*Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory/Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale,* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter/Hiver 1979).

# MARXISM AND THE REIFICATION OF POLITICS

*Ronald F. Perrin*

## Reconsideration and Revision

Let us begin on a note of candor. To address the problem of reification is not merely an admission of the unfinished nature of the Marxian enterprise, but the recognition of its present instability. More than a century after Marx and Engels initiated their critique of bourgeois ideology the capacity to distinguish between the authentic and the false in the publics' understanding of its interests still eludes us. Understandably, the situation has prompted Professor Leiss to suggest that, "the received notions of commodity fetishism and reification in radical theory may well be obsolete."[1] The sources of his skepticism are not difficult to document. Instead of the classical Marxist projection of a society increasingly polarized between the interests of capital and labour, we witness the continued and escalating fragmentation of society. What is more, these various factions and groupings articulate demands which are, in their immediate context, equally legitimate. How does one arbitrate, for example, between labour's demand for salary increments that will keep pace with inflation and the demand of environmentalists for a curb on productive growth? Where is the truth and where is the false in the need of elderly home owners for some measure of property tax relief and the competing interest of the poor in those basic social services that are often funded through such taxation? It is not enough to respond with the tired litany that "these conflicts are grounded in the structural contradictions of monopoly capital". In theory and in practice they are central antagonisms for Marxism as well. In theory, because Marxism is the attempt to comprehend them; in practice, because Marxism maintains the promise of their resolution.

However, despite the "evidence", I am not ready to concur with Leiss's prognostication. Insofar as the concepts of commodity fetishism and reification reflect the intention to identify, within the production and circulation of commodities, a renascent human substance, they are essential concepts for any radical theory that would claim a Marxist lineage. I recognize however, that this

is a visceral response and not a counter-argument. The real case for this "reconsideration" of Marxism initially rests with the fact that the need for such systematic self-evaluation is a theoretical commonplace.

Notwithstanding its claim to maintain a critical posture towards history Marxism has its own genesis and future within history. Like the humanistic sciences *(Geisteswissenschaften)* to which it is kindred, Marxism contains an irreducible core of relativity.[2] However, Marxist theory remains unique where it knows itself, *i.e.* where it acknowledges that its understanding is prepared and shaped by its subject matter, even as it struggles to make the historical event meaningful.

Nonetheless, as a theory of society, there was a sense in which the original Marxist dialectic had its object outside of itself. The ideas and events that engaged Marx's attention were manifestations of the bourgeois stage of history. Our present situation is different in one important respect; to the extent that Marxism would now address the full range of humanity's social organization it must be prepared to encounter its own history in such varied settings as the official socialism of the Marxist-Leninist states, the dispersed radical opposition in the United States and Canada, and the recent development of a Euro-Communism.

The process of reconsideration is further aggravated by its immediate practical consequences. Let me anticipate one possible response to this conference by noting that those who would embark upon the reconsideration of Marxism had best prepare themselves against the charge of revisionism. Whenever, as it most assuredly must, Marxism takes its place alongside those political alignments that are seeking to direct the course of human affairs the reconsideration of its theory will force the revision of its practice. To be sure, the cry of "revisionist" is, more often than not, the cloak of sectarian nonsense. Yet it does reflect a genuine conflict between the need to maintain some degree of theoretical integrity (to keep one's wits together) while maintaining a responsive flexibility towards new circumstances and possibilities. The capacity to sustain this tension is the mark of any dynamic political programme.

The test of Marxist theory, then, does not lie with the ability of its adherents to preserve their principles above or against the shifting interests of society. It rests instead with our competence in locating within the theory the resources for its own regeneration. My purpose here is to make some contribution to this effort by reconsidering Marxism through the prism of its own conceptual framework. My presumption is simple, namely that the most telling appraisal of Marxism's present situation will be one that locates itself within the generation of Marxist theory and practice. If there is anything contrary to the spirit of Marx it is the notion that one can assume an Archimedean point *vis à vis* the meaning of historical and social events.[3]

### Reification and Commodity Fetishism: Genus and Species

The suggestion that the notion of reification is obsolete strikes me as premature since it presupposes that clear understanding of the concept's significance which still eludes us. In part, the elusiveness of the term is a feature of its problematic relationship to the analysis of commodity fetishism. Lukács, for example, takes Marx's account of the fetishism of commodities as a description of "the basic phenomenon of reification",[4] and Marcuse also turns to the account in Volume I of *Capital* as the place where Marx most clearly expounded the process of reification.[5] Yet it is clear from a full reading that both Lukács and Marcuse find in the fetishism of commodities only a particularly instructive illustration of reification and not an exhaustive account of its significance. Implicit in their arguments is the claim that the concept of reification enables us to address those social relationships which lie beyond the immediate domain of commodity production and exchange but have been endowed with that pseudo-objective character which one finds in the fetishized commodity. Both men, for example, make reference to the reified conception of natural law in Stahl's positive philosophy of the state.[6] However, as far as I can determine, in neither case is the distinction between commodity fetishism and reification fully developed. As a result there is a tendency in Marxist theory (as we see from Leiss's conjunction) to conflate the two terms, limiting the significance of reification to the analysis of economic relationships within capitalism and their most direct reflections in the attendant (bourgeois) ideology. The thrust of this approach is to undermine the employment of the concept in a more reflective undertaking, *i.e.,* one that would consider the process of reification as a characteristic of the Marxist, as well as the bourgeois, experience.

What then is the relationship between commodity fetishism and reification? As Marx developed his analysis of the former he drew attention to the distinction between commodities and objects *per se*. "There is a physical relation between physical things. It is different with commodities."[7] The commodity, as an expression of a "value-relation between the products of labor," has "absolutely no connection with (its) physical properties".[8] Here the value-relation in question is *exchange value* and it is this, labour in exchange for capital, that assumes with the fetishism of commodities the form of an objective character "stamped upon the product of that labor".[9]

We ought not, however, to allow the distinction between physical objects (the things of nature) and commodities to eclipse the obvious fact that "a commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us ...."[10] If this were not the case then the fetishism of commodities would be simply one more form of mystification. The "secret" of commodity fetishism is that, as the form of use-value in capitalist society, the commodity gives objective form to the social

relationship between otherwise isolated individuals. "Commodities are things, and therefore without any power of resistance against man.... In order that these objects may enter into relation with one another as commodities, their guardians must place themselves in relation to one another, as persons whose will resides in those objects, and must behave in such a way that each does not appropriate the commodity of the other, and part with his own, except by means of an act done by mutual consent."[11] Thus the objective character of commodities is fundamental to Marx's analysis. We could go further and note, with Marcuse, that it is the objective character of use-value that enables Marx to speak of human needs and capacities as "objective powers". This is not my concern here; the point is to indicate the subtle, but crucial, difference between the terms of this analysis and the circumstances which are appropriate to the process of reification.

With reification we are not exclusively preoccupied with a state of consciousness that attributes *to the object* material properties that are in fact the contribution of an acting subject. More often than not, the situation is quite the opposite. A process (such as technology) or an idea (the "rights" of property) is perceived as an indeterminate force, empowered to shape and direct human affairs while remaining impervious to social intervention or control. In this instance, to paraphrase Marx, we are not concerned with the products of men's hands but with the results of human thought and will; mental constructs and states that seem to extend beyond the bounds of any historical determination.

So understood, the process of reification does indeed have a much more extensive sphere of reference than the phenomenon of commodity fetishism. With reification we find human beings enslaved by their ideas; with commodity fetishism they are dominated by their things.

Let me suggest that the generic relationship of reification to commodity fetishism can be clarified by reference to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* In his "Observation on the Antinomy of Pure Reason" Kant cautions that, "if from our own concepts we are unable to determine anything certain, we must not throw the blame upon the object as concealing itself from us. Since such an object is nowhere to be met with outside our idea, it is not possible for it to be given."[12] In this manner Kant seeks to undermine the dogmatic solution to the antinomies, *i.e.* the response that involves the transformation of, "our idea into a supposed representation according to the laws of experience."[13] From this perspective one might characterize the whole of Marx's work as an extended confrontation with the "dogmatic solution" of bourgeois society, that is, with the demand that every dimension of experience (education, culture, the family, etc.) submit to the laws of the market. This perspective, however, also provides a framework within which we can situate Marx's analysis, enabling

us to observe that the concern with commodity fetishism bespeaks its *specificity* with respect to that situation in which the instrumentalities of the market place give a definite cast to the reified structure of life and consciousness in bourgeois society. By preserving the critical significance of "reification" beyond Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism it becomes possible to address the question of how the oppositional view that was developed on the basis of Marx's critique could reduce its understanding to the twin dogmas of the proletarian revolution and the withering away of the state.

### The Reified Proletariat

The seeds for a reified conception of the proletariat are planted in Marx's earliest commentaries on the state and politics. Most striking, perhaps, is the discussion in the *Introduction to the Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law.* There the language clearly evokes the proletarian class while the context of the argument indicates just as clearly that the conditions for the formation of that class have yet to be met. "No particular class in Germany has the consistency, the severity, the courage or the ruthlessness that could mark it out as the negative representative of society." "[T]he proletariat is coming into being in Germany only as a result of the rising *industrial* development," a development that in 1843 could only be anticipated by Marx. Finally there is Marx's revealing claim that the proletariat "can no longer invoke a *historical* but only a *human* title...."[14] Nonetheless, Marx concludes that the proletariat *is* "the dissolution of the existing world order".[15]

In commenting on these early characterizations of the proletariat Leiss has noted "a propensity in Marxian theory to assume the existence of a class which was autonomous *a priori*," a class that "would be, as it were, the material medium of Marxian theory, a medium already prepared for the theory which was the simple expression of its objective being."[16] That there is such a propensity is, of course, one of my contentions in this essay. However, Leiss's observation is a bit too indiscriminate. The idea of the proletariat eventually did find its objective expression in the industrial working force of early capitalism. What strikes me as crucial is the fact that in the remarks cited above Marx was describing the proletariat in a context devoid of any specific economic considerations. Here the concern is with the proletariat as the agent of revolutionary change. In this context Leiss is correct; the proletariat exists only in theory.

Nonetheless, the theory is not drawn from wholecloth. On the contrary it represents Marx's considered assessment of the *political* revolution in France, the revolution of the bourgeoisie. One fundamental feature of the bourgeois revolution was a multiplicity of particular interests and classes, with each class

claiming to represent itself as the general "emancipator" of society. "For the storming of this emancipatory position, and *hence for the general exploitation of all spheres of society in the interests of its own sphere* ... all the defects of society must conversely be concentrated in another class ... so that liberation from that class *appears* as general self liberation."[17] (my emphasis) These, Marx argues, are the circumstances upon which a "partial, merely political revolution are based".[18]

Thus, in drawing upon the experience of France, the most fully developed political practice available, Marx concluded that every political representation of the general will was, at bottom, a *misrepresentation.* The conclusion of his essay followed inexorably; the *absence* of any clearly developed political state in Germany, together with the *presence* of a dissolute feudal order, established the necessary political conditions for the formation of a universal class. This is what is signified in Marx's claim that, "Germany has accompanied the development of modern nations only with the abstract activity of thought without playing an effective role in the real struggle of that development (but) it has, on the other hand, shared the *sufferings* of that development, without sharing in its enjoyment or its partial satisfaction."[19]

It is difficult to avoid the sense that Marx viewed the underdeveloped character of Germany's political evolution as a virtue insofar as it prevented the dispersal of her revolutionary potential in a variety of piecemeal programmes and struggles. Indeed, this may have contributed to the enthusiasm with which he portrayed the German proletariat: a class with neither "historical title" nor "particular interests". However, the real problem lies elsewhere, namely, with his limited conception of the political state.

Throughout the essay on Hegel's *Philosophy of Law* Marx presumed a fundamental and unmediated dichotomy between the political state and civil society *(bürgerlichen Gessellschaft).* It was a distinction that he developed most explicitly in the *Essay on the Jewish Question.* There he was concerned to demonstrate that the universality of rights proclaimed in the bourgeois philosophy of the state was without any inherent substance. The real substance of life was contained in the fractured civil society that had emerged from the feudal order.

> Where the political state has attained its true development, man — not only in thought, in consciousness, but in *reality,* in *life* — leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the *political community,* in which he considers himself a *communal being,* and life in *civil society,* in which he acts as a *private individual,* regards

> other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers.... In his *most immediate* reality, in civil society, man is a secular being. Here, where he regards himself as a real individual, and is so regarded by others, he is a *fictitious* phenomenon. In the state, on the other hand, where man is regarded as a species-being, he is the imagined member of an illusory sovereignty, is deprived of his real individual life and endowed with an unreal universality.[20]

Marx's indictment continues to resonate wherever the state persists in mocking humanity's most genuine aspirations towards fellowship and community; but his claim compounds the dilemma, it does not point the way to a resolution. By asserting that this represents the "truth" of the political state, the possibility of achieving any universal human emancipation within the structure of the state is precluded. By definition the state is consumed (theoretically and practically) by the play of the particular interests within the realm of *Gesellschaft*. Yet the state "occupies" this particular moment in history. In limiting his political analysis to the circumstances appropriate to the French revolution and its aftermath Marx was forced to project the alternative to the state in a class that would somehow escape history. The reified proletariat, a "class that is in but not of civil society", is the logical corollary to a conception of the political order which has forgotten that the nature of that order is not fixed but dialectical, that the laws of its development are not physical but human, that its truth is not to be discovered but rather, to be made.

To accept these early formulations as Marxism's final statement on the meaning of the state and politics is to remain at an impasse. The proletarian revolution will occur only with the absence of the nation-state since wherever the labouring class is brought into the realm of civil society (where its existence as a particular interest within civil society is recognized and guaranteed by law) the revolutionary transformation is preempted. The paradox brings the history of Marxism into sharp relief and forces that encounter with its own past which I have already indicated. Let me turn to the two poles of that history — the Soviet Union (which continues to dominate the intellectual and moral horizon of the Left) and North America (where Marxism continues to exist only as theory).

## The Practice of Reification

The natal environment of the Bolshevik revolution bore a striking resemblance to the world of Marx's early political writings. Marx's following appraisal of Germany, for example, could well have been an observation on the state of Russian society between 1905 and 1917. "It is therefore not only the ... kings who accede to the throne *mal a propos*; every section of civil society goes through a defeat before it has celebrated victory, develops its own limitations before it has overcome the limitations facing it and asserts its narrow-hearted essence before it has been able to assert it magnanimous essence."[21] Furthermore, the development of the Russian proletariat (a minority before the revolution and a class without an industrial base after the havoc of civil war) was every bit as problematical as it was in Marx's Germany.

We should not be altogether surprised, then, to find Soviet Marxism recapitulating in practice the limitations that Marx ascribed to the 19th century bourgeois state as well as the ambiguities in Marx's political analysis. Lenin's address to the Eighth Congress of Soviets is instructive on both accounts. In the first instance the sovereignty of the proletariat is legitimized by its antithetical relationship to capitalism.

> The dictatorship of the proletariat has been successful because it has been able to combine compulsion with persuasion. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not fear any resort to compulsion and to the most severe, decisive and ruthless forms of coercion by the state. *The advanced class, the class most oppressed by capitalism,* is entitled to use compulsion, *because it is doing so in the interests of workng and exploited people, and because* it possesses means of compulsion and persuasion such as no former class ever possessed.[22] (my emphasis)

The argument recalls the setting of the Bolshevik ascendancy. On the terrain of a shattered civil society a courageous minority succeeded in empowering itself and representing its interests as universal. The *formal* medium of its rule became, admittedly, the Party rather than the State. It is precisely here where the ambiguity cuts deepest. Like the bourgeois state, the Party presupposed those distinctions within civil society that were the necessary substance of its administrative (and in this instance, dictatorial) rule. However, consistent with the devaluation of politics that was inherent to Marx's analysis of the state, Lenin turned away from the political resolution in favour of that policy of

bureaucratic economism which continues to mark Soviet domestic policy.

> We have, no doubt, learnt politics: here we stand as firm as a rock. But things are bad as far as economic matters are concerned. *Henceforth, less politics will be the best politics.* Bring more engineers and agronomists to the fore, learn from them, *keep an eye on their work,* and turn our congresses and conferences, not into propaganda meetings but into bodies in which we can learn the business of economic development.[23] (my emphasis)

Thus, there was to be no withering away of the state but instead the substitution of the Party as the official overseer of society.

With Marx the idea of the proletariat was significant to the extent that it informed his critique of society, enabling him to highlight the purely formal character of bourgeois justice. With Lenin the critical edge is lost. Rather the "proletariat" becomes an instrument of policy superimposed upon the Russian experience with implications that tend towards the surreal. By denying from the outset its own political character the Soviet government remains theoretically and practically incapable of translating the diverse interests of Russian society into a public form or language. The issue was stated cryptically by a colleague of mine in Soviet Studies at the University of Montana: "The Soviets are as congenitally incapable of resolving the problem of human rights as we are of resolving the problem of unemployment." Against the force of a politically effaced state apparatus, the opposition can represent itself only in private — in the moral protests of the individual conscience. There remains little prospect for a praxis that might mediate between the opposing "moments" of the bureaucratized state and civil society.

### The State Before Society

Is the situation really different in the West? It becomes increasingly evident that in North America, at least, a heavily bureaucratized state also functions, with less and less success, to administer the affairs of an apparent multiplicity of social groups and interests. Thus, the socialist and corporate states appear to occupy parallel, if not intersecting, trajectories. However, the appearance is misleading insofar as it obscures historical differences that may yet prove decisive.

In North America the political structure of the state was fashioned under

conditions vastly different from those that prevailed in either revolutionary Europe or Russia.[24] Specifically, the North American setting was predominated, not by the forces set in motion with the destruction of an *ancien régime*, but by the dynamic of settlement and expansion. The political order derived its functional legitimacy from its capacity to control and assimilate the waves of immigration rather than the ability to facilitate the transformation of an indigenous peasantry into an industrial army. In both Canada and the United States the recurring preoccupation with federalism, secession and separatism bespeaks the absence of any inherent social substance. In short, the creation of the state preceded the formation of society and this unique chronology continues to give the two nations a much different composition than those societies which Marxists have traditionally taken as the model for their political understanding and strategies.

In that model political authority rests upon the capacity of one class to represent its interests as universal. In the North American case the presumption is that such a univerality is, in principle, inaccessible.

> From the birth of the nation, a hierarchy of local governments, formerly sovereign and autonomous, interposed itself between the individual and the supreme power of the state ... the constitution took form as a series of compromises between competing interests — large states versus small, agriculture versus commerce, slave holding versus free labor. The structure of the Union was designed to balance these interests, giving each a voice but none command. The conception of politics as a conflict of more or less permanent groups was thus introduced into the foundation of our government.[25]

As Professor Wolff's analysis indicates, the interests and needs of the citizenry in the Federalist setting gain political expression, not through the organized voice of a class or party that implicitly or explicitly views itself as the bearer of a general will, but rather through forms that are at bottom sectarian.

To be sure, Marxist critics have had little difficulty demonstrating that, from the beginning, the assumption of the absolute and inviolable rights of private property functioned as the reified universal within the statements of the founding fathers, (*e.g.* Madison's observation in the Federalist #10 that "the diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate is no less an insuperable obstacle to the uniformity of interests. The protection of

these faculties is the first object of government.''[26]). Nonetheless the failure to translate this critique into any practical movement or form reflects a failure to concretely address the intrinsic capacity of the political structure to deflect the radical alternative into the play and conflict of particular interests.

Again, the resemblance between this state of affairs and the circumstances which Marx drew upon in his analysis of early bourgeois society is misleading. Here there is no latent ''moment'' of universality (no endemic culture, no shared recollection of a common religion) whose human core might be emancipated through a revolutionary transformation. Instead, the temporal and functional priority of a political state that is structurally determined to generate factions seems to contain the Marxian alternative in a perpetual state of prematurity. The situation is not unlike that which Marx described in his observations on competition in *The German Ideology*. There he noted that despite the physical proximity of workers in the industrial labour process, competition continued to force them into a state of isolation. He recognized that every, ''organized power standing over against these individuals (and) reproducing this isolation could only be overcome after long struggles.''[27]

What prognosis do these brief observations imply? The immediate prospects for the *political* articulation of a universal interest, seem to me, precluded by the basic character of our societies. I find little comfort here from the fact that it is possible to demonstrate the systematic character of the corporate state in our philosophical and economic critiques. The continued failure of this effort to generate any public response only serves to underscore the absence of a corresponding political analysis.

However, the peculiar circumstances of the political order in Canada and the United States do suggest a practical course. In effect, the political process in our societies is designed to produce and reproduce a state of social anarchy that can only be averted by larger and larger doses of state intervention. The task of Marxists in such circumstances is to take up the struggle against the organized power of the state at the point where the issue is joined most directly and most immediately, namely, where the state encroaches upon the individual.

### Euro-Communism: The Middle Way?

I have been arguing that for differing reasons the Marxist theory of politics in the Soviet Union and North America has been constrained by an uncritical acceptance of Marx's early response to the bourgeois state. By questioning the actuality of Marxist practice in the former instance and the possibility of Marxist theory in the latter, I have traced the outline of a crisis in Marxism. Even this bare bones account would be incomplete without some mention of Euro-Communism. The movement captures our attention because it seems prepared

to recognize that crisis and respond by re-situating Marx and Marxism squarely within the experience of the modern state. In its eschewal of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", its willingness to enter the arena of constitutional politics, its recognition of at least a semi-autonomous state in concepts like Carillo's notion of the "director state",[28] and its insistence that a concern with individual rights is not the exclusive province of bourgeois social theory, Euro-Communism suggests a middle ground between the arcane Marxism of the Soviet Union and the embryonic Marxism of North America. Moreover the theoretical development that accompanies these strategic revisions reveals a refreshing break with the reified understanding that I have been describing. The following declaration by Norberto Bobbio is typical of the new spirit of inquiry that is both point and counterpoint to the practice of Euro-Communism.

> The fact that there are so many Marxisms is not a scandal. On the contrary, it is a sign of vitality, as the multiplication of sects at the time of the Reformation was a sign of Christianity's vitality. Even the "neo" is a good sign. I am suspicious of philosophcal systems which are not reborn under that sign. Had there remained only one Marxism, one would have to think that it died or is dying, and I would keep my distance from it, advising others who still believe in the critical function of reason to do the same.[29]

Again, these events are exciting — and promising, but at the risk of sounding far more pessimistic than I am, I must conclude on a note of caution.

Any social programme that strives to pursue a middle course in a period of crisis cannot fail to be preoccupied with the dangers which lurk on its respective flanks. The situation is compounded in the case of Euro-Communism because the threat in each instance is both domestic and foreign. For example, if the Communist parties of Western Europe are to gain their legitimacy within the established political process they must achieve an unprecedented measure of autonomy *vis à vis* the Soviet Union — "the independence of the communist parties in relation to the Soviet state is essential"[30] — while at the same time avoiding domestic suppression by demonstrating an "unequivocal" commitment to the basic principles of that process.

> As regards the political system established in Western Europe, based on representative political institutions — parliament, political and philosophical pluralism, the theory of the separation of powers, decentralization,

> human rights, etc. — *that system is in its essentials valid* and it will be still more effective with a socialist, and not a capitalist, economic foundation.[31] (my emphasis)

Conversely, the need to preserve intact the allegiance of the Party membership and concentrate its energies behind the electoral programme dictates a heated re-affirmation of Marxist principles that seems to mitigate the commitment to democracy.

> Within our own movement, too, there is no lack of more or less veiled accusations. We are not returning to social democracy! In the first place because we are not in any way discarding the idea of coming to power in a revolutionary way, if the ruling classes were to close the democratic paths and a set of circumstances were to develop in which the revolutionary road would be possible.[32]

This conflict between a liberal and a revolutionary posture illustrates the shortcomings in any attempt to confine the Marxist Renaissance at the level of strategy. Such a stance produces a hybrid formation of bourgeois and Marxist principles, contributes to a shifting and uncertain political practice, and undermines the effort to forge a new socialist majority. Equally telling is the extent to which it obscures the distance which divides Europe from its revolutionary past and Euro-Communism from its Marxian antecedents. Carillo's willingness to embrace a "political and philosophical pluralism" for example, is worlds removed from Marx's insistence that only one class is historically entitled to represent the universal interests of humanity. Until the advocates of Euro-Communism are prepared to acknowledge the fact that their situation calls for theoretical as well as practical innovation my fear is that their movement may yet succumb to the atrophying effects of a reified interpretation of Marx.

One last note, there is a disposition among North American Marxists to seek elsewhere for the solution to our problems. Its expressions are as old as the capitulation of the C.P.C. and the C.P.U.S.A. to the Third International and as recent as the attempts within the New Left to employ a guerilla style of politics in the urban metropoles of imperialism. To be sure we are involved, affected and instructed by the fate of Euro-Communism, but we ought not to allow its development to divert our energies from the need to generate a Marxism that is indigenous to our own countries.

Philosophy
University of Montana

**Notes**

1. William Leiss," ... an ontology of stoned concepts," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory,* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring-Summer, 1977), p. 105.

2. For an excellent discussion of the historical limits of dialectical theory see Herbert Marcuse, "On the Problem of the Dialectic", *Telos,* No. 27 (Spring, 1976), pp. 21-24.

3. "When you ask about the creation of nature and man, you are abstracting, in so doing, from man and nature.... Since the *real existence* of man and nature has become evident in practice, through sense experience, because man has thus become evident for man as the being of nature, and nature for man as the being of man, the question about an *alien* being, about a being above nature and man — a question which implies the admission of the unreality of nature and of man — has become impossible in practice." Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Karl Marx - Frederick Engels, Collected Works,* Vol. 3, New York: 1975, pp. 305-306.

4. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness.* London: 1971, p. 86.

5. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution.* New York: 1960, p. 279.

6. Lukács, *op. cit.*, p. 108. Marcuse, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-371.

7. Marx, *Capital,* Vol. 1. New York: 1967, p. 72.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

12. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* tr. by Norman Kemp Smith. New York: 1963, p. 434.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 435.

14. *Karl Marx-Frederick Engels, Collected Works,* Vol. 3. New York: 1975, pp. 185-186.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

16. William Leiss, "Critical Theory and its Future," *Political Theory,* Vol. 2, No. 3 (August, 1974), p. 342.

17. Marx-Engels, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

22. Lenin, "Report to the Eighth Congress of Soviets, Dec. 22, 1920," from Robert C. Tucker, *The Lenin Anthology*. New York: 1975, p. 492.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 492-493.

24. In the following remarks I want to focus on those political-historical features which the United States and Canada have in common. Obviously a complete discussion would have to explore the implications of our differences as well. Moreover, in this brief treatment I have had to draw examples from my own experience which is necessarily specific to my knowledge of developments in the U.S. I hope that my Canadian colleagues will correct me where I might be over-generalizing.

25. Robert Paul Wolff, "Beyond Tolerance," in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*. Boston: 1965, pp. 8-9.

26. *The Federalist, A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States.* The Modern Library, New York: p. 55.

27. *Karl Marx-Frederick Engels, Collected Works.* Vol. 5. New York: 1976, p. 75.

28. *Santiago Carillo, Eurocommunism and the State.* Westport: 1978, pp. 24-25.

29. Norberto Bobbio, "Is There a Marxist Theory of the State," *Telos,* No. 35 (Spring, 1978), p. 6.

30. Carillo, *op. cit.* p. 40. Since I find Carillo the least ambiguous spokesman for Euro-Communism I have confined these brief remarks to observations on his work.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 133.