base" and "superstructure" metaphor - but the discovery of a developmental thought (*Entwicklungsgedanken*), which allowed for a universal conceptualisation of the evolutionary process (*Evolutionsbegriff*) of the social arena⁵. Following this analytical logic, social transformation was not considered to be the result of a abrupt revolutionary change, but the consequence of a universal process of developmental evolutionism whose "final goal" could not be predicted because it is, also, the subject to the same logic of mutation. Developmental evolutionism was the "natural condition" of social existence and it applied to the future socialist society as well as to contemporary capitalism. In this sense, the "Revisionist" tradition not only criticised the classical Marxian notion of the inevitable collapse of Capitalism, but was also highly critical of the idea that the social arena would be finally polarised into two antagonistic and fundamental classes. However, the relative revisionist liberation from the straitjacket of economism was compensated by an even stronger dependence on the paradigm of social evolution that permeated classical Marxist theory. Revisionism merely replaced the working class as the privileged agency of social change, to substitute it by another privileged agency - the ethical and progressive human being emerging out of modernity. In this way, the same teleological bias of classical Marxism in identifying a privileged agency of social transformation, and bestowing upon it a "functional-causal" status in the process of social change, was maintained. The one-dimensional evolutionary paradigm that characterised the thoughts and ideas

 5. V. L. Lidtke, op. cit. Le premesse teoriche del Socialismo in Bernstein, p. 147

of the Revisionist school are clearly detectable in Bernstein's conceptualisation of the national arena. The national community was identified with the national state, and nationhood was essentially a political issue. The state was progressively transformed by the increasing political participation of the working class: it ceased to be the exclusive domain of the bourgeoisie and became a positive asset of the working population. In this way the transformation of national state also reflected the developmental evolution of the social arena. If at the time of the Communist Manifesto, the proletariat had no fatherland, this situation was dramatically changed by the progressive democratisation of the national state. All state affairs were legitimate socialist concerns, including colonialism. This rigid developmental logic provided the rationale for Bernstein's uncritical acceptance of the progressive nature of industrial capitalism, and for his rigid and dogmatic understanding of the process of social evolution in hierarchical and Eurocentric terms. If the emergence and existence of national communities is to be located in Bernstein's universal-historical continuum, then there is no escape from a hierarchical interpretation of national development, and from the argument that, given the uneven nature of the process of development, some nations are "more civilised" than others. In view of the character of this analytical stance, the failure of Revisionism to understand the national question becomes clear. The optimistic revisionist belief in "Progress and Civilisation" resulted in a complacent and profoundly ethnocentric treatment of the national question. While the revisionist enthusiasm for colonial ventures was unique in the context of the Second International, it would be wrong to regard this position as an unconnected aberration. The unilateral notions of social evolution that permeated most classical Marxist works on the national question were at least in part responsible for both the creation of an intellectual breeding ground for these ideas, and for what Kolakowski calls a "rigid codification of a dogmatic orthodoxy".

In terms of the epiphenomenalist logic and rigid

evolutionist notions that prevailed in the thoughts and actions of the leaders of the second international the "October Revolution" was an almost inconceivable event. It would be misleading, however, to argue that Marxism-Leninism broke with epiphenomenalism because it could not justify the Bolshevik revolution. Rather, it was Lenin's and Trotsky's ability to break with the rigidities of epiphenomenalism that allowed the Bolsheviks to sensitize Marxist theory to the social and political conditions of Czarist Russia, paving the way for the political struggle that successfully culminated in the October Revolution. The social and political structure of that vast and diverse country resisted the imposition of western and central European models of development. Above all, three aspects of what was later called "Marxist-Leninist" theory were considered crucial for the conceptualisation of the national question. Firstly, the expansion of the political field permitted Marxism-Leninism to conceptualise the political dimension of national phenomena free from the limits of the transparent relations of causality that characterised the epiphenomenalist discussion of Kautsky and Luxemburg. The "relative autonomy" of the national phenomenon allowed Marxist Leninists the strategic use of national demands to advance the cause of the revolution. Secondly, The conceptualisation of the Revolution allowed Marxism-Leninism to argue both that a "bourgeois democratic" revolution could be immediately followed by a "socialist revolution", and that revolutionary situations display "regional peculiarities". This permitted the conceptualisation of "the right of nations to self determination"- a cardinal point in the Marxist-Leninist theory of the national question - as a bourgeois democratic demand to be supported by the proletariat in what Marxism-Leninism defines as "backward" situations. These were, situations in which "bourgeois democratic" revolutions had not yet been fully accomplished, and consequently, the "avant garde" party is aiming to transform the bourgeois democratic revolution into a fully fledged socialist revolution. Thirdly, the conceptualisation of Imperialism and the notion of "combined and uneven development", paved the way for

the conceptualisation of the specific forms of oppression in the colonial world and for the articulation of the class contradictions of "classical" Marxism with the national contradictions of the imperialist era. In breaking with epiphenomenalism in order to explain the specific "unevenness" of the process of development in Czarist Russia, the Marxist-Leninist tradition managed to sensitize Marxist theory to the political dimension of the national question, and the potentialities of the revolutionary movement outside of Europe. This position was certainly vindicated by the revolutionary successes in China, Cuba and Vietnam. However, "putting politics in command" was also the main weakness of the Bolshevik approach to the national question. The class reductionist understanding of the political arena required the evaluation of the political dimension of national communities from within the paradigmatic field of class determination. The national question in the Marxist Leninist tradition, was always looked at from the "angle" of the working class, an instrumentalist perception that obscured certain "non-class" fundamental features of the phenomenon under consideration. The Marxist Leninist tradition was unable to come to grips with the cultural and ethnic aspects of national existence because it was impossible to reduce the latter to the paradigmatic field of class determination. This situation blinded the Bolsheviks to the role of culture and ethnicity in the constitution and resilient existence of national communities. Also, the taxonomical periodisation of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the national question required the identification of a "bourgeois dimension" to every national movement. This situation prevented Marxist-Leninism from conceptualising the existence of "non bourgeois" national movements - a glaring inadequacy for the ideology of a political movement that defines itself as the "avant garde" of the anti-colonial struggle in societies in which, as a general rule, bourgeois classes hardly exist.

In view of the conflicting interpretations of the work of Gramsci, it was argued that a class reductionist and a non class

reductionist reading of the work of Gramsci are equally possible. But from the point of view of the ongoing discussion on the national question, the originality and novelty in Gramsci's legacy only resides in recovering and expanding his partial break with class reductionism. The non-class-reductionist reading of Gramsci discloses an imaginative and original -but nevertheless partial- attempt to find solutions to the perennial Marxist problems of interpreting the national question beyond the paradigmatic straitjacket of economism. The concepts of "historical bloc" and "national popular" represent an original way of conceptualising the specificity of the national arena. The constitution of a "historical bloc" implies a radical and novel reconstruction of the relational identity of the elements that constitute the arena of the social. Classes are part of an historical bloc only insofar as they "merge" their specific identity with other classes or strata participating in that relation, thus creating a political will that constitutes a more inclusive social and political grouping. From the point of view of the ongoing debate on the national question, Gramsci argues that the historical bloc is a form of communality that attempts to become the national community; common culture is a crucial aspect in the crystallization of a national community. For Gramsci, no hegemonic unit will emerge without claiming to represent "society" as a whole. A fundamental class becomes the organiser of an hegemonic unit when, in the context of the historical bloc, the intellectuals and popular masses establish an "organic" link in which culture in the intellectual sense (knowledge) develops a connection with culture in its "anthropological" sense (shared experiences). In the specific case of Italy, Gramsci called upon the working class and its organic intellectuals to lead the historical bloc that was to constitute the Italian national community, through a "national popular" collective will - a task that the Italian bourgeoisie had conspicuously failed to perform. The notion of "national popular collective will" captures both the political and cultural specificity of the national community, while at the same time, suggesting an "organic link" between in-

tellectuals and popular masses for the purpose of creating the basis for a stable hegemonic formation. The important novelty in the Gramscian approach is that the notions of "historical bloc" and "national-popular" permit a conceptualisation of the political arena outside the paradigmatic field of class determination, given that their configuration is not ultimately reducible to the direct determination of any of the fundamental classes in the process of production. This opens the way for thinking of the national community beyond the paradigmatical straitjacket of economic reductionism. Would this mean that Gramsci broke with the class reductionism of the Marxist Leninist tradition? The answer to this question must remain inconclusive. It is, however, possible to say that Gramsci's contribution to the development of Marxist theory is a set of analytical categories that enables us to think in a conceptual framework that breaks with class reductionism. But Gramsci himself fell short of this break. While the notion of "national popular collective will" permits for an understanding of the multifarious forms of national existence at both the political and cultural levels, this two-dimensional understanding is limited by Gramsci's commitment to a consolidation of a national state that provides the conditions for a process of "expansive hegemony". The strategy for the construction of a new historical bloc is designed to convert this historical bloc into the national community, so that it can provide the basis for an "integral state" in an expanding hegemonic process. But this last aspect argument towards one of the most serious limitations of the Gramscian discussion of the national question. The national community is important only insofar as it becomes the vehicle for the formation of a new political subjectivity in the form of the "national popular collective will". In this sense, the national phenomenon is only important to the extent that it becomes the basis for the formation of a cohesive national community that will be able to sustain a national state. The Leninist traces are evident. Gramsci's conceptualisation of the "national-popular" is a decisive and momentous advance on Lenin's theory on the right of nations to self determination because of

the novel conceptualisation of culture and the intellectuals, but at the same time, it remains trapped in the Leninist bias towards "statism" - the achievement and consolidation of single state encompassing one single national community. Consequently, important traces of economic reductionism are to be found in Gramsci's inability to conceptualise those aspects of the national phenomenon that are not connected with the urge to form a cohesive national state, as in the case of the ethno-national minorities that exist in every Western state. The ethno-national plurality of the national arena and the problematic connection between the nation and the state remains outside the Gramscian conceptualisation of the "national popular", blinding this otherwise insightful theoretical analysis to the important plural dimension of national existence. Gramsci's belief in the *hegemony of Western Culture over the whole world* culture shows his inability to come to terms with a pluralist view of the national arena. "Antonu su Gobbu" is after all, Antonio Gramsci, a modernising Italian Marxist, committed to the consolidation of "civilisation and progress", with little time for "folkloric dialects" and "primitive superstitions" of "backward" ethnic minorities.

In order to understand the momentous but partial breakthrough of Otto Bauer, it is necessary to appreciate how the acute nationalities conflict in the context of late Imperial Austria was a crucial factor in directing the reluctant attention of the "All-Austrian" socialist party (Gesamtpartei) to the burdensome national question. While the conditions of "uneven development" in Czarist Russia produced highly innovative ways in conceptualising the political struggle, the political nightmare of the national struggles in the collapsing Habsburg Empire produced some of the most sophisticated Marxist discussions of the national phenomenon. This was not the result of unqualified socialist support for nationalist causes -there was, in fact, no love lost between the Austrian socialists and nationalist movements. It was, rather, that the Gesamtpartei realized that

without tackling the national question head on, without developing a thorough political and intellectual understanding of the national phenomena, an understanding that was so conspicuously absent in the orthodox Marxist tradition, they were condemned to political oblivion under the raising tide of nationalism. It was above all, the political urgency of tackling the national phenomenon that generated the most serious questioning of the economistic conceptualisation of the national question. The impossibility of locating the multidimensional national phenomenon in the context of the turn of the century political positions of the socialist movement, as well as the intellectual impossibility of conceptualising this elusive phenomenon in terms of the orthodox canons of classical Marxist thought, generated the original response of the Gesamtpartei that culminated in the Brno programme. And it also helped to create the conditions that impelled the work of Bauer into a decisive but never explicitly acknowledged, let alone conceptualised, break with economism. Another important contribution to the originality of Bauer's discussion was the emergence of that unique intellectual and political community that subsequently took the name of Austro-Marxism. What, above all, characterised the Austro-Marxist tradition was, as Bauer argues, the growing awareness of the complex nature of the social arena - a world that defies monocausal explanations derived from the principles of economism. In terms of the emerging theory of the national question, Max Adler's insightful critical engagement⁶ with Neo-Kantianism and Revisionism on the one hand, and with classical Marxism on the other, was crucial in providing the new categories of analysis that permitted Bauer to both devise a break with economism and develop the novel conceptualisation of the national phenomenon developed in the Nationalitätenfrage.

6. op. cit. Kausalität und Teleologie in Streite um die Wissenschaft.

The main advantage of Bauer's work in comparison with all of the other attempts to conceptualise the national phenomenon discussed in this work, is the analysis of the national community as a developmental process that cannot be reduced to a single, ontologically defined mechanism of causality. The characteristics of the phenomenon described by Bauer as "community of fate" is useful in understanding the national community as both, a multi-dimensional and as a developmental process. The definition of "national character" rescued from the metaphysical essentialism of the the nationalist discourse is also an illuminating way of conceptualising this elusive aspect of the national phenomenon. In spite of this, Bauer's conceptualisation of the relation between nation and state is overshadowed by the Austrian debate. Bauer denies any role to the state in structuring the national community because he was eager to suggest a political solution to the Austrian predicament in terms of a federation of nationalities. Bauer is, however, right in arguing that the form of the state does not functionally require a "national" content and likewise, there is nothing intrinsically "etatist" in the existence of national communities. The relation between the two is a heuristic construct that needs not to be taken for granted, rather it must be historically explained. However, the unilinear and epiphenomenalist nature of the case study in Bauer's work is in sharp contrast with the perceptive and multifarious theoretical discussion of the process of national formation. It seems that in Bauer work there is an almost unsustainable tension between the imaginative and innovative theoretical analysis, and the one sidedness of the case study which is trapped in a class reductionist perspective. In some ways it seems as if there are two Bauer's writing this book: one Bauer fresh out of the intellectual environment of fin-de-siècle Vienna with brilliant and innovative ideas matured through Max Adler's and his own debate with the Neo-Kantians and orthodox Marxism; and another Bauer, the party man, loyal to the dogmas of economistic Marxism and constrained by the need to demonstrate allegiance to the doctrinal teachings of Marx and Engels.

In trying to establish the causes for the recurrent inability of the European Marxist tradition to adequately conceptualise the national phenomenon, the separate and joint abortive influence of economic reductionism, evolutionism and Eurocentrism has been identified in each and every analysis of the national question discussed in this work. Bauer, and to a lesser extent, Gramsci, came closer to a more sensitive conceptualisation of the national arena only in those aspects of their respective works that involve a departure from economic reductionism and evolutionism. These departures went some way towards sensitizing Marxist theory to the multifarious nature of the national phenomenon. But if the Marxist tradition is to leave behind once and for all the "great historical failure", it must attempt to conceptualise the elusive and recurrent national phenomenon firmly outside the abortive and blinding parameters of analysis that informed the European classical Marxist debates on the national question.

References cited in this work

Primary Sources

Collections

Marx Engels Werke (MEW) Dietz Verlag, Berlin, GDR.

Marx and Engels Collected Works, (MECW) London, Lawrence & Wishart, various editions.

Lenin, V. I., Collected Works, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow 1963.

Lenin V. I., Selected Works, Progress Publishers Moscow 1961

Gramsci, A. Quaderni del Carcere, Einaudi Editore, Turin 1966, 10 volumes.

Stalin J., Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1952

Bauer, Otto, Otto Bauer Werkeausgabe-(OBW), Vienna, 1975

La Segunda Internacional y el problema nacional y colonial, Part I and II, series Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, 73 and 74, Siglo XXI editores, Mexico, 1978-79

Books

K. Marx, Capital, 3 Volumes, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1977

K. Marx, Preface to the contribution to the critique of Political Economy, various editions and publishers.

S. Avineri (ed.) Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernisation, Anchor Books, London 1969

Marx and Engels on Colonialism, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1974

F. Engels, "Über den Verfall des Feudalismus und das Aufkommen der Bourgeoisie", in MEW Vol 21. English translation "Decay of Feudalism and Rise of Nation States", in F. Engels, The Peasant War in Germany, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1977

L. Aguilar (ed.), Marxism in Latin America, W. Knopf, New York 1969.

Eleanor Marx Aveling, (ed.) Revolution and Counter Revolution, London, Unwin Books, 1971

K. Marx, Early writings, with an introduction by L. Colletti, London Penguin Books 1985.

K. Marx, German Ideology, students edition, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1977

K. Marx, The Communist Manifesto, various editors and editions.

K. Renner, The Institutions of Private Law and their Social Functions, London, Routledge & Kegan 1949, reprinted 1976.

Otto Bauer, Die Nationalitätenfrage und Die Sozialdemokratie 1924 Wiener Volksbuchhandlung Viena 1924.

Otto Bauer, The Austrian Revolution, English translation of "Die Österreichische Revolution", L. Parsons, London, 1925.

Otto Bauer, La cuestión de las nacionalidades y la social-democracia, spanish translation of "Die Nationalitätenfrage", Biblioteca Pensamiento Socialista, Siglo XXI editores, Mexico 1979

Max Adler, El socialismo y los intelectuales, Spanish translation of "Der Sozialismus und die Intellektuellen", Biblioteca Pensamiento Socialista, Siglo XXI editores, Mexico, 1980

Max Adler, La Concezione dello Stato nel Marxismo, Italian translation of "Die Staatsauffassung des Marxismus", De Donato Editore, Bari 1979.

Max Adler, Kausalität und Teleologie im Streite um die Wissenschaft Marx Studien 1, Vienna, Wiener Volksbuchhandlung 1904. Italian translation Causalità e Teleologia nella Disputa sulla Scienza, with an introduction by R. Racinaro, De Donato Editori, Bari 1976.

Stalin J. Marxism and the National Question, Moscow 1953

V. I. Lenin, Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, Progress Publishers, Moscow. 1970.

L. Trotsky The History of the Russian Revolution, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1965.

R. Hilferding Das Finanzkapital, Vienna, Wiener Volksbuchhandlung 1910 Vol. 3 of Marx Studien. English edition with an introduction by T. Bottomore; Finance Capital, Routledge and Kegan, London 1981.

E. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, Schocken paperbacks, New York 1961.

Rosa Luxemburg, El desarrollo Industrial de Polonia, Spanish translation of "Industrielle Entwicklung Polens", Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1979.

Rosa Luxemburg, La Question Nacional y la Autonomia, Spanish translation from a series of articles in Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, Siglo XXI, Mexico 1979.

Rosa Luxemburg, The National Question, Selected Writings, (ed. by H. B. Davis), Monthly Review Press, New York, 1976.

Georges Haupt, Michel Lowy, Claudie Weill (eds.), Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, 1848-1914, Francois Maspero, Paris 1974

G. Luckacs in History and Class Consciousness Merlin Press, London, 1976

A. Gramsci, Selection from Prison Notebooks, preface by G. Nowell Smith and Q. Hoare, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1971

A. Gramsci, The Southern Question, in The modern Prince & other Writings, International Publishers, New York, 1968

A. Gramsci Gli Intelletuali e l'Organizzazione della Cultura, Editore Riuniti, Rome, 1977

H. Rickert, Science and History: a Critique of Positivist Epistemology, translated by G. Reisman Princeton, 1962.

Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, Fontana Edition, 1974.

I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Random House, New York, 1958

F. Tönnies, Community and Society, Michigan State University Press, 1957.

B. Borochoy, Nationalism and the Class Struggle, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1973.

Secondary Sources

- Eric Hobsbawm et al. (eds.) History of Marxism, London 1982, English translation of vol. 1 of Storia del Marxismo, five volumes, Einaudi Editore, Turin 1979.
- Vicent J. Knapp, Austrian Social Democracy, University press of America, Washington 1980.
- Anson Rabinbach (ed.) The Austrian Socialist Experiment, Social Democracy and Austro-Marxism, 1918-1934 Westview Press, Colorado, 1985.
- H. Portelli, Gramsci y el Bloque Historico, Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires 1974
- A. Cutler, B. Hindess, P. Hirst, A. Hussain, Marx' "Capital" and Capitalism Today, Vol II, Routledge and Kegan, London 1978.
- E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Verso 1985.
- B. Hindess and P. Hirst, Mode of Production and Social Formations, London MacMillan 1977
- H. Mommsen, Die Sozialdemokratie un die Nationalitätenfrage im habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat, Das Ringen um die supranationale Integration der zisleithanischen Arbeiterbewegung (1867-1907), Europa Verlag, Vienna, 1963
- H. Raybourn, The Ethical Theory of Hegel, Clarendon Press, 1967.
- S. Avineri Hegel's Theory of the Modern State Cambridge 1972
- Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.) The State & Civil Society, Cambridge 1984

- P. Worsley, Marx and Marxism, Tavistock Publications, London 1982
- C. Mouffe (ed.) Gramsci and the Marxist Theory, Routledge and Kegan, London 1979
- T. Nairn, "The Modern Janus" in The Break Up of Britain, Verso, second edition London, 1981
- Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart Schram, Marxism in Asia, The Penguin Press, London 1969
- Anouar Abdel-Malek, Nation and Revolution, vol 2 of Social Dialectics, The MacMillan Press, London 1981
- Lelio Basso Rosa Luxemburg, A. Deutsch Lmted. London 1975
- Paul Frolich Rosa Luxemburg, Ideas in Action, Pluto Press, London 1972
- J. P. Nettl, Rosa Luxemburg, London Oxford University Press, Vol I and II, London 1966
- N. Geras The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg, New Left Books, London 1976
- J. Joll The Second International, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1974.
- G. Haupt, Socialism and The Great War, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1972
- G. P. Steenson, Karl Kautsky, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978
- M. Salvatori, Karl Kautsky, New Left Books, 1979

- H. B. Davis, Socialism and Nationalism, Monthly Review Press 1967
- J. L. Talmon, The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution, University of California Press 1981
- A. Walicki, Philosophic and Romantic Nationalism: The case of Poland, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1982
- B. Jessop, The Capitalist State, Martin Robertson, Oxford 1983.
- B. Jessop, Nicos Poulantzas, Marxist Theory and Political Strategy, MacMillan London 1985
- M. Shaw (ed.) Marxist Sociology Revisited, MacMillan, London 1985.
- S. Bloom, El Mundo de las Naciones, Spanish translation of "The World of Nations"; siglo XXI editores, Buenos Aires 1975.
- Pierre Giraud, Patois et les dialectes Francais, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, Paris
- Albert Doujot, Le Patois, Librairie Delagrave, Paris 1946.
- Histoire de la Language Francaise, Paris 1958
- S. Salvi, Le Nazione Proibite, Vallecchi Editore, Florence 1973
- P. Vilar, La Catalogne dans L'Espagne Moderne, Bibliotheque Generale de L'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris 1962
- I. Cummins, Marx, Engels and National Movements, Croom Helm, London 1980.
- H. A. Reyburn, The Ethical Theory of Hegel, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977.

- H. Marcuse. Reason and Revolution, Beacon Press, Boston 1969.
- C. Herod, The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought, Martinus Nijhoff The Hague 1976.
- L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism 3 Volumes, Oxford, 1978.
- G. P. Steenson, K. Kautsky, Marxism in the Classical Years, University of Pittsburg Press, 1978.
- Liebman Marcel, Leninism under Lenin, Merlin Press, London 1980,
- E. H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, MacMillan London, 1963
- G. Haupt & M. Jean-Jacques, Makers of the Russian Revolution, Allen and Unwin, London 1974
- L. Shapiro and P. Reddaway, Lenin: The Man, the Theorist and the Leader, Pall Mall press, London, 1967
- A. Ulam, Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Fontana, London, 1974,
- L. Colletti, From Rousseau to Lenin, New Left Books, London 1972.
- R. Service, The Bolshevik Party in Revolution 1917-1923, MacMillan, London 1979.
- B. Knei Paz The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1978
- H. B. Davis. Socialism and Nationalism, Monthly Review Press 1967
- Labeledz, L. (ed.) Revisionism, Allen & Unwin, London 1962

- Wright, E. O., Class, Crisis and the State, New Left Books, London, 1978
- Poulantzas, N. Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, London, New Left Books, 1975
- Eric Cahm and V. Fisera (eds.) Socialism and Nationalism Vol 2, Spokesman, London 1978
- Gay, P. The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, Octagon Books, New York, 1979
- Rex, John, Race Relations in Sociological Theory Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1983
- N. Abercrombie, S. Hill and B. Turner The Dominant Ideology Thesis, London, Allen & Unwin 1980
- J. Hoffman The Gramscian Challenge London, Blackwell 1984
- C. Buci-Glucksmann Gramsci and the State, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1980.
- D. Grisoni and R. Maggiori Guida a Gramsci Biblioteca Universali Rizzoli, Milan 1977
- K. Korsch, Marxism and Philosophy, New Left Books, 1970.
- E. Said Orientalism, Routledge & Kegan, London 1978
- B. S. Turner, Marx and the End of Orientalism, Allen & Unwin London 1978.
- F. Lo Piparo Lingua, Intellectuali, Egeonia in Gramsci, Laterza, Roma 1979

- S. Salvi, Le Nazione Proibite, Vallecchi Editore, Florence 1973
- F. Pauley, The Habsburg Legacy, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York 1972
- Oskar Jaszi The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy University of Chicago Press, 1929
- Robert Kann, The Multinational Empire, two volumes New York, 1950
- K. Stadler, Austria, Ernest Benn Ltd. London 1971.
- I. Oxaal, The Jews of Pre-1914 Vienna, Working Paper, Dept. of Sociology & Social Anthropology, University of Hull 1981
- Z. A. B. Zeeman, The Twilight of the Habsburgs, Purnell & Sons. London 1971.
- Carl. E. Schorske, Fin de Siècle Vienna Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London 1980.
- A. Janik and S. Toulmin Wittgenstein Vienna, London Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1973.
- John Boyer, Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna, University of Chicago Press, 1981
- N. Weinstock Zionism, False Messiah, Inklinks, London 1978
- Jean Pierre Faye, Los Lenguajes Totalitarios spanish translation of Thèrie du récit, Introduction aux Langages Totalitaires, Taurus Ediciones, Madrid 1974.

- Jean Pierre Faye, Migrations du Récit sur le Peuple Juif, Collection "Eléments", Paris 1974.
- A. Rabinbach, The Crisis of Austrian Socialism, University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Kurt L. Shell, The Transformation of Austrian Socialism State University of New York, 1962.
- W.M. Johnson, The Austrian Mind, University of California Press, 1972.
- M. Sully, Continuity and Change in Austrian Socialism: The Eternal Quest for the Third Way, Columbia University Press, New York 1982.
- J. R. Recalde, La Construcción de las Naciones, Siglo XXI de España Editores, Madrid, 1982.
- A. Agnelli, Questione Nazionale e Socialismo, Contributo allo studio del pensiero de K. Renner e O. Bauer, il Mulino, Bologna 1969.
- T. Bottomore, (ed.), Austro-Marxism, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976
- G. Marramao, Austromarxismo e Socialismo di Sinistra fra le due Guerre, La Pietra, Milan 1977.
- D. Albers (ed.) Otto Bauer und die "Dritte Weg" Campus Verlag, Frankfurt 1979.
- G. Ananiadis, Austro Marxism and the "Third Way" to Socialism, unpublished thesis Dept. of Government University of Essex 1981.

- T. E. Willey, Back to Kant, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1978.
- H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, Harvester Press, 1979.
- G. Bourque, L'Etat Capitaliste et la Question Nationale, Les Presses de L'Université de Montréal, Quebec.
- R. Munck, The Difficult Dialogue, Marxism and Nationalism, Zed Press, London 1986.
- Smith, A. D. Theories of Nationalism", London, Duckworth London 1971, 2nd edition 1984.
- Y. Bourdet, Otto Bauer et la Revolution, Edi., Paris 1968.
- O. Leichter, Otto Bauer, Tragödie oder Triumph?, Vienna, 1970.
- E. Tiryakian and R. Rogowski, New Nationalisms of the Developed West, Allen & Unwin London 1985.
- J. Figgs & R. Laurence (eds.) The History of Freedom and other essays, London MacMillan 1919.
- H. Tobias, The Jewish Bund in Russia from its Origins to 1905, Stanford University Press, 1965.
- E. Gelner, Nations and Nationalism, B. Blackwell, London 1983.
- B. Anderson, Imagined Communities, Verso, 1983.
- W. Connor, The National Question in Marxist Leninist Theory and Strategy, Princeton University Press, 1984

Leninism and the National Question, Progress Publishers Moscow, 1977

Shaheen S., The Communist Theory of National Self Determination. W. Van Hoeve, The Hague, 1956

Tibi, B. Arab Nationalism, MacMillan Press, London 1981.

Zwick, P. National Communism, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 1983.

Boersner D. The Bolsheviks and the National and Colonial Question, Hyperion Press, Conneticut, 1956

C. Schorske, German Social Democracy, Russell & Russell, New York, 1970.

Davis, H. B. Towards a Marxist Theory of Nationalism, Monthly Review Press New York

Smith A. D. The Ethnic Revival, Cambridge University Press, 1981

J. M. Leclercq, La nation et son Idéologie, Editions Anthropos, Paris, 1979.

E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in the Marxist Theory, NLB, 1977

Articles

R. Munck, "Otto Bauer, towards a Marxist Theory of Nationalism", in Capital and Class, 25 1985 pp. 84-97.

A. D. Smith, "Nationalism and Classical Social Theory" British Journal of Sociology, vol 34, n. 1 Mar. 1983 p. 23.

W. P. Metzger, "Generalizations about National Character: An Analytical Essay" in L. Gottschalk (ed.), Generalization in the Writing of History, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1963.

W. Connor, "Nation Building or Nation Destroying?", World Politics, 24 1972

Schiff Z. "The Spectre of Civil War in Israel" Middle East Journal, Vol 39, 2, 1985.

Kozlov V., "The classification of ethnic communities, the present position in the Soviet Debate" Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol 3, 2, 1980.

Carrere d'Encause H., "Unité proletarienne et diversité nationale: Lenin et la théorie de l'autodétermination", Revue Française de Science Politique, Vol 1, No 2 1971

L. Krader, "The theory of evolution" in E. Hobsbawm (ed.) op. cit. History of Marxism, vol 1. London 1982

M. Lowy, "Marxists and the National Question", New Left Review, 96, 1976

T. Shanin, "Soviet Theories of Ethnicity, the Case of the Missing Term", New Left Review 158, 1986.

R. Rosdolsky, 'Friederich Engels und das problem der "Geschichtslosen" Völker', Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, Vol IV, Hannover 1967. Spanish translation by C. Ceretti, Federico Engels y el problema de los pueblos "sin historia", series Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente, número 88, Siglo XXI editores, Mexico 1980.

Josep Llobera, The Idea of Volksgeist in the Formation of Catalan National Ideology, unpublished paper, Goldsmith College, London 1983.

G. Haupt and C. Weil, "L'Eredità di Marx ed Engels e la Questione Nazionale", Studi Storici, Istituto Gramsci Editore, 15, 1977, 2

C. Hilary et J. Mascotto, "Dialectique Materialiste et Nationalisme Historique", Les Cahiers du Socialisme, May 1978, Montréal, Quebec. pp. 87-197.

R. Rosdolsky, "Workers and Fatherland", Science and Society, Vol 29, 1965.

A. D. Smith, "Ideas and 'structure' in the Formation of Independence Ideas", Philosophy of Social Sciences, Vol 3, 1973

R. Gallisot, "Nazione e Nazionalità nei Dibatti del Movimento Operaio, in Storia del Marxismo, vol 2, op. cit.

E. Hobsbawn, "Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory", in Anne Showstack Sasson (ed.) Approaches to Gramsci Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, London 1982

C. Mouffe, "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci" in C. Mouffe (ed.) Gramsci and the Marxist Theory, Routledge & Kegan, London 1979.

B. Jessop, "Capitalism and Democracy, the best possible political shell?", in G. Littlejohn et al. (eds.) Power and the State, London Croom Helm, 1978

Protokoll über die Verhandlungen der Gesamtparteitages der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Österreich, Brün, translated into Spanish by Conrado Ceretti in op. cit. La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Nacional y Colonial, Vol 1.

- G. Therborn, "What does the Ruling Class do when it Rules? A. Giddens and D. Held (eds.) Classes Power and Conflict, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1982
- Lidtke, Vernon L. "Le premesse teoriche del socialismo in Bernstein", in Annali, Istituto Feltrinelli, 15, 1973
- Berstein, E. "Die Deutsche Sozialdemokratie und Die Turkische Wirren" (The German social Democracy and the Turkish disturbances), Spanish translation, in op. cit. La Segunda Internacional y el Problema Colonial.
- Said . E. "Orientalism Reconsidered", Race and Class, 27, 2, 1985
- Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", New Left Review 100, November 1976.
- S. Hall, "The Problem of Ideology, Marxism without Guarantees", in B. Matthews (ed.) Marx 100 Years On, Lawrence and Wishart 1983.
- Manuel Garcia Pelayo, La teoria de la naci3n en Otto Bauer, Politea, Mexico, 1978.
- R. A. Berman, "Fascinating Vienna" in Telos 68, summer 1986 pp. 7-38.
- Moshe Machover and Mario Offenberg, "Zionism and its Scarecrows" in Khamsin 6, 1978 pp 33-59
- Peter Schmidtbauer, "Zur sozialen Situation der Wiener Juden in Jahre 1857" in Studia Judaica Austriaca, VI, pp.57-91
- A. G. Kogan, "The Social Democrats and the Conflict of Nationalities in the Habsburg Monarchy", Journal of Modern History 21, 1949 pp. 204-217.

- H. Konrand, Nationalismus und Internationalismus, Europaverlag, Vienna 1976
- Synopticus, Staat und Nation, Vienna 1899. Spanish translation, in La Segunda Internacional y el problema nacional y Colonial, op. cit.
- R. Kann "Karl Renner", Journal of Modern History, 23, 1951 pp.243-249.
- Norbert Leser, "Austro-Marxism, a reappraisal", Journal of Contemporary History, 11, 1976.
- E. Cassirer, "Hermann Cohen", Social Research, 10, 1943
- P. Heintel, "Neo Kantianism" in C. D. Renning (ed.) Encyclopaedia of Marxism, Communism and Western Society, New York, Herder & Herder, 1977.
- A. W. Wright, "Socialism and Nationalism", in L. Tivey (ed.) The Nation State, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1981.
- R. Debray, "Marxism and the National Question", New Left Review 105, 1977.
- Z. A. Pelczynski "Nation, Civil Society and State, Hegelian Sources of the Marxian non-theory of Nationality", in Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.) The State and Civil Society Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- G. Haupt "Les Marxistes face à la Question Nationale: l'histoire du problème", in G. Haupt, M. Lowy and C. Weill, Les Marxistes et la Question Nationale, op. cit.