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The Party as Instrument of Transformation

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The explicit vocation of communist parties is to be agents of a deep social transformation: revolution.

In the first phase of their existence the communist parties put forward this objective in a very simple way, from the political and theoretical viewpoint. Their historical function was to apply the model of the Soviet Revolution by making the revolution in Europe into a general process, in which the starting point was the seizure of power by the party, the latter conceived as a transposition of the Bolshevik Party.

Today the problem presents itself in a radically different manner. The Eurocommunists still remain faithful, in principle, to their revolutionary vocation, but they have explicitly abandoned the Bolshevik model as a reference point, as well as the idea of an international revolutionary movement based on a vanguard party.

Their revolutionary perspective is centred on the specific conditions - national and international - of the class struggle in the developed capitalist countries. The engine of this revolution is the active mobilization of a plural majority, whose structural roots are to be found in the development of the advanced capitalist societies.

Consequently, Eurocommunism wishes to maintain the initial revolutionary tradition but to break with the form and a substantial part of the content of this same tradition. In order to be agents of revolution in the countries of developed capitalism, that is to say in political, economic and social

conditions which have nothing to do with those existing at the time of their formation, the Eurocommunist parties must carry out a thorough revision of their political, ideological and organizational tradition, but without a complete break with the historical reasons for their creation as parties.

What are, then, the main aspects of this tradition ? What are the problems posed by the necessity of its revision ?

THE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TRADITION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

I do not intend to go into great detail over this subject, because I believe that its fundamental reference points are fairly well known. I wish quite simply to recall its main features.

First of all I must start by recalling that the communist parties arose historically out of a split in the international workers' movement. They were certainly not the cause of this split but rather its effect. However this is surely the key question which has remained throughout the history of the workers' movement: the problem of the split and the need - or refusal - to overcome it.

In my opinion, the political elements of this split are the following : firstly, a specific evaluation of the question of imperialism, a far-reaching theoretical and political problem which conditioned all the analyses of the First World War and the attitude of the international workers' movement towards it ; secondly, the impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution, and I use the word impact advisedly because the Russian Revolution was

perceived as such by many different sectors of the workers' movement, which were unhappy with the attitude of the great socialist parties in the First World War. During the first years, the most specific aspects of the Russian Revolution were not very well known, and the essential element was considered to be the factual reality - and thus the general possibility - of a radical break with the capitalist system ; thirdly, the effects of the break itself, for it is not true that the birth of the communist parties was a kind of triumphal march followed with great enthusiasm by the masses. By this I mean that the effects of the break were very diverse : certain sectors of the workers' movement saw it as a step forward ; others, no less important and significant, were reticent or completely opposed to it.

With regard to political theory, I believe that the most noteworthy aspects are as follows :

A) An exaltation of internationalism as anti-imperialism. This exaltation was a fundamental theoretical basis for the break and, simultaneously, the connecting link with the great anti-imperialist national liberation movements, which began to develop in an original way precisely after the Russian Revolution.

B) A theory of the State, taken almost word for word from Lenin's State and Revolution and The proletarian revolution and the renegade Kautsky. It is well known that this Leninist theory of the State was an abridgement of certain

general reflections by Marx and Engels, with as the central element the concept of 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and a radical opposition between 'bourgeois democracy' and 'proletarian democracy'. This reductive conception made the State into a homogeneous whole directly serving a ruling class - whose contradictions remained in the background -, a State which could be captured by a revolutionary assault led by a vanguard nucleus, that pulls along a majority behind it, takes over the State, destroys it and creates another, with the dictatorship of the proletariat as its basis.

C) The concept of the party. The model for communist parties was the Bolshevik party, conceived as a vanguard formed by professional revolutionaries and organized in almost military terms, with a rigid centralization of the most important decisions. Though essentially supplied by the working class, the party is characterized by the fusion of revolutionaries from the ranks of the workers' movement with revolutionaries originating from - not representing but originating from - the 'intelligentsia', as an element external to the workers' movement, which, left to itself, is only capable of producing a trade-unionist movement.

D) A predetermined conception of revolution, which is understood as a frontal attack on established power. This attack is the work of the popular masses led by the vanguard of professional revolutionaries. Its goal is to destroy the bourgeois State and build on its ruins a State of a completely new type,

that of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

E) The self-determination of oppressed nationalities, a less fundamental theoretical element but one which, later on, will become very important, not only in relation with the anti-imperialist liberation movement, but also to the question of nationalities within the developed capitalist states.

The evolution of these theoretical elements was conditioned by the concrete development of a quite specific and new model of socialism. Until then the concept of socialism had been based upon a rather vague aspiration. Some main categories - socialization of the means of production, etc. - had been established, but nothing was known about the conditions for their practical realization. The real concrete model was constructed in the USSR, however not as a finished model, but as a combination of immediate and specific responses to conjunctural problems. What is important is that the Soviet model, which originated from very specific/historical realities and was not strictly speaking a model, was transferred to other realities, other situations, and transformed into a finished model ; it became a true theoretical and practical model for what the communists wanted to attain and build with the socialist revolution. It became the general model for the international communist movement.

The international isolation of the Russian Revolution, the failure of the international revolution according to the Russian model, the need to change this internationalist perspective due to the reality of Socialism in one country were decisive factors in changing the initial perspective.

In addition, solidarity with the sole existing socialist State - the USSR - became the touchstone of 'proletarian internationalism', and the communist parties changed from agents of an international Bolshevik revolution into forward defensive weapons of the Bolshevik State in 'enemy territory'.

As a consequence of all that, the national aspect of the class struggle disappeared from all analysis and practice or was subordinated to the more general interest of consolidating the only existing socialist nucleus. Internationalism became submission to a strategy defined from a single centre. The political tactics of each communist party was subordinated to the supreme international objective, and that was identified with the concrete interests of the Soviet State.

Naturally, the Soviet State itself was idealized. The Bolsheviks did not act on the basis of a model but according to concrete requirements and problems. The problems of constructing a new State were met one by one as they came to them; their theory had certainly foreseen the most general aspects of the problem, but it did not supply any concrete response to the multiple aspects of the new situation. And the construction of a new system - termed 'Socialism' - on a very pragmatic basis was idealized by the communist parties, ~~who~~ which saw it as a universally valid structure, with generally applicable laws, that is to say, not as a model of socialism but as the model itself.

This situation was modified by complex historical events which, following the great world crisis of 1929, gave rise to nazi-fascism, the popular fronts, the II World War, the transformation of Western communist parties into very large mass parties rooted in national reality, the Cold War after the division of the world into large blocks, the Chinese Revolution, the national liberation movements, the Cuban Revolution, the capitalist development of the 1960s and, finally, the 1968 crisis, which was simultaneously a crisis of the capitalist system and a crisis of real Socialism, the latter crisis lasting from the split between the USSR and China up to the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Here I do not intend to go into the history of these decisive years. The aim is simply to recall a number of important events in order to sketch out the backdrop which explains the evolution of the communist parties and the transformation not only of the historical conditions for their appearance but also of the initial theoretical data.

THE THEORETICAL BASES OF EUROCOMMUNISM

The communist movement has a tradition, and the characteristic feature of Eurocommunism - and also its biggest contradiction - is that it wants to overcome this contradiction without completely breaking with that tradition.

Clearly, Eurocommunism is not aiming to return to the common

fold of the Second International for the simple reason that this common fold no longer exists. Since 1917, great changes have taken place affecting as much the communists as the socialists.

If the communists have a tradition, so too do the socialists. The Cold War, the military blocks, the great revolutionary movements sparked off by the Russian Revolution, etc., have also left deep marks on the socialist tradition and compelled the socialist parties as well to look for new paths. For that reason, to talk nowadays of an old common fold is not very relevant.

In any case, Eurocommunism wants to assume all the positive aspects of the great changes occuring after the Russian Revolution without letting itself be carried along by the negative elements of this process. The problem is to know whether this aim is attainable.

However, the subject of my analysis is another. In more concrete terms, it concerns the definition of the changes implied by Eurocommunism in the specific field of political theory, in relation to the initial theoretical positions. In my opinion, these changes are as follows.

First of all, I believe that Eurocommunism carries within itself a <u>new conception of internationalism</u>. This cannot any longer be defined as simple solidarity with the Soviet model, not only because the USSR is the head of one of the great political and military blocks, but also because the Soviet model

itself is unacceptable. Stalinism was not simply a deformation, an error due to the cult of personality. It was a system, and Eurocommunism has no wish to take it up as such.

The new internationalism must have as its basis the new historical realities, that is, the real elements and factors of the struggle against imperialism today. Fixed criteria and dogmatic reductionism are no longer admissible. The totality of the real or potential forces of anti-imperialism is not limited by any means to the communist parties. Moreover, many of the deepest revolutionary changes of these recent years have had other forces as their protagonists. As rather significant examples I would recall the cases of Cuba, Algeria and Nicaragua. All the great revolutionary changes after the Russian Revolution have followed their own paths, different from the Russian one. One must, therefore, know how to find the bases for a new internationalism ; and the task of the communist parties lies in playing a role - among other factors - ~~so~~ such that this new internationalism can become an operational force in the struggle against imperialism.

Another fundamental element of Eurocommunism is the refusal of the division of the world into blocks. Eurocommunism has developed in a part of the world subject to the power of American imperialism, and represents a form of struggle against it. But this factor of anti-imperialist struggle is not a function of the social and political model represented by the other block. As a consequence, the communist parties cannot and do not wish to be the extension or representation of one block

within the other. This is so not only due to the crisis of a certain traditional model, but because it would mean simply to accept the disappearance of the national dimension to the class struggle. In other words, if one accepts the logic of the military blocks, and if the Western communist parties follow this logic, they have only two possibilities left for achieving power : either military victory by the socialist over the imperialist block, or a summit-level agreement between the two superpowers. The first case is unthinkable, as it implies a world war. The second is not impossible seen purely theoretically, but in practice it is, for it implies not only the disappearance of the communist parties as national parties, but also of all progressive parties and movements ~~in~~ as instruments of popular struggle, mobilization and participation. The class struggle in each country at the national level would, in practice, be liquidated or transformed into a completely secondary element, since it would no longer be the leading factor of social transformation.

Another no less essential element is the transformation in the party model. The model of the Bolshevik party defined in its main lines by Lenin (but structured by Stalin and identified by him with the State itself) is evidently not viable. But here too it is not a question of starting all over again. I believe that the new party model came into effect in practice from the 1930s onwards and above all in the post-war (1945) period, with

very uneven results from one country to another. The central idea is that of the mass party, but that poses several problems : up to what point can a mass party continue to be based on democratic centralism ? And up to what point can a mass party ignore the existence of different tendencies and factions within it ?

Democratic centralism is an effective but delicate method. What today is called democratic centralism is no longer what it was in the Bolshevik party. It is something quite different : a rather pragmatic method for unifying along a single political line the political differences existing in a mass party, so that the party acts as a single party, and not as several at the same time. In practice things sometimes happen differently because of varying situations and contradictions internal to the party itself.

Democratic centralism can only continue to exist if applied with flexibility and if, at one and the same time, it allows a large network of intermediary decision centres to function with considerable autonomy. For that reason it is indispensable to ensure an authentic collective work and a massive participation of party militants in the discussing and carrying out of tasks. In any case in this question it seems to me that the communist parties still have one foot in the past and one in the future. Today democratic centralism is a more pragmatic than doctrinaire method, similar to that used in the other political parties. The central problem is always to guarantee that a large number

of people act in unison while wholly maintaining their differences, and this problem continues to exist.

Another essential point is <u>to go beyond the Bolshevik model of Revolution</u>. It is often said that the seizure of the Winter Palace cannot be repeated. The concept of revolution proposed by Eurocommunism has much more in common with the notion of the 'revolution of the majority' of the later Engels, but though very stimulating this notion also poses a certain number of problems. Who are the subjects of the revolutionary process ? Who is the majority, and against whom must it fight ? And who exactly is the enemy ?

For a long time these problems found simplistic solutions in the communist parties : the subject of revolution is the working class and its allies (peasants, intellectuals, etc.) The enemy is the bourgeoisie and its State. Therefore it was necessary to take over the State, destroy it, and build another based on a different class power. But this model has several faults : its simplism, its apriorisms, its detachment from concrete reality. The political position in the developed capitalist countries is much more complex, as is the ruling class. The modern State can no longer be reduced to the abstract condition of a homogeneous apparatus in the service of one class. Revolution is not a simple seizure of power, but a process extending through time and space which requires social and political conditions which cannot be realized by any working class party on its own.

Among other things, that requires a new formulation of the theory of the State.

The analysis of the contradictions within the ruling classes and strata is a fundamental condition for any new elaboration of the theory of the State. It is not very meaningful to go on talking about the 'bourgeoisie', and nothing more. Rather one must talk of 'bourgeoisies', 'ruling classes', at both the national and the international level. Here is one aspect which the Marxist theory of the State has considerably elaborated recently, and I do not intend to enlarge upon it.(cf. Poulantzas, 1976; Bobbio, 1976; Ingrao, 1977; Holland, 1975; Sontag, 1977).[1] It is necessary to talk of sectors and groups of the ruling classes, see their contradictions among themselves, valorize to a greater extent the national aspect of the structure or class being considered.

As a function of all this I believe that the concept of 'bourgeois State' must be reconsidered. In the State which we term 'bourgeois', elements exist which are not 'bourgeois', and there are even some which can be used to modify its predominant class nature. Among the values attributed to the bourgeois State - for example, constitutional values - there are several which did not spring precisely from the bourgeoisie and were won after long struggles (the right of association or to strike, for example), and which consequently are not part of the bourgeoisie's value system.

The theme of democratic liberties cannot be resolved without further ado by the expedient of distinguishing between 'formal freedoms' and 'real freedoms', the former being those of the bourgeois State. There are much more complex implications. This leads us to put forward one of the conclusions which logically flows from our discussion. I mean the relationship between the concept of reform and that of revolution. This relationship has been excessively simplified since the days of the Second International (it suffices to recall certain of Rosa Luxembourg's works) and became a taboo subject under the Third International. It still remains so in certain important sectors of the communist parties. I do not think that a simplification of the question resolves anything. A new link between these two fundamental concepts must be found, for otherwise the political programmes based on the idea of the revolution of the majority have no meaning.

THE CONCEPT OF 'REVOLUTION OF THE MAJORITY' AND THE THEORY OF THE STATE.

At this point it is necessary to specify certain aspects of this concept, which comes from Engels himself (Longinotti,1975). In the introduction to the 1895 edition of Marx's "The class struggles in France", Engels writes :....'the institutions of the State in which the bourgeoisie's domination is organized offer new possibilities to the working class to struggle against those very institutions....'. Further on he says : '.... the epoch of surprise attacks, of revolutions made by small conscious

minorities at the head of the unconscious masses is over. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of social organization, the masses must intervene directly, and must have understood for themselves what is at stake, why they are giving their blood and their lives ..... and in order for the masses to understand what must be done, the task is long and requires perseverance.' Engels also touches on the question of universal suffrage, and says that the German workers have 'transformed universal suffrage from the means of deception it had been up to now, into a tool of emancipation'.

This might be seen as a contingent thought of the later Engels, but I believe there is a line of thought which leads further. The quotation from Engels signifies that the masses do not intervene after a minority has opened up the way, and that in order for the masses to understand, political education work is insufficient. What is needed is organizational work, the coordination of mass movements, starting from their specific conditions of existence. All the more so as the popular masses are far from uniform in themselves.

Let us consider, for example, the actual situation of the working class. Only at a very general level, on a conceptual plain, could one talk today of the working class as a socially homogeneous political whole. It is as much diversified in its structures as on the level of ideological orientations. It is also diversified on the supranational level. Thus, to

unify the working class on the political and trade-union level is a long-range task which can only succeed starting from actually existing pluralism, and by respecting this same pluralism.

If the working class, the main but not the only subject of the revolution of the majority, is diversified, the other sectors which make up this majority are even more so. The idea of revolution of the majority is based on the belief that the contradictions of imperialist accumulation have created a diversity of social subjects who may join together on anti-imperialist positions. But the fundamental problem of such a revolution is to know how to tackle this diversity of social subjects so as to make it into an active formation ; that is to say, how to make a true political majority out of it, able to undertake a task of radical social transformation of the capitalist order's foundations.

The problem of the role of the popular and working class political parties is closely linked to this theme of the subjects of the revolution of the majority. If the majority is plural by definition, so must the result be as well. Ideological pluralism is, therefore, a key element in the formation and consolidation of this majority. The role of parties calling themselves revolutionary must be to contribute to the consolidation of this plural and pluralist majority. More precisely, the role of a communist party no longer consists in being the sole vanguard, but one - the most dynamic, the most active,

the most unitarian - among others. When observing the present European scene, it can easily be seen that in many places it will not be the main protagonist of change.

Sometimes there has been the tendency to present the concept of the revolution of the majority in exclusively electoral terms; for example when it is said that socialism cannot be reached with just 51 percent of the votes. That seems obvious. But it cannot be reached either with a greater electoral majority if that is the only thing in question. Behind this electorally expressed majority, there must be a majority politically and socially operative at all levels.

There is one more important question. When I say that this majority must know against whom, against which State it is fighting, I may give the impression of remaining faithful to the old conception of the State. The majority of which I speak cannot be forged outside of the State, which is not a fortress surrounded by the enemy to be taken by storm. There is no political life at the margin of the State, as there is no working class (or any other) organization outside of the State, outside of the apparatus and institutions which constitute the State. The majority as subject of the revolution can only be formed within the State. For that reason, the struggle against the State mentioned above is more complex than it appears. At this point the problem of the relationship between reform and revolution takes on its full significance.

In this context the question of freedoms becomes a key problem. In a society without precise limits with regard to the State, the possibility exists of forging a majority only if one starts from pluralist situations. And that can only be done if democratic freedoms are maintained and extended so as to ensure the participation of all sectors which potentially can be integrated into the majority.

I believe that it is impossible to go on working with the abstract notion of the State ; the State is a concrete reality with a real existence in the form of a set of apparatuses and institutions, formed historically through uneven evolution, and which are pervious, to an unequal degree, to the effects of the class struggle. In every revolutionary process, in every tactical and strategic definition, one must act with the concrete State as it exists. One must be capable of seeing its contradictions, those existing between one institution and another, and between them and the ruling classes, the contradictions internal to the latter, and even within the dominated classes which are supposed to form the new transformative majority, etc.

If one remains confined to an abstract vision of the State, in the long run, there is no other course of action left open to the communist parties but the frontal assault in order to conquer and to build something almost entirely unknown on the ruins of the old state, unless they simply wish to import a model from other countries which have already made a social revolution. This is

precisely what Eurocommunism rejects.

I would now like to turn, though very rapidly, to another major theme. In the traditional conception of the State, there is always either implicitly or explicitly the idea of discontinuity. It was thought that ~~every~~ any State could be replaced by another, the result of a revolutionary action, on totally new foundations. ~~That~~ This view derives, I believe, from a schematic vision of history. There is the tendency to believe, for example, that the 1789 French Revolution signified a radical break with the absolute Monarchist State, or that the 1917 Russian Revolution completely destroyed the Czarist State and created another one anew. In reality that is not exactly the case. There is always an element of continuity. Marx himself anxiously points it out in his 18th brumaire when he states that after every revolution the State strengthens itself. This is particularly visible in the reinforcement of the centralized administrative apparatus and in the widening of the whole of the State apparatuses' capacity to intervene, and even beyond that.

It can be applied, with all due care, to the case of the relationship between the Czarist State and the Soviet State after 1917. The moving appeals by Lenin, at the end of his life, against the bureaucracy's excesses, what did they ~~show~~ signify? They showed that the State being constructed by the Bolsheviks was maintaining many of the features of the former State alongside the new aspects. Take for example the Czarist military and

administrative cadres which supplied the Red Army and Soviet administration. And this was not all. There were also the mentalities, inertia and collective habits which could not be changed from one day to the next, and even less so on the basis of a Jacobin attitude (Lewin,1968). Further, when Bukharin, likewise in the last years of his life, was worried by the monstrous growth of the State, and spoke of the dangers of a State built according to Stalin's political and economic conceptions, he recorded this continuity in mentalities and forms of action, which were a charge against the Soviet bureaucrats of acting exactly like their Czarist equivalents (Cohen,1975). I think that even in Soviet ideology one can perceive a penetration by the ideology which acted as a support to Czarism. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain such aspects as the heirarchical rigidity in the Soviet ruling bodies. The case of China could be considered in a similar way.

As a conclusion to this section, I wish to insist on two points. The first is that it seems to me absolutely necessary to pose afresh the problem of the relation between reform and revolution, while leaving aside, once and for all, the taboos surrounding the subject. In our societies today it is impossible to go on posing this problem in mutually exclusive terms on the basis of a division which seems artificial.

The second is the necessity of reposing the problem which lies at the very origin of the communist parties. They arose

from a split in the workers' movement, and the first priority for them as for the other workers' parties, socialist or social-democratic, is to reconstitute its unity. It is impossible to consider a socialist transformation of society with the workers' movement divided. It is impossible to advance towards socialism with a workers' movement incapable of binding other sectors of society into a revolutionary majority. The overcoming of this division in the workers' movement will, therefore, be made on new foundations, beginning with the convergence of this movement's different components. This is a responsibility of the communists and socialists and in general of all the parties which politically and ideologically organize the workers' movement in the advanced capitalist countries. This is why ~~For that to occur~~, the ultimate logic of Eurocommunism consists in its disappearing, in its being dissolved into a new unity of the workers' movement, plural and certainly contradictory, but open to the future.

THE PARTY, POLITICAL SOCIETY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

If the revolution can only be conceived as a process, if the State is not a homogeneous whole, if the agent of revolution is a plurality of subjects which have to constitute a majority, it is clear that the function itself of a communist party, as a tool of social transformation, takes on a new meaning.

With the notion of the vanguard party, which opens the way for the masses, out of date, the Eurocommunist party must be an element of dynamization and organization of the popular masses, an element for intervening in public institutions, and the State's structures. In short, the task is that which in the Spanish communists' political programmes appears under the notion of 'party of struggle and of government'. Nevertheless, this concept expresses a contradiction which the communist parties are not always in a position to resolve in practice. In as far as parties of government - for example with regard to autonomous regions and local councils - they always run the risk of becoming simple administrators, that is to say, agents of a more rational administration of a system which they thereby help to consolidate, not transform.

In addition, the very dynamic of the contemporary State may lead them to play an unexpected role : to be the first and most ardent defenders of the State with regard to the double danger of an authoritarian reaction and anarchic disintegration. Thus with the offensive of terrorism before them, the communists may find themselves facing a very complex situation, since not only does terrorism tend to reduce the political struggle to a clash between two armed minorities, with a total marginalization of the masses, but it also tends to reduce the progressive forces' room for manoeuvre for the democratic reform of the State apparatuses.

To the extent that these forces - and first of all the communists - need to defeat terrorism so as to bring the masses as protagonists, back into political life, they may find themselves forced to strengthen the State's coercive apparatus without, for all that, having the possibility of introducing into it elements of democratic reform. Such is the communists' main preoccupation in their discussions about the anti-terrorist measures.

But this is not the only contradiction. In a democratic system the parties constitute the main channels for selecting political leaders at all levels. The parties of the right do practically nothing but that, with a few exceptions. The communist parties, under electoral pressure, for example, may fall into this practice denied by them in theory.

Given that the worker militants have a privileged field of action which is the trade-union, the danger exists of the party actually splitting into three : the public party (the deputies, mayors, local councillors, etc.); the strictly trade-union party and its working-class leaders; and the organic party of the leadership and the apparatus.

All these contradictions are only manifestations of the basic problem met by parties which call themselves Eurocommunist; the need to be instruments of transformation in civil society and in the State simultaneously, in a social structure which allows no air-tight compartments nor separations, but which at

the same time produces different dynamics.

These contradictions can only be overcome if the struggle to obtain the organized intervention of the masses in politics becomes the primary aim of the communist parties. This does not mean the weakening of civil society, but its strengthening. It also implies that the State must be not destroyed but reinforced by democratic reforms, which will make it more receptive to mass participation.

The communist parties must be both instruments for defending popular interests from the effects of the crisis and attacks from the right, and also offensive instruments for modifying State structures, for overcoming the crisis by introducing elements of socialism in the economic field, and for organizing a social fabric which the capitalist crisis tends to destroy. In short, it is a question of combining the defence and the strengthening of representative democracy by the development of all forms of basic democracy and by the struggle for a new economic and social system within a vast network extending from the enterprises as far as the institutions.

This implies that the communist parties must be open to the multiple initiatives which can arise from this new potential majority. That is to say that the political action of the communist party cannot aim at a general identification between the isolated citizen and the positions of the party itself. Rather, to render this revolution of the majority possible,

which is at the heart of Eurocommunist strategy, it is indispensable for citizens to be capable of being integrated into a vast network of social organizations, like trade-unions, neighbourhood, parent and teacher, peasant, ecologist, cultural organizations, etc., which have, every one of them, their own specific basis for action and their own raison d'être.

The task of the communist party is not to substitute themselves for or instrumentalize these movements, nor to conceive of them as the rearguard of a vanguard with the party at its head, but rather to give an impetus to this diversified universe of associations and to propose political syntheses capable of unifying the different initiatives. The role of the party, in short, is to unify the progressive positions arising from this great mass movement and to contribute to its growing into a political majority able to bring about the transformation of the State apparatuses and institutions.

All this entails the need for theoretical reflection, good organization, and a relationship with the totality of political and social forces, which the European communist parties are in a position to take up only partially.

What appears today to be in the foreground is rather the contrary : the need to set up defensive mechanisms with regard to the right and the authoritarian State. The new Cold War and the hardening of the political-military blocks is exercising strong pressure on the communist and socialist parties, and is

tending to push them back into past positions.

The question remains open, and today conditions theoretical analysis. The proposition can be put forward that this research will be neither easy nor linear, and that it will be necessary to develop a richer and more open conceptual apparatus.

Notes

1) To these authors one should add Althusser's reflections on the State apparatus. The collection of essays by Bobbio and others (1976) has been published in Spain in the form of a book with an introduction by J. Solé Tura, Barcelona, 1977.

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