

## Imperialism and the Question of Peace

MURZBAN JAL\*

War is bad in that it produces more evil people than it destroys.

IMMANUEL KANT.

An end which requires an unjustifiable means is no justifiable end.

KARL MARX.

War is not only a continuation of politics. It is the epitome of politics.

LENIN.

To talk of peace under capitalism and imperialism can be rightly said to be the most malicious of all fictions. Just as Max Horkheimer and Nicos Poulantzas had said that one cannot understand fascism without understanding capitalism and imperialism, so too one will have to say that one cannot understand war and peace without understanding the histories of capitalism and imperialism. The ideas put forth by Lenin in the last century, that capitalism has reached a new stage of development in the form of imperialism, that its existence is based on expansionism and conflicts between rival capitalist blocs and that wars are the instrumental reason of modern capitalism, remains true to this day. Not only are wars important for imperialism, they now form the essential political economy of global capitalism in the present days of the 'empire'.

The present work is based on the archaeology of violence and the consequent critique of imperialism.

As 'critique' it inquires into the scientific knowledge of violence as well as its praxical transcendence as a just and revolutionary peace. It consequently inquires into the *reification of consciousness* produced as mass psychology by global capitalism and the necessities of the radical subversion of this reified death-world. The 'practical subversion' (*practischen Umsturz*), as Marx called it in *The German Ideology*<sup>1</sup> will guide the revolutionary politics of Marxism as well as the theoretical production of the critique of capitalism and imperialism in particular and violence bred by class societies in general.

This paper is divided into five parts: i) 'The Empire', which deals with the conspiratorial aspect of the American state in the quest for imperial dominance, ii) 'Marxist Strategies: The Weapons of Criticism and the Criticism of Weapons', which presents Kant's notion of eternal peace, and Antonio Negri's question: how is the ontology of

living labour possible? iii) 'The Genealogy of Estrangement', which presents Marxism as the critique of alienation, iv) 'On Revolutionary Resistance', which outlines the Marxist theories of just and unjust wars, and v) 'The Groundwork of Violence', which locates violence in the irrationality of commodity production.

Marxism as revolutionary theory and praxis is a combination of two disciplines: dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Whilst historical materialism as the science of Marxism is the empirical study of societies, their economies, ideologies, cultures, sciences (including both the natural and social sciences), and dialectical materialism, as the philosophy of Marxism studies the history of humanity under the purview of the discursive aetiology of estrangement and their consequent supersessions. It is this specific epistemico-political space to be grasped: to understand the history of class societies as the histories of

\*Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

estrangement. It is thus that the origins of commodity production, class formations, the genesis of the state, capital accumulation, national and imperialistic wars are understood in their critical and historical perspectives. The critique of imperialism will be carried forth in the politics of revolutionary democracy and the philosophy of what the young Marx called 'the human essence' (*das menschliche Wesen*). The radical conception of proletarian politics is based on this ethical project of classlessness and universal humanity. The international communist movement is the bearer of this universalism.

#### THE EMPIRE

Martin Heidegger had once spoken of 'the Europeanization of the world and all mankind' (*vollständige Europäisierung der Erde und des Menschen*). The entire globe will have to be under the 'care' of this process of Europeanization. But the end of the second imperialist war in 1945 brought in a new process: 'the Americanization of the globe'. What Chomsky calls 'the welfare of the world capitalist system'<sup>2</sup> now fell on the shoulders of the United States of America. Germany and Japan became the 'great workshops' for the American dream and the global bourgeoisie. Capital that was decadent and morbid, and standing on its last legs was given a new lease of life.

The crutches given to capital were accepted with gratitude and turned into the engines for further accumulation of its morbid desires. Global civil society was being built. But the great architect-builder was not 'the invisible hand' of the market alone. Thus the new phantasmagoric

forms of global capital, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and company did not do the ghost walking on the earth alone. The state came readily to the help of capital. The 'empire' was being conceived in the wombs of America. The Organisation of Strategic Services (OSS) got metamorphosed into the lethal Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Never was the state the embodiment of the 'moral good'. But now it was armed to the teeth. When capital went through its periodic bouts of economic crises, the American state played the guarantor of global capitalism. So capitalist, banker, the media, politician, mercenary, general and theologian, all joined hands to form the conservative right wing in America.

And it waged wars and wreaked havoc against anyone who came in its way; first target being International communism. The American state claimed to be involved in the de-Nazification programme in Germany. Actually it saw to the Nazis taking safe haven in South America. Then it hit the newly emerging communist movements. 'The School of the Americas', a notorious institute was built in Georgia in the USA to train right wing politicians and military men to overthrow democratic and popular regimes in South America. It hit the Marxist peasant and democratic movements there. In Iran, in operation Ajax, the CIA organised a coup against the democratically elected Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953. In January 1954, the CIA organized a coup against president of Guatemala, Jacob Arbez Guzman. In April 17, 1961, 1400 CIA saboteurs entered the Bay of Pigs in Cuba to sabotage the Cuban revolution. Later that year, the high

priest of democratic ethics, John F Kennedy authorized 'Operation Mongoose' against Cuba including serial assassination attempts against Fidel Castro. The CIA worked there with the mafia. Che Guevara was however caught by the CIA in Bolivia and assassinated. In 1962 democratic America trained 47,000 Meo tribesmen, Laotians and Thai mercenaries in Laos. A full fledged war against Vietnam followed. In Indonesia the Americans literally *oversaw* the massacre of the PKI (Communist Party of Indonesia) in 1965-66. General Suharto, the puppet of the CIA, rode over the dead bodies of the revolutionaries and sat on the despotic throne of Indonesia. In September 11, 1973 General Augusto Pinochet staged a coup against the leftist president Salvador Allende in Chile. In January 1980, the CIA started supplying arms and money to the Afghan Mujahedin. Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda were born. The empire had given birth to its Godfearing Frankensteinian children. Both God and capital were very angry with the sinful descendents of lustful Eve. In 1981, Ronald Reagan directed the head of the CIA Bill Casey to support counter revolutionary forces in Nicaragua, Cambodia, Angola and El Salvador. And the present neo-conservative American administration, like its 'liberal' democratic predecessor, Bill Clinton, took over 3/4th of the arms market for Third World countries—85 per cent going to non democratic countries.<sup>3</sup>

One thing is thus most certain: capitalism (like theology) cannot exist peacefully. It needs wars, crusades and occupations to reproduce itself. The name of the present crusader is George W Bush. His knights of the round table are

Dick Cheney and David Rumsfeld. His intellectual-warrior and philosopher queen is Condoleezza Rice. As the great Platonic philosopher queen, she will have to synthesize all the greatness of the 'glorious' American civilization. Thus Fukuyama and Huntington, 'the end of history' and 'the clash of civilizations' are synthesized in the game plans of the great empire.

Not only had history to be rewritten, but also theology. And theology came as a handmaiden to the imperialists. The Soviet Union was deemed 'evil' not only because it propagated a workers' republic, but because the oil and gas rich regions of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia could not be looted freely by the American bourgeoisie. The theological 'end of history' thus took place with the death of the 'evil spirit' (i.e. the Soviet Union) and the triumph of the 'good spirit' (i.e. American liberal democracy). But as remnants of the 'evil one' now in the form of the invisible 'terrorists', struck one unfortunate day hitherto christened '9/11', war on terror had to be waged by the American state. The American state wanted war, it got war. Thus all forms of evil, one wanted to identify, were identified. Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, North Korea immediately drew the ire of the American state. Afghanistan was immediately bombed and then occupied. Never mind that Unocal Corporation wanted the American establishment to remove their own God fearing Taliban friends and bring someone more in agreement with the earthly pleasures of bourgeois political economy. (The testimony of John Maresca, a vice president of Unocal Corporation which was presented to a Congress-

ional committee on February 12, 1998, which mentioned in detail American foreign policy and its relation with Central Asian oil and gas reserves can be found in *Monthly Review*, Vol. 53, No. 7, 2001, especially the following statement which is of extreme relevance: "The impact of these resources (i.e., Central Asian oil and gas) on US commercial interests and US foreign policy is also significant and intertwined." The sector running from the Central Asian regions (formerly under the Soviet Union) through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Arabian Sea was targeted for commercial exploitation. The document also mentions India in its field of action. It further mentions, "As with the proposed Central Asian Oil Pipeline, CentGas (a Unocal branch), cannot begin construction until an internationally recognized Afghanistan government is in place." This was said before the American state 'recognized' their old mujahedin partners, the Taliban as terrorists. Central Asia had to be turned into the new 'Silk Route', connecting Europe and Asia for the American corporations. All old partners had to go and new ones had to enter the scene. So Saddam Hussein the good poster boy of the Anglo-American imperialists was said to be in league with the 'terrorists'. The good anti-communist and faithful servant of the imperialists had to go. He thus went. It was said that he had weapons of mass destruction (he did have them when he was waging the pro-American war against the Iranians and bombing the revolutionary Kurds). But then the weapons were destroyed. The Americans knew this. But lies are the best excuses for waging imperialist wars.

When Pakistan the faithful squire

of the Americans offered to help them after the apocalyptic 9/11, LK Advani, the new 'iron man of India' and the then Union Home Minister offered to the Americans help claiming that the geographical territory of India was similar to that of Afghanistan. The follower of the comprador Savarkar had to prove that he was as good as his master. In this case why should not the dreams of the Americans for the status of 'empire' not be fulfilled when there are so many willing slaves to help them?

#### MARXIST STRATEGIES: THE WEAPONS OF CRITICISM AND THE CRITICISM OF WEAPONS

It is from this strategic space that one raises the critical question: how can one demand peace in the age of the imperialist empire? If there is peace, what would the nature of this peace be? Should one talk of a peace programme or instead demand a revolutionary uprising against the imperialists and their comprador cliental states? Or should one demand permanent peace with the demand of disarming of the American armed forces to be followed by the call to dismantle all armies of the world? Remember that all peace initiatives within the bourgeois order of things have necessarily led to more brutal wars. The Treaty of Versailles, 'treacherous' as Lenin rightly pointed out—was one of the 'functional' causes for the rise of the Nazis. Likewise the 'peace' initiatives between the occupational Israeli state and the PLO, besides leading to the fundamentalization of the Palestinian movement (of which the Israelis have contributed much like the formation of the anti-PLO Islamic terrorist organization Hamas), have also led to tremendous

repression on the innocent Palestinians.

On the other hand, should one combine the art of revolutionary uprising with the demand for a just and permanent peace? But to demand a just and permanent peace in the context of revolutionary uprisings is to demand an understanding of Marxist philosophy itself. What is Marxist philosophy and what is its specific importance today? Further: how is this revolutionary philosophy to be understood in a realistic and practical sense? How does one understand dialectical materialism in the specific form of the genealogy of estrangement in the context of imperialism and peace? Can there be a global mass civil disobedience movement against the imperialist empire? How then can one initiate the global mass boycott of imperialism and capitalism? Can there be a vanguard in this struggle against imperialism? And who would be this vanguard?

Let us for the time being bracket these Marxist questions and now turn to question raised by Kant: how is 'eternal peace' possible? The essay *Eternal Peace, A Philosophical Sketch* like his text *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten (Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals)* is of crucial importance for understanding the modern concept of peace. His moral precept guiding his notion of practical reason shall also be the guiding force for the implementation of the peace programme. This is how his moral imperative goes: "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law".<sup>4</sup> According to Kant the practical imperative should be read as: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply

as a means, but always at the same time as an ends".<sup>5</sup>

Now with this discovery of the 'kingdom-of-ends', the Kantian notion of moral politics and the peace programme follows. Kant claimed to have discovered six preliminary articles of an eternal peace between states. They are:

1. No treaty shall be held to be such, which is made with a secret reservation of the material for a future war.
2. No state having an independent existence, whether it be small or great, may be acquired by another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase or gift".
3. Standing armies shall gradually disappear.
4. No debts shall be contracted in connection with the foreign affairs of the state.
5. No state shall interfere by force in the constitution and government of another state.
6. No state at war with another shall permit such acts of warfare which make mutual confidence impossible in time of future peace: such as the employment of assassins, of poisoners, the violation of articles of surrender, the instigation of treason in the state against which it is making war, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Now there are three definitive articles of eternal peace:

1. The civil constitution in each state should be republican.
2. The law of nations (*Völkerrecht*) should be based upon a federalism of free states.
3. The Cosmopolitan or World Law shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality.<sup>7</sup>

A number of points come up in the reading of the Kantian text. First is the foundation of the principles of peace grounded on the metaphysics of morals. Here the issue of peace is linked to the ideas of moral politics and the people uniting to form the *state* in accordance with the principles of 'freedom' and 'equality', which itself is based on 'duty' and not on 'prudence'.<sup>8</sup> Because Kant's Christian morality interpreted according to the principles of enlightenment are the dominant features of his political philosophy, he claims: "Seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and of its *righteousness*, and your end (the well being of eternal peace) will be added unto you".<sup>9</sup> For Marx, the categorical imperative is simple: revolution. *The oppressor must be overthrown.*

Whilst an immediate contrast of these Kantian precepts and contemporary neo-conservative ideology is obvious, there is also a sharp line of demarcation between Kantian moral philosophy and Marxist revolutionary elan. On the international scene these three lines of demarcation will be the fault lines drawn between imperialism, liberalism and Marxism. At the national level the three areas demarcated are those between communalism, liberal-secularism and Marxism.

It is with these epistemological lines drawn that political strategies can be drawn by the communists. Should one align with the Gandhians and the NGO's (the Kantians of today), the secular democrats (the Congress under Sonia Gandhi) in the struggle with the communal-fascist RSS as well as the struggle of the communists against the imperialists?

Let us now recall contemporary reflections on the questions of war and peace:

War and peace: in its classical form, the conjunction of war and peace preserves the disjunctive value implied in the chiasm of these two common notions, whilst showing the impossibility of producing—both historically and conceptually—a positive definition of peace. Peace, as disarmament, negatively designates the social state of affairs characterised by the absence of war. This is Raymond Aron's peace by disarmament: "it is said that peace reigns when commerce among nations not entail the military forms of struggle" (Raymond Aron, *Peace and War among Nations*, 1962). Being neither essential nor existential, peace does not exclude struggles and conflicts (it demilitarises them) from the moment its principle has become "no different than of wars: instances of peace are based on power" (ibid) in a world that the imperative of public security already requires us to consider in its entirety (*totus orbis*). With security at its core, this secular form of political globalisation is indissociable from the antinomy: War/Peace which submits the 'law of peoples' (*jus gentium*) to the universal perspective of power (*potestas*). Antinomy: this is the term used by Proudhon to explain that "peace demonstrates and confirms war", whilst "war in turn is a demand of peace" (P-J Proudhon, *War and Peace, Inquires into the principle and the Constitution of the Law of Peoples*, 1861). Despite the striking actuality of this formula, Proudhon is describing here what he calls "the alternative conditions of the life of the peoples", who are subjected to the historical, 'phenomenological', alternation states of peace and states of war in a world in which the national logic of state centralisation both implies and explains the propensity toward military confrontations.<sup>10</sup>

The first question is how should one be emancipated from the state of perpetual war, remembering that capitalism is in itself a state of perpetual war? Secondly how does one deal with the 'empire' now taken the empirical form of the American

state which claims absolute, in fact, divine sovereignty and divine right to declare war on any nation state in order to declare an illusory peace? Negri and Alliez ask further questions that are relevant to this issue:

1. Has Peace become the post-modern label for War?
2. Is it 'necessary to arm war with the thought of desire of peace so as to lead the enemy, by victory, to the advantages of peace' (St. Augustine, Letter 189 to Count Bonifacius)?
3. Can there be a 'war against war'?
4. What is the difference between 'the living labour of the world' which is 'the globalization of living labour'?
5. How does this *transcendental dead labour* 'recompose itself only through war'?<sup>11</sup>

Now it is, this *aufgehoben* (literally 'an uprising' in the Marxist repertoire, though *aufgehoben* implies three simultaneous meanings (especially for Hegel): 'to lift up' that preserves as well as abolishes reality at a higher level of being) against dead labour and the appropriation of living labour (both in the political, economic as well as the ideological sites) that shall have to concern us. Recall Marx: capital as dead labour governs living labour. And to borrow Marx's phrase "We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead".<sup>12</sup> It is this difference: the difference between the ontology of dead labour (recomposed as the ideology and theology of death) and the ontology of living labour that shall not only concern the investigations on war and peace, but also discover the *precise site* of the Marxist critique of violence. Let us bracket this question

and move on to the Marxist reflections on war.

There can be nothing called 'wars in general'. There are bourgeois wars, the wars waged by the imperialists to loot weaker nations and subjugate them and revolutionary wars: the wars waged by the oppressed nations to ward out the aggressive imperialists as also the wars of the revolutionary proletariat against the world bourgeoisie. This is Lenin's teachings. Thus one must distinguish just wars from unjust wars. This has hitherto the *raison d'être* of the Marxist theory of wars in the twentieth century. Whether it has been Lenin, Trotsky, Mao, Giap, or Che Guevara, this line of demarcation differentiating just wars from unjust wars runs through revolutionary Marxism.

But there are also the sites mentioned above that differentiates the zones of living and dead labour, the life-world of the sensuous human essence (*das menschliche Wesen*) and the death-world of reification which do not seem to be touched by the Leninist theory of just and unjust wars. So how can one relate the notions of living labour with that of just wars?

#### THE GENEALOGY OF ESTRANGEMENT

Marx's fundamental revolution is the sighting of the continents of knowledge, dialectical and historical materialism. This fundamental revolution seeks the origins of estrangement, stratification of societies into classes, and the logic and ideologies of contradiction, opposition and conflicts. It is thus a critique of class societies and of civilizations based on private property. Dialectical and historical materialism critiques not only the

capitalist mode of production, but all hitherto existing (present and past) class societies. Never before in history has such a revolution been performed, though Hegel, Darwin, Bachofen, Morgen and Engels also worked in the project of the evolutionary history of nature and world civilizations.

In philosophical terms, history (as class histories) is based on the principles of the transcendence of the human essence and the struggle to appropriate the latter. This is what Marx says in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*: the dialectic of human history comprises the 'estrangement of the human essence' (*Entfremdung des menschlichen Wesens*)<sup>13</sup>, and 'the transcendence of the estrangement' (*die Aufhebung der Entfremdung*)<sup>14</sup>, which is also defined as 'the appropriation of the human essence' (*die Aneignung des menschlichen Wesens*)<sup>15</sup>.

The human essence (not human nature) is the term along with another one, 'species being' (*Gattungswesen*) whereby Marx unleashes his critique of class societies. Class societies are violations of the human essence. In 1844, Marx wrote to Feuerbach:

In these writings (i.e., *Philosophie der Zukunft* and *Wesen der Glaubens*) you have provided—I don't know whether intentionally—a philosophical basis for socialism and the Communists have immediately understood them in this way. The unity of man with man, which is based on the real differences between men, the concept of the human species brought down from the heaven of abstraction to the real earth, what is this but the concept of *society*!<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to these categories of the human essence and species-being, stands the history of class societies.

Marx claims that class societies are dominated by the process of reification. Reification as a form of human alienation is a process where societal relations are no longer relations between people, but *between things*. Thus we find a rigorous opposition running through history—the conflict between this reified 'thingification' and genuine humanism. Now this concept of reification runs throughout Marx's works. Consequently the line of thinking perfected by Louis Althusser (especially in his magnum opus *For Marx*), that there is an 'epistemological break' in Marx's works and that the concepts 'alienation', 'reification', 'species being', 'the human essence', 'humanism', etc. are all Hegelian and Feuerbachian remnants and ideological fictions worthy only to be purged out from 'scientific' Marxism, is totally false.

On the contrary, one will have to say: scientific Marxism necessarily includes all the above notions used by the young Marx (especially these terms used in his 1844 period). As *Versachlichung* and *Verdinglichung* reification as 'thingification' implies that people have lost their humanity and literally become things. Let us consider the distortion of human activity in the passive-contemplative and the voluntaristic-idealised types. Marx, here, is dealing with these distortions as represented in philosophical forms:

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* [*Object*] or of contemplation [*Anschaung*], but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the *active* side, in contradistinction to

materialism, was developed by idealism—but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really differentiated from thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as *objective* [*Gegenstandliche*] activity. Hence in the *Essence of Christianity*, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in the dirty-judaical form of appearance [*Erscheinungsform*]. Hence he does not grasp the significance of "revolutionary" of "practical-critical," activity.<sup>17</sup>

This, to my mind, will remain the epistemological basis for the understanding of *action types* in the Marxist repertoire. In this passage Marx claims that both Hegel and Feuerbach, as philosophical representations of the zenith of philosophical idealism and materialism, cannot grasp the true significance of human action. They cannot grasp, hence the truth of 'the ontology of living labour'. They fall prey to the estranged character of the bourgeois lifeworld.

Violence is both, embodied in this estranged-bourgeois world as well as represented and reflected in the philosophical and ideological worlds. The question is: how does one transcend this violence of estrangement and reification?

In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx claims that alienation creates private property which further re-creates human alienation.<sup>18</sup> It is at this specific site that we would be able to inquire into the origins of violence. Not only are private property and estrangement created, but also alongside the notions of 'having', 'possession', 'ownership', and 'the defence of private property'. Violence emerges in human civilization in defence of

private property, and over the centuries has both, played this role as well as perfected it. The idea of violence cannot be removed from private property. There is no violence 'innate' in 'human nature'. Human nature in the abstract is pure fiction. One dictum follows: *remove private property and violence ends.*

But violence does not end 'automatically'. *Communist education* as the education of the human essence, what revolutionary Marxism calls 'the cultural revolution', has necessarily to be carried out in every day struggles. The *cultural revolution* is the realization of *the human essence*.

Earlier I had mentioned that the human essence should not be confused with the question of human nature.<sup>19</sup> This follows from the reading of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. Essence is not nature. *Wesen* is not *Natur*. And the human essence (*das menschliche Wesen*) is not human nature (*die menschliche Natur*).<sup>20</sup> Great translations and renderings of *das menschliche Wesen* have unfortunately been carried out in this erroneous equation. These renderings have included the great scholarly works of Maximilien Rubel, Tom Bottomore, Louis Althusser, Eric Fromm and Norman Geras.

On the contrary the human essence is the fullness of the idea of *radical social being*. This fullness and radicality of *humanness* and *naturalness* is necessarily in opposition to reification and thingification, the latter necessarily being realized as commodification, and the development of class societies and private property.

We shall thus have to proceed to the radical idea of the human essence whereby we can have a philosophical basis for socialism as

well as maintain a rigorous critique of violence. Thereby one can also understand the formation of the authoritarian personality, which is rooted in *history* and not in anything called 'human nature'. Let us now see how the death of the human essence has served the causes of the ruling classes by establishing the ideology of violence through repression. Let us also note how the death of the human essence gives birth to the great lie called 'eternal human nature'. To that we must go far back into human pre-history.

The first detection of regular warfare in human history is possible around 8,000 BC with the emergence of agriculture. Experiments in chimpanzees have shown that animals have no inclination towards organized violence. Nor has regular warfare been detected in hunter gathering societies. But it is possible that around 2000 BC violence got institutionalized and structured largely through theological sanction. This period has laid the fertile grounding for the growth of the state, standing armies and institutional religions as ideologies of patriarchy, violence and private property. It is quite possible that individual and collective neurosis emerged here. Around 2000 BC primeval mythologies of creation started showing evidence of violence as well as libidinal repression and also the subordination of women. (Wilhelm Reich had conceived of a relation between sexual repression and the growth of the fascist personality). Therefore it is important to look into the relation between sexual repression, the subordination of women and the origins of mass violence. Let us see how they are structured as dominant myths and ideologies. In the Babylonian myth

of creation, for instance, Marduk, the patron god of Babylon, becomes the supreme god. Yet Marduk does not totally eliminate the other male gods, nor does he eliminate the tradition of the mother goddess. In the biblical tradition, on the other hand, the violent yet secretly veiled male supremo is seen. Here both the supremacy of the male (in the form of the estranged 'Holy Spirit'), not only eliminates mother right and the matriarchal elements of matrilineal societies, but usurps the feminine domination of procreation. This is where male-centric violence is clearly detected, where the male as estranged spirit launches a hostile attack on womanhood itself. In this biblical narrative, the male god claims that the feminine principle is no longer needed in procreation. So creation is depicted as emerging through the *word of the male god*. It is not the womb, but the *order* of the male god whereby creation takes place. This will serve as the first principle of the origins of male-centric violence as well as the subordination of women. Thus it is no longer sexuality whereby procreation is possible, but through the speech-act of the male. Note how the male robs sexuality from the woman (literally castrating her). The vibrant mother goddess is killed. The virgin mother is born. Probably the best known picture of repression is painted here. And so is the story of the *enslavement of humanity*. Recall the biblical story of creation again, the castration threat, the monopoly of the male god, the sinful Eve, and the threat to eternal damnation. The rigorous difference and conflict between father (god/state) and son (Adam/civil society) is drawn here. God (the state) forbids the son (civil society) to eat the forbidden fruit

(the mother's breast/surplus product). The son is disobedient, attempts to seize the surplus it itself has produced and is exiled from paradise. This myth is both the reflection of the victorious patriarchal and class order as well the promotion of repression and violence modern day right wing ideologies are grounded in these theologies of domination, exclusion and repression.

Let us now move from the heavenly domains to the earthly ones. We have thus moved into the domains of estrangement and repression as the 'basis' of violence. Estranged labour, now in modern bourgeois society turns:

*Man's species-being*, both nature and his spiritual species-property, into a being *alien* to him, into a *means* for his *individual existence*. It estranges from his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his *human* aspect.

An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life activity, from his species-being is the *estrangement of man from man*. When man confronts himself, he confronts the *other* man. What applies to a man's relation to his work, to the product of his labour and to himself, also holds of a man's relation to the other man, and to the other man's labour and the object of labour.

In fact, the proposition that man's species-nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is from man's essential nature.<sup>21</sup>

Life now appears in abstract an estranged form. Now what is estranged in society is projected in distorted form. So human beings who are lost in the real world find themselves in the duplicated world, but now in hostile and aggressive forms. (We shall elaborate this in the

last section of this paper). Totalitarian regimes throughout history have been able to tap as well as create and recreate these forces of estrangement and aggression. This world of the repressed unconsciousness is known since Feuerbach as the *projected lack*. Now the more one invests in this totalitarian world of the projected lack, the less one belongs to oneself. So the more one invests in the furies of fascism, religious fundamentalism, ethnic cleansing and imperialism, the more society loses its humanised self. This controlled-estranged world of the repressed unconsciousness is also known as fetishism and the regression of thinking. So now we have his doubled sites of violence: capital accumulation in the age of imperialism and the accompanying ideologies of violence.

Thus if the economic base of bourgeois society is necessarily built on violence (the violence against labour-power in the extraction of surplus value, the violence against the peasantry in their expropriation from their lands and the violence against the colonies in the loot of their natural resources), the corresponding ideological superstructure is overloaded with the *descriptive and normative narratives of violence*. So capital and ideology go marching into the lands of 'evil'.

Thus if capital has divided the world into the centre and periphery, so too the current ideologies and theologies of *imperialist reason* do the same. (I am using term 'imperialist reason', and not 'western reason', or 'occidental reason', the later two made fashionable by a vast number of intellectuals from Martin Heidegger to Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Edward Said). Now it is in this infamous domain of

'imperialist reason' that the grotesque clash between the 'west' versus the 'rest' takes place. The 'rational' west tries to occupy the 'irrational' periphery, sometimes with consent, and quite often by force. The part that it cannot occupy, it deems it evil and proceeds to destroy it totally. The process of imperialist occupation and annihilation continues, now with much greater lethality than even the fascist wars of expansionism. What then is to be done?

#### ON REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE

In both the philosophical and revolutionary political works, Marx claims that one cannot use the weapons of the bourgeoisie. In *The Civil War in France*, Marx says that the proletariat 'cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purpose'.<sup>22</sup> Thus we claim that one cannot use the despotic instruments of class societies and wield them for socialist purposes. Marxism does not support wars. It condemns them as barbaric practices, but the condemnation is not based on a metaphysics of morals, but by linking wars with class warfare and the politics of the ruling classes.

Marx's and Engels's reflections on war start with *The German Ideology*. Since the history of economic production is dominant in their works, the study on wars seem not to take so dominant a form in their works as arms industry had not started in the 1840s and so was yet to become an essential feature of capitalist production. Yet the importance of wars had been noted. For instance Marx and Engels had noted that even highly developed societies like the Phoenicians could

be completely destroyed through wars. (The elimination of the last Zoroastrian empire in 651 AD by a much smaller Arab army is an instance of how a society based on developed productive forces could be totally lost to history through wars.)

In contrast the revolutionaries had also talked of armed uprisings against the oppressors. By 1848 when revolutions in Europe were taking place, the Communist League talked of a revolutionary war with Russia. Engels, incidentally, had practical experience in warfare. He served in the Prussian artillery and in 1849 took part in an aborted uprising. And revolutionary Marxism whilst condemning the brutality of wars never supported pacifists ideals. For both Marx and Engels Russia was the 'policeman of Europe'. Just as the present American state is serving as the bearer of the world counter revolution, Russia played that role in the nineteenth century. The strategies of revolutionary wars were always open to Marx and Engels. It was important to note the class base of all wars. This leads to the question: can violence be used for the revolutionary seizure of power? Neither Marx and Engels, nor Lenin, Trotsky or Mao indulged in *a priori* thinking with regards to war.

Thus in the 1872 speech at the Hague, Marx claimed that when the standing armies and the bureaucracy dominated the state, force had to be the leverage of revolution. By 1891, the view was held by Engels that it was better to struggle under legal means than to indulge in street fighting. But experience in Czarist Russia proved that under a reactionary police state, it would be a party of committed professional revolutionaries that would serve the

cause of revolution. But placing force as a sort of some metaphysical ideal, as in Bergson's and Deleuze's 'vitalism', it had no place in revolutionary Marxism. In the *Anti-Duhring* Engels added an extra section called 'The Force Theory' and derided the anarchist hermeneutic of force as something independent of the mode of production. "Force is no mere act of the will," Engels asserts, "but requires the existence of very preliminary conditions before it can come into operation, namely instruments (of production)." Yet events occur in history when both the economic mode of production as well as the obsession with war work together. Napoleon was an example of the seeking of the glory for war. In the last century the fascists also were obsessed with wars, just as the Islamic fascists and the RSS thrive on terrorism and riots. It is the privilege of the global rightists to be obsessed with the psychosis of war and death. For the fascists, wars and riots are the main tools with which to abolish democracy. As they have no concrete economic and political programmes, it is through the production of mass hysteria whereby the fascists can achieve their aims. Third world fascists have proven to be good clients of the imperialist arms industry.

There are two points raised: the critique of violence and the theories of just and unjust wars. This anti-nomy would be present in the philosophy of Marxism: violence that is critiqued in the philosophy of the human essence and the politics of just wars which is preserved in revolutionary Marxism. The latter would insist (especially Lenin and Trotsky) that one should proceed into the *concrete histories* of imperialists

and revolutionary wars, and not to confuse these two types of wars. For it is necessary to study the *science* of wars and to understand how the rules and techniques of warfare continuously change. It is important to pose here the question: can there be anything called just wars in the age of nuclear and biological weapons?

By the late 1950s, a few years after the first use of the atomic bombs on civilian population and the consequent arms race between the Americans and the USSR, the urgent need of all progressive forces was the prevention of war. At the same time the international arms industry came to the focus. Engels' statement that war could break out due to the over-accumulation of arms was taken very seriously. At the same time the mass base of the global left grew, whether in the form of the Communist Parties or the New Left movement, taking into consideration that wars of all types were outdated. At the same time Mao disagreed and broke with the Soviets under, Khrushchev. In Peru the Maoists' Shinning Path continued its strategy of protracted warfare and in India too armed struggle by the Maoists peasantry was briefly carried out, only to lose their mass bases. On the contrary the communists in India who carried out political struggle through peaceful means grew in strength.

Thus one needs to ask: have conventional wars been outdated, and cannot be used for revolutionary purposes? How does one understand the heroic wars fought by the revolutionary Red Army under Trotsky's command, the war imposed by the Nazis on the Soviet people, the war of resistance in Vietnam against the Americans, Mao's conception of protracted wars and Che Guevara's

guerrilla warfare? Does one simply discard these histories for a seeming non-violent peace praxis? Should one take Gandhi's concept of non-violent resistance and mass non-cooperation seriously, or is this non-violent peace praxis to be regarded as nothing but fiction, a delusory idea manufactured now by the transnational corporations and their puppet NGOs? It is to these matters that attention must now turn. Consider Lenin:

After expropriating the capitalists and organising their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world—the capitalist world— attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and the case need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states. The political form of a society wherein the proletariat is victorious in overthrowing the bourgeoisie will be a democratic republic, which will more and more concentrate the forces of the proletariat of a given nation or nations, in the struggle against the states that have not come over to socialism.<sup>23</sup>

It is important to note that the main focus of Marx's theory of revolution is based on the idea of the *Aufhebung de Staates*, the abolition and the transcendence of the state which Engels called 'the withering of the state' (*Absterben des Staates*). According to Marx, the formation of the militant proletariat will have to disband standing armies and the repressive state apparatus.<sup>24</sup> The disbanding of the state apparatus—or to *smash* the state, as he once told his friend Kugelmann<sup>25</sup>—was always the preliminary condition for every revolution. This method of expropriating the exploiting expropriators, to take the means of

production and convert them into common public property and the formation of a socialist methods of production and distribution, along with the complete freedom of speech and thought, the abolition of all prisons, universal suffrage, universal education, housing and health care, etc., remained the *conditio sine qua non* for all socialist revolutions. This *Aufhebung des Staates* is concretely coupled with the *Aufhebung* of alienation and private property. But what is this anti-class mode of politics in the period of socialist transformation?

In the history of hitherto existing revolutionary theory and praxis, the idea of the *dictatorship of the proletariat* has differentiated Marxism from anarchism. Since the 1852 letter of Marx to J Weydemeyer, *The Class Struggles in France* and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* one knows of the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*<sup>26</sup> (the process of the transition to the abolition of all classes)—though 'Western Marxism' has quite often in its academicism attempted to repudiate this idea.<sup>27</sup> For Marx:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one to the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.<sup>28</sup>

Now that Iraq is converted into the first station of global military occupation by the American state, just as Poland was by the Nazi army, the question of the Communist International and the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat fighting the imperialist occupiers comes to the scene of action. This revolutionary internationalism does not recreate state mechanisms, a

representational legislature, and a bureaucracy over and above the people. On the contrary it is based on workers' councils and the arming of the entire proletarian population against the reactionary bourgeoisie. Marxism consequently does not talk either of utopian transformations of society nor the utopias of peace. In fact it concentrates on the actual mechanisms for the abolition of commodity production and class society, which remains the basis of all wars. Utopianism, generally developed from the utopian socialism of de Rouvray, Saint Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen. On the contrary 'imagine' a just society being built that is devoid of the process of class struggles and the revolutionary abolition of commodity production. Just as Proudhon (and following him John Gray) wanted to abolish money but not commodity production, so too the pacifists want to abolish war but not the economic and political class system that gives rise to wars. Gandhi too follows this utopian methodology. His politics of ahimsa and swaraj is coupled with the imagined politics of village society (which in actuality is nothing but the brutality of the *varna* system). He thus falls into the abyss of idealist politics. Gandhianism is built on the utopian romantic 'Ramarajya', where both ruler and ruled are stated to be 'straight forward', 'pure in heart', 'inclined towards self-sacrifice' exercising 'restraint and self-control', 'a relationship which is as good as that between father and son'. But this is pure fiction because it is built on the atrocities of caste stratified society. One cannot build the castles of justice or peace on the hovels of unjust foundations.

So the difference between

Marxism on the one hand and pacifism and utopianism on the other, becomes obvious. Utopianism constructs slogans in the air. They are devoid of any concrete material and social analysis. They talk of peace but barely of imperialism, they talk (sometimes) of the armed forces but not the political economies behind these armies. On the other hand:

The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes and orders is dependent on what is produced, how it is produced and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought not in men's brains, not in men's better insights into eternal truth and justice, but changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics* of each particular epoch.<sup>29</sup>

It is on these premises that the theory of wars can be constructed. Marxism is not Kantianism. It does not construct moral imperatives, especially those of eternal goodness and perpetual peace. Marxism is also not a formalism. Kantianism, and the corresponding utopias of pacifism (whether of the Quakerian type, or the Gandhian one) are purely formalistic prescriptive speech-acts, where form is split from the content and which attach itself to the social content from the outside. On the contrary, to recall Isaac Rubin:

One cannot forget that on the question of the relation between form and content, Marx took the standpoint of Hegel and not of Kant. Kant treated form as something external to the

content, and as something that adheres to the content from the outside. From the standpoint of Hegel's philosophy, the content is not something to which form adheres from the outside. Rather, through its development, the content itself gives birth to the form which is already latent in the content. Form necessarily grows from the content.<sup>30</sup>

Consequently not only does one have a philosophical method of relating form with content, one also has the method of understanding wars and peace. Especially one understands that wars do not emerge from one's imagination, but from concrete modes of production and the historical conjuncture of class struggles. Thus the demand to abolish wars has necessarily to demand the abolishing of capitalism. In this way, revolutionary Marxism distinguishes itself from pacifism. Secondly revolutionary Marxism (especially the line defined by Lenin) differentiates itself from anarchism and pacifism, by claiming that there is nothing called *wars in general*. Thus dialectical and historical materialism deems it imperative to understand wars as predicated on class struggles and to be studied in their concrete historical specificities.<sup>31</sup> In this way the dictum of Clausewitz, "war is the continuation of politics by other means", has been incorporated by Marxism into the scientific understanding of wars. Thus the imperialist wars waged by the American state on the middle east is understood as the continuation of their politics of imperial occupation.

But the question is yet open: can the revolutionary proletariat indulge in revolutionary and just wars? One cannot expect the imperialists to peacefully hand over power to the proletariat. The experiences, since the 1830s of the bourgeoisie

massacring the proletariat, have shown that the ruling classes have only perfected the methods of political annihilation. And now the transnational American state in the form of the empire, has the lethal CIA freely operating throughout the world. (Incidentally the CIA has reinvented the notorious paramilitary Special Operations Group [SOG] which was rebuilt by George Tenet in 1998, and is having a free run in Afghanistan and Iraq. But now even this has been superseded by David Rumsfeld in aping Hitler's deputy Heinrich Himmler, who has already by now his own secret unit that would be answerable to no one but him, not even the CIA). SOG operatives are being trained to attack enemy nuclear facilities. In May 2002 Bush signed a secretive directive authorizing the Pentagon and the CIA to attack nations that are close to acquiring nuclear weapons.

Since we have claimed that the revolutionaries cannot wield the weapons of the bourgeoisie, the question is posed again: how is mass resistance against imperialism possible? Now if the essence of Marxist philosophy is the recovery of the human essence then no sort of violence can be defended. Violence cannot be considered as a strategy for revolutionary change. Violence can only be rooted in the terrible darkness of human alienation. So Marx's central factor is the humanistic factor and the struggle against capitalism has to be led by the proletariat: the class that proclaims the *dissolution (Auflösung) of hitherto existing world order*, because it itself is the *dissolution of this world order (Auflösung dieser Weltordnung)*.<sup>32</sup> The proletariat has to raise itself to the rank of a principle of society (*Prinzip der Gesellschaft*), the young Marx had

reminded us, by demanding not only the negation of a this or a that, but by demanding the *negation of private property itself* (*die Negation des Privateigentums*).<sup>33</sup> It is this class, the class with *radical chains*, that seeks to emancipate itself, but only by emancipating the whole of society.<sup>34</sup> It is to this class that Marx had turned his attention in the great rebellion against the dark night of commodity production.

### THE GROUNDWORK OF VIOLENCE

Marx had continuously talked of seeking 'the real foundations' (*die reale Basis*)<sup>35</sup> of history. Let us now proceed to understand this real basis. It is in this understanding that the brutality of violence can be located. It is also on this basis that the mass psychology of fascism, communalism and imperialism can be understood. The *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* is the text that seeks the philosophical reading of the real basis by transforming the anthropology of philosophical humanism into the ontology of the human essence. This text would be pregnant with the radical child called 'historical materialism'. Historical materialism was at that time merely waiting in the wings. With *The German Ideology* historical materialism was born. Since then the theory of humanism and class struggle would work together. Since *The German Ideology*, Marx worked on the dialectic of productive forces and relations of production as the real basis of history. In the 1859 'Preface' to the critique of political economy Marx said:

My inquiry led to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended by themselves or on the so-called general development

of the human mind but on the contrary they are rooted (*wurzeln*) in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century embraces within the term "civil society"; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy. . . . The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation (*die reale Basis*), on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions (*bedingt*) the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines (*bestimmt*) their existence, but inversely (*umgekehrt*), their social existence that determines their consciousness.<sup>36</sup>

This is how the economic structure is located as the real basis of social consciousness. And this is also how political forms are said to be rooted (*wurzeln*) in civil society. The dynamics of social being and social consciousness is located in the dialectic network determined by the logic of reification. Thus consciousness (now under the grip of imperialism) is not to be considered as an *a priori* free floating violent mind, but is to be considered as emerging from definite social conditions, whereby a fetishism of the mind takes place. But what is this fetishism of the mind? By fetishism we mean an obsession and madness that has seized a once sane society. So what needs to be done is to graft the notions of 'alienation', 'reification', and 'fetishism' in the sites of the base and the superstructure, where both are understood as violent social forces. It is here that we can understand the hegemony of right wing reactionary forces. And it is on this terrain of the fetishism of consciousness that the rightists can obtain consent from the

masses. One must insist that the process of the fetishism of the mind has to be taken seriously. Wilhelm Reich had noted that despite the mass support of the communists in the 1920s in Germany, and despite the masses being anti-capitalist, the Nazis as the most reactionary bourgeois force, could come to power. So we need to look into the classical rendering of historical materialism again:

According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have asserted. Hence if someone twists this into saying that the economic is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and the further development into system of dogmas—also exercise their influence on their course of the historical struggles and in many ways preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, of all these endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner connection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree.<sup>37</sup>

It is with these ideas noted down that we shall be able to approach the groundwork of the Marxist ideas of peace. Now when Marx talked of the

productive forces/relations of productions dialectic as the basis of history, he defined the mode of production as *forms of human life*, thus to be viewed as, "a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life (Lebensweise)* on their part".<sup>38</sup> So what do we find? That the 'real individuals' (*wirklichen Individuen*) are the 'real premises' (*wirkliche Voraussetzungen*) of history.<sup>39</sup> Consequently Marxism in no way can be viewed as a reductionism, economism and teleologism. So one must remember that Marx does not purge the idea of the individual from his theoretical problematic. Nor did Marx extinguish the ideas of alienation and the human essence from his later works (a point incorrectly interpreted by the French structuralists). In fact with stress on the notions of 'real individuals' and 'the human essence', whereby the critique of violence and wars can take place. And so with the discovery of the forces of production/relations of production/superstructure dialectic, Marx creatively relates these categories with the concepts: 'real individuals', 'human essence', and 'alienation'. In this way one can insist that historical materialism is not an economism, reductionism and teleologism, but a concrete historicism and humanism. (Incidentally Lukács and Gramsci would follow this radical line of historicism and humanism.)

So we find that the mode of production is a multi layered site that comprises:

(i) production, with technology, science and labour forming its essential base (ii) class exploitation, and class struggle, (iii) exchange value and production for surplus

value, (iv) real individuals, and (v) the human essence.

What thus do we find? That wars in particular (the famous thesis of Lenin) and violence in general (emerging from prejudices, paranoia and neurosis) are grounded in the dialectic of productive forces / relations of production. But this dialectical mode of production is not empty, something devoid of people. The categories: class-real individuals-human essence have to be interwoven in this dialectic. Unlike Hegel's dialectic of the *Geist*, a dialectic dominated by 'the Idea' considered by the idealists as 'the demiurgos of the real world',<sup>40</sup> the Marxist dialectic is full blooded, life inspired and determined by the sensuous character of the material lifeworld. Then war and peace (like violence) have to be discovered in the sensuality of historical materialism, and not in 'abstract, meaningless phrase(s)', not in economism, and most certainly not in 'the Idea'.

And yet 'the Idea' does intervene in real history, as psychosis and right wing ideology where both the embedding of violence into the ideological lifeworld as well as the veiling of the groundwork of history is performed and perfected. Remember that Freud's definition of psychosis as 'the withdrawal from reality', applies both to the mental patient as well as to the Hegelian 'Idea'. The latter has been critiqued in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* as the estranged mind that emerges from an estranged reality (*fremde Wirklichkeit*). Right wing ideologies necessarily take the form of illusions (for example Islamic fascism's idea of the Muslim brotherhood and Hindutvavadi's notion of a mythical Hindu rashtra)

and as psychotic delusions these ideologies are projected as the driving forces of history. Engels had a term for this delirious process—'false consciousness'.<sup>41</sup> 'The Idea' as ideology is necessarily false consciousness. Consider Engels:

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Here he imagines false or seeming motive forces. Because it is a process of thought he derives its form as well as its content from pure thought, either his own or that of his predecessors. He works with mere thought material, which he accepts without examination as the product of thought, and does not investigate further for a more remote source independent of thought; indeed it is a matter of course to him, because as all action is *mediated* by thought, it appears to him to be ultimately based upon thought.<sup>42</sup>

We have noted that this 'Idea' as ideology, that is displaced from the material reality of the mode of production appears not only as 'pure thought', as Engels rightly asserts, but also as *estranged thought*. Ideology is this process of estrangement of the mind from social reality and this sort of estrangement is perfected by the rightists. Right wing ideology does not deal with the Real, but the Imaginary (recalling Jacques Lacan's tripartite articulation of the Real, Imaginary and the Symbolic). It is in this critique of the *estrangement of the Real* (and the birth of the imaginary and the symbolic) that the genealogy of violence can be situated.

Thus when Marx talked of the economic base of society *determining* the ideological superstructure, we will have to say that the concept of determination (*Bestimmung*) is the

concept that explains the fetishism of the mind. Determination is not a determinism, but a *definition* which studies the formation of ideologies. Determination (*Bestimmung*) is intrinsically related to the notion of formation (*Gestaltung*). Marx's theorem: *social being determines social consciousness* has to be understood in this radical way. Determination is the concept that binds the estranged realms of reified bourgeois existence and fetishised consciousness. And in this very terrain of *estranged existence* in the times of moribund capitalist existence that the mapping of the right wing imperialist mind takes place. This mapping of the violent mind is constituted within the real basis. Marxist critique of political economy is now armed with the theory of alienation, reification and fetishism.

It is here that we can claim that right wing ideology (or to rephrase Marx and call it 'ideology as such', though he never used this term, he used the term 'state as such'<sup>43</sup>) has to be viewed as fetishism and psychosis, and violence has to be seen as estrangement and repression (*Verdrängung*). So what do we find? That the celebrated Marxist statement: *the economic base of society determines the ideological superstructure* can be re-read as: *the reified economic base determines the psychotic political unconscious*.

In this way repression and psychosis enter the historical materialist scene of action. The revolutionary relation between these two has been explored for over a century, Wilhelm Reich, Eric Fromm, Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno being the few masters of this hermeneutic, though it was Lukàcs's *History and Class Consciousness* that brought the idea of reification in the Marxist

repertoire (David Ryzanov had not yet discovered the works of the early Marx). So it is with these two dimensions: reification and psychosis, ideology and madness that we proceed unearthing violence into the groundwork of history. The archaeology into the deeply buried notion of violence begins here, where the origins of violence are located in the irrationality of commodity production.

Let us now see how the fetishised violent mind is rooted in bourgeois political economy itself. This fetishised deranged mind is no accident. Its necessity is based in the capitalist mode of production itself. Thus we have this couplet: psychotic mind / deranged reality. Recall the question posed by Hegel: "With what must the Science begin?"<sup>44</sup> This question reoccurs in Marx's *Grundrisse*.<sup>45</sup> And in *Capital* Marx arranges his concepts beginning with the commodity. This 'immense accumulation of commodities' is the great overture with which *Capital* begins.<sup>46</sup> Unlike the bourgeois political economist, Marx does not think that any rationality can be ascribed to the commodity. In fact he thinks that all possible irrationalities are conjoined to the commodity. And when this irrational and alien thing develops its diseased self in full blown form as generalised commodity production, and expressed in the formula: M-C-M<sup>1</sup> (where M stands for money invested in the process of production, C stands for commodity which is a combination of means of production and labour-power and M<sup>1</sup> stands for surplus value, i.e. surplus created by labour-power over and above the original investment), then this process is described by Marx as a 'magical' process, whereby some sort of

'magic', the surplus value is seen to emanate as if from thin air. This Marx calls the fetishistic character of commodity production. The commodity is thus 'a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.'<sup>47</sup> Like God it is 'mystical', 'enigmatic', 'mysterious' and 'transcendent'.<sup>48</sup> And like God it is also violent. Unlike money which in its murderous innocence "comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek", so Marx announced, "capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt".<sup>49</sup>

So we get a few characteristics of capitalism: irrational, mystical and violent. But wait, there are more. Capitalism is a disembodied reality, it dismembers every individual, because it itself is dismembered. To be precise, capitalism is a 'ghostly reality' (*gespenstige Gegenständlichkeit*),<sup>50</sup> based on 'magic and necromancy',<sup>51</sup> and like God hiding beneath a 'mystical veil',<sup>52</sup> where 'existence as a material thing is put out of sight'.<sup>53</sup> And so capitalism is a society that has *lost its bodily form*. Any semblance to theology? Lucio Colletti thought so,<sup>54</sup> and claimed that capitalism could only be perfected in Christianity. Any relation to the mental illness called 'psychosis'? Freud thought so.<sup>55</sup> Thus the unholy alliance of capitalism with religion, madness and violence is not accidental.

And it is on this reified-disembodied base that the estranged mind finds its real home and is perfected as the already mentioned theorem: *the reified base determines the psychotic unconscious*. Now let us ask the utopians and pacifists. You do not mind capitalism, but you shriek when the capitalists declare war. But don't

you know that capitalism is itself irrational and violent?

Let us conclude our observations on the violence of the disembodied body and the estranged mind. We saw how capitalism in its very essentiality is (i) irrational-mystical-fetishistic and embodied with 'magical powers', and (ii) violent (especially the violence against labour-power in the production process, and the violence in the world market in the process of the sale of commodities in the age of overproduction). Because the estranged mind is predicated on this fetishised base of capital accumulation (M-C-M<sup>1</sup>—read as ideal-material-ideal dialectic) the same process of disembodiment and idealization process is at work in the realm of consciousness. It is this Marxist phenomenology of consciousness understood in the dialectical materialist aetiology of estrangement that explains the philosophical part of understanding the *reification and fetishism of consciousness*.

Let us see how this reification of consciousness is understood in a practical way. We must outline the aetiology of this distorted consciousness in order to know how the subversion of imperialism (and their comprador fascists clients) is possible. Consider Marx: in the production of commodities humanity alienates itself. Now what is estranged and denied in the world of capitalism is projected onto a duplicate, 'imaginary world'.<sup>56</sup> So what do we have? A self-alienation (*Selbstentfremdung*) and duplication (*Verdoppelung*) of the world into a real world and an imaginary one.<sup>57</sup> Now how is the genealogy of the imaginary world to be understood? That "the secular foundation

(*weltliche Grundlage*) detaches (*abhebt*) from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm (*selbständliches Reich*) is really only to be understood by the self-cleavage (*Selbstzerrissenheit*) and self-contradictoriness (*Sichselbstwidersprechen*) of this secular basis (*weltlichen Grundlage*).<sup>58</sup> This is the crux of the problem. The estranged mind that has grown from the soil of the estranged world duplicates the real world but only in distorted form. As projections of estrangement, this estranged mind has to be viewed as symbolic investitures of estrangement, i.e., where the mind is said to be invested with delusory-fetishised powers. And the more one invests in this duplicated, imaginary world, the greater the repression the individual and society suffer, and consequently, the less one belongs to oneself. This loss of the self is a constituent cause of modern day violence, the 'art' that has been perfected by the fascists and the imperialists.

When Marx says, let us see bourgeois society in terms of the base-superstructure model, he is also opening space for the dialectic of lack-power, repression-violence bipolarity. Here Marx says the economic base exists in terms of a lack (life for the masses here exists as a repression) and the elements of power and violence exist at the level of the superstructure (that is channelled by the ruling classes).

So what is Marx's solution? That, "for instance, once the earthly family (*irdische Familie*) is discovered to be the secret of the holy family the former must itself be annihilated (*vernichtet*) in theory and practice."<sup>59</sup> This revolutionary elan has formed the crux of the Marxist theory of revolutions. "The Communists", so the celebrated statement went,

"disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their existing ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."<sup>60</sup> Thus when the history of revolutions of the twentieth century was based on the traditions of the French Revolution, and when the aura of Blanqui and Babeuf was perpetuated in the communist tradition as the heroic models of social change, the question was both of the use of revolutionary force as a leverage of social change, as well as the notion that bourgeois society cannot bring justice. That justice can only be brought by force is only one part of the strategies of revolutionary action. But force here has not to be confused with violence. Just as the Narodniks were incorrect on basing their politics on the use of revolutionary violence (remember that Lenin and the Bolsheviks could emerge as a revolutionary party only in the critique of the Narodniks), so too the romantic anarchist versions of violence as propagated by George Sorrel are not only false but also out rightly reactionary. Marxism is not anarchism. Lenin was not Chernyshensky, Petr Chaadev, or Tkachev. The Bolsheviks were not the *Zemlia i Volia* (Land and Freedom). The difference between communism and anarchism is that the former insists that the masses make history, whilst anarchism stresses on violent acts against the authoritarian state performed by few heroic individuals.

And that is why Marxism always concentrates on the issues of the people, and that is also why Marxist politics is always peoples' politics, and its philosophy is *necessarily* humanism. Neither do they fantasize on some sort of metaphysical world peace, nor do they indulge in romantic adventurism. On the

contrary, they claim that capitalism and imperialism have to be overthrown, and with socialism and the establishment of classless society, wars can be seen as something of the past. Humanity will be free at last refusing to live in the nightmare of its own prehistory. *The dawn of classless society will light the morning of real peace.* As Marx says:

Communism as the positive transcendence (*Aufhebung*) of *private property* as *human-estrangement*, and therefore as the real *appropriation* (*Aneignung*) of the *human essence* (*menschlichen Wesens*) by and from man; communism therefore as the complete return (*Rückkehr*) of man to himself as a *social* (i.e., human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism as fully developed naturalism equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the *genuine* resolution (*Auflösung*) of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution (*Auflösung*) of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be the solution.<sup>61</sup>

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## Rendering Gandhi: Acts of Engagement

SASHEEJ HEGDE\*

The art of transposing truth is one of the most essential and the least known. What makes it difficult is that, in order to practice it, one has to have placed oneself at the centre of a truth and possessed it in all its nakedness, behind the particular form in which it happens to have found expression. Furthermore, transposition is a criterion of truth. A truth which cannot be transposed isn't a truth; in the same way that what doesn't change in appearance according to the point of view isn't a real object, but a deceptive representation as such.

SIMONE WEIL (1987: 67-8)

Bapu, you are far greater than your little books.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (CITED IN NANDY 1987: 115)

Living as I do in a socio-political context where 'Gandhi' is both an object of veneration and a figure of contempt, the rendering that I seek to effect might seem a balancing act. And yet, I must reiterate in a gesture that, hopefully, settles the difference that is 'me', this 'text', and our time—I am no specialist on Gandhi or affairs 'Gandhian'.<sup>1</sup> Basically, I am working with, and through, certain intuitions and instincts about the figure; and, what is more, delivering

largely from, and into, a literature about Gandhi rather than directly from him. I have no particular justification for this procedure, partly epiphanic, partly representational, juxtaposing images, thoughts and fragments, and reaching beyond them, except to claim that we are here mostly dealing with ways of *making-present* (and not simply, *making sense* of) Gandhi.

These two operations of rendering, it need be emphasized, although

distinct, are not necessarily separate. Broadly the latter, namely, 'making sense' has to do with delineating the features of Gandhi, in the sense, say, of delivering 'snapshots' of his life and thought; whereas the former (that is, making-present) concerns a definition of his specificity: emphatically, what makes Gandhi 'Gandhi'? The distinction however, is problematical, in that the discourse, in doubling back and forth between these two foci, leaves open

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\*Reader, Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.