

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND SOCIALIST INSTITUTIONAL  
TRANSFORMATION: CONTINUAL  
INCREMENTAL CHANGES AND  
RADICAL BREAKS

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**I**ntrouction: The Chicken-and-Egg Problem in the Transition Beyond Capitalism In an earlier paper on issues involved in the transition to socialism/communism,<sup>1</sup> one of us considered a chicken-and-egg problem for a transformation beyond capitalism.<sup>2</sup> The problem arises from the following considerations.

The goal of socialism/communism for Marx and Engels was human development:

If man draws all his knowledge, sensations, etc., from the world of senses and the experience gained in it, then what has to be done is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as a man. If correctly understood interest is the principle of all of morality, man's private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity.<sup>3</sup>

To move to this goal, which Marx and Engels often referred to as the expansion of human freedom, it is necessary for self-activating humans<sup>4</sup> to (collectively) take and exercise control of the social, political, and economic dimensions of the society they constitute (i.e., self-governance, conscious social/political/economic coordination, planning, and control, etc).

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the

product over the producer ... The struggle for individual existence disappears ... The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organization ... Only from that time will man himself, with full consciousness, make his own history — only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is humanity's leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.<sup>5</sup>

Life under capitalism, however, causes the majority of humanity to be subaltern. As is well known, Marx stressed that, under capitalism, workers have to sell their labour-power to survive. Under capitalism, notwithstanding that labour and not capital creates all value, the workers' physical existence really does depend on capital providing them with employment so they can earn the money to purchase the commodities needed to survive. Less widely appreciated even among many Marxists is that Marx wrote a fair amount about how, reflecting this reality, workers come to view that socially constructed reality as “self-evident laws of Nature,” something like the law of gravity. This then becomes a centrally important contribution to the durability of capitalism<sup>6</sup> — it never even enters one's thinking to consider whether we could live better under a different law of gravity:

It is not enough that the conditions of labour are concentrated in a mass, in the shape of capital, at the one pole of society, while at the other are grouped masses of men, who have nothing to sell but their labour power ... The advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature ... The dull compulsion of economic relations completes the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist. Direct force, outside economic conditions, is of course still used, but only exceptionally.<sup>7</sup>

Workers viewing as necessary and unchallengeable the hierarchical conditions of capitalist production in which they play a subordinated role would in itself, by definition, cause their behaviour to be subaltern. But in a sense, their subordination goes even deeper, it becomes internalized:

Labour produces ... for the worker, deformity. It produces intelligence — but for the worker, stupidity, cretinism ... [The worker] does not develop freely his mental and physical energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind.<sup>8</sup>

In a poignant scene from the classic revolutionary film *Queimada*,<sup>9</sup> the liberation forces triumph over the forces of reaction and seize control of the government. They then quickly have to face the fact that because of their subordinate role in society until that moment, and notwithstanding their clearly portrayed full humanity and thereby potential, they indeed do not have the ability to run a (then) modern government. They therefore have to turn power over to their “progressive allies,” a class that, in time, returns the labourers to their previous oppressed condition.

Hence the chicken-and-egg problem. Social change to a social/political/economic system beyond capitalism requires a society of self-activating and self-governing humans to effect the change. Self-activating humans must have both the ability and the desire to run their own lives. But such humans cannot develop under capitalism; they could only develop under socialism. To build the new society, one needs transformed humans, but to have transformed humans one needs a new society.

We want to stress: fundamentally changing the way humans interact is not a conceptually difficult process. It is a process that will take generations, but it has happened repeatedly before in history and it will happen repeatedly again. Those who see the way people are today as a permanent barrier to building a better world have not studied history. But there is this “which-comes-first” conceptual problem of how to create a collectively self-governing and self-activating humanity, which is necessary for building socialism.

As indicated by its title, this paper is concerned with the process of the interaction of the transformation of people and the transformation of institutions in the transformation to socialism. The second section focuses on what we maintain as the generally sufficient and appropriate (and most common) procedure of dialectically overcoming the conundrum incrementally through praxis. The third section argues that, for some cases, that

procedure is not adequate. We argue that, for those cases, one will need radical ruptures in the institutions to allow the transition to socialism to proceed. Specifically, for such cases one will need to have a dialectical relation between a process of incremental changes that will continue to be the necessary form for the process of human development, and a process of radical ruptures in the nature of some institutions.<sup>10</sup> We illustrate this point with two particular issues that are always considered as part of the discussion about the transition to socialism.

**The Simple (and Mostly Adequate) Solution Process: Learning and Becoming by Incrementally Increasing Doing**

The goal of this section is twofold. First, it intends to outline the typical nature of the extended dialectical processes of human development and institutional change<sup>11</sup> that will constitute the transformation from capitalism to socialism. Incrementally increasing one's authentically human activity allows one to incrementally develop one's human potential, which promotes a struggle to reform or replace institutions that inhibit further human development. This, in turn, allows one to incrementally further increase one's authentic human activity, and so on. Second, in presenting this typical form of the dialectical process of incremental human development and institutional change, it intends to present a foil for the next section of this paper. There we consider those cases where the interaction must be characterized by a rupture in the evolution of some institutions to allow the dialectical development of our human potential to continue to advance.

What sort of social process can overcome the chicken-and-egg conundrum outlined in the last section? The standard proposal by those few who have addressed this issue is to institute a process in which subalternate people begin to take on (collectively), bit by bit, more decisionmaking control over their lives. As subordinate as they are, with as distorted a view of their abilities as they have, there are still many aspects of self-activation and self-governance that they (collectively) are ready to assume today, when a social situation that permits these presents itself. And we have seen this process in the real world repeatedly, of people who had been subaltern stepping forward and beginning a process of social participation and taking

preliminary steps (particularly locally) of self-governance. The Russian, Chinese, Yugoslav, Cuban, Chilean, Nicaraguan, and now Venezuelan revolutions in the previous century have all demonstrated this process. Then with each new task that people take on and master, they simultaneously do two things that prepare them to take more control over their lives. They both develop the skills for collective decisionmaking and, bit by bit, they cease to view themselves as powerless, as the objects of history; they bit by bit develop self-confidence and a belief in themselves as the subjects of history. With that, they also develop a continuously expanding desire for self-governance and, more broadly, self-determination. With each change in themselves, they require and effect changes in the institutions that they are part of, changes that both allow and promote further changes in themselves.

For concreteness on this issue of a continual dialectical incremental process of transformation, we look briefly at what a few authors, mostly from the Marxist tradition, have written.

While Albert and Hahnel do not write in a Marxist framework, many parts of their frame coincide with a Marxist framework, including in particular their views on the development through work (doing, praxis) of the collective human capacities for self-activation and self-governance. While their discussion on work, its nature, and its effect on human development is extensive and spread throughout much of their work, the following passage gives the flavour of their (and Marx's) view on the matter:

1. Work produces human qualities.

Inputs to work include tools, natural resources, products of other's labor, *and* workers' energies, skills, knowledge, and social relations. Outputs include commodities for consumption, unintended byproducts, *and* workers' altered moods, increased or diminished skills, and altered personalities. If work is rote, frustrating, and mindnumbing, it dampens skills and self esteem. If work is complex and challenging, it enhances skills and self esteem.

...

2. The human qualities work produces in turn affect what responsibilities we can hold and what level of participation in decision making we can sustain.

...

3. Any economy that *produces class divisions* must differentiate among new workers building confidence and skill in some and generating apathy in others.

In contrast, any economy that aspires to classlessness must ... develop skill and confidence in *all*.<sup>12</sup>

There are two concepts in the above that we want to highlight, one broader and more fundamental, the other more concrete and immediately related to our concern in this essay. The first was discussed often by Marx throughout his work, from his earliest writing onward: that man creates himself through his activity. Very briefly, he held:

(Early Marx): ... Hegel conceives labor as man's act of *self-genesis*....<sup>13</sup>

(Late Marx): He ... [sets] in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway.<sup>14</sup>

In line with this concept of self-creation (both as an individual and as a species) through one's work (broadly defined), it follows that one needs to engage in numerous different types of work in order to develop oneself in a multidimensional way, in order to develop numerous different human capacities. If a person is restricted to a narrow task or job for her whole life, she will develop far fewer of her potential capabilities, and thereby produce a much less developed human, than if she pursues a mix of many different productive activities over her lifetime. In all of their work on this issue, Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel propose "balanced job complexes," where all jobs are a mix of tasks of different natures (e.g., making decisions, supervising activities, rote work, following group given directions, caring for other people, etc.) so that any job will produce rounded human development. While we consider their concept of balanced job complexes to be unrealistic,<sup>15</sup> the important point here is their concern with rounded human development. Pat Devine approaches the same goal by dividing jobs in society into a number of different quality-types along the lines just indicated, and argues that people should work at a number of different jobs from the different type-groups over the course of their lives to promote broad self-development of their multifaceted capacities.<sup>16</sup> Michael Lebowitz stresses

this point and its necessary absence under capitalism in a number of his works:

At the core of all this is the importance of *variety*, variety of activity — people develop their capabilities only through their own activity. Through new acts which allow for the growth of their specific capacities. ... When they are denied the opportunity to exercise these potentialities, however, they do not develop — which is precisely what Marx recognized was inherent in a society in which human beings exist as a means for the expansion of capital.<sup>17</sup>

The second concept is a concretization of the first concept to the particular problem of a transition to socialism that is the concern of this essay: how the work done under capitalism creates subalternity. Specifically, a society structured to both reflect and facilitate hierarchy necessarily cripples the development of the majority's human potential for the exercise of collective self-governance and self-activation that is needed for the transition. Here, we cite the work of Pat Devine and Sam Gindin, two authors who have focused on this issue in part of their work.

In *Democracy and Economic Planning*, Pat Devine directly addresses our issue of concern in a number of places in the book, but in particular in the section “The Desire and Ability of People to Participate” and the chapter “The Abolition of the Social Division of Labour”<sup>18</sup>:

Since most people in capitalist and statist societies do not participate to any significant extent in running their own lives, the objective of a self-governing society run by self-activating subjects has appeared to many as a utopian illusion. This position is often advanced in bad faith, as a convenient rationalization for the status quo, by those who possess social power as part of the minority that runs society. Yet there is more to it than that. The power of hegemonic ideology should not be underestimated, particularly since it captures a central fact of people's lives, of the reality that they actually experience.<sup>19</sup>

Indicating that he draws on the work of Rudolf Bahro,<sup>20</sup> Devine then takes the analysis to a deeper level. In this frame, the allocation of human social consciousness is key to human development, including the capacities

and desire for self-activation and self-governance. First, humans need to devote some part of their social consciousness to “producing the basic requirements of human existence. This covers routine production and reproduction, and also the hierarchy of knowledge associated with it.”<sup>21</sup> The remaining social consciousness can be used in two different ways. Quoting Bahro, Devine indicates these as:

*Compensatory* interests, first of all, are the unavoidable reaction to the way that society restricts and stunts the growth, development, and confirmation of innumerable people at an early age. The corresponding needs are met with substitute satisfactions. People have to be indemnified, by possession and consumption of as many things and services as possible ... for the fact that they have an inadequate share in the proper human needs ... *emancipatory* interests, on the other hand are oriented to the growth, differentiation and self-realization of the personality in all dimensions of human activity.<sup>22</sup>

We find this frame particularly important for understanding the process of maintaining subordination under contemporary advanced industrial capitalism. It simply does not match today’s world (usually, except at times of crises when the velvet gloves come off) to talk of the masses being forcefully prevented from self-development by not allowing them access to education, culture, etc. The relative lack of wealth by the majority of society is one control factor. But the control mechanisms and processes are much more subtle (and effective) than only that. Even when large sections of the working class receive wages significantly above what would be necessary to support their survival and that of their families, the majority of people will use that money on activities that do not contribute to their development, but rather serve as escapist relief to compensate them for and distract them from their lack of access to “emancipatory interests.” Engaging in authentic self-interests would require that people had real power over their lives, real self-activation and self-governance, and those are incompatible with the capitalist mode of production.

Sam Gindin outlines the same view in a number of his works:

For workers, capitalism starts with the need to sell their labour power. In exchange, they receive a different kind of power, the ability to consume. What makes the capitalist-worker exchange unequal is not just that workers retain only a fraction of what they produce, but the difference between *access to consumption* and *control over doing ...* As compensation for a loss, the form consumption consequently takes is, not surprisingly, distorted. Consumption in this context isn't simply about independent needs and enjoyment, but includes an element of the workers *themselves* trying to 'compensate' for the exchange they have been forced to make. Consumption becomes part of a process that includes offsetting the loss of dignity, the frustrations, and the drain in personal energy inherent in alienated labor. Moreover, consumption-as-consumption redirects and fragments the potential unity of workers. Even when workers develop organizations and sufficient unity to challenge their employers, the collective action that emerges is channeled into increasing the price of their labour, increasing their power to consume.<sup>23</sup>

We want to stress the magnitude and importance of how this differs from the typical radical classroom-variety discussion of the essence of capitalism, since this relates to our concern about the process of human development and institutional change that constitute a transition to socialism. In the standard classroom-variety discussion, the focus is on the fact that workers produce more value than they receive via their wages, with the difference, surplus value, being the heart of the process of capital accumulation that is the goal of capitalism. That is indeed all correct and important to understand concerning the functioning of capitalism, but it is what Lebowitz in his work correctly calls a one-sided understanding; it is the process of exploitation and the related accumulation viewed only from the perspective of capital. Understanding how to (as a process) move beyond capitalism, however, requires that one also understand the other side of capitalism, its functioning from the perspective of the humans involved in the social process. One has to understand how the essential operation of capitalism creates a basic contradiction with humanity's goal of self-development.

Having posed the conundrum, we now indicate the standard procedure offered for overcoming it (concerning both capabilities and desire) by those who do not simply ignore the problem. Citing Held, Devine writes:

The position that emerges ... is that people are able to *learn* to participate by participating and are more likely to seek participation *if* they can be confident that their input into decision-making will actually count; that is, will actually be weighted equitably with others and will not simply be side-stepped or ignored by those who wield greater power.<sup>24</sup>

Devine elaborates on both the most subtle issues in this standard position of “learning and becoming by doing,” the interaction of the ability to self-govern and the desire to do so, and the development of both as a process:

The desire to participate and the ability to participate are in a symbiotic relationship. As developmental and participatory democrats have argued from Rousseau, Wollstonecraft and Mill to Macpherson and Patemen ... participation feeds on itself. As people increasingly take control of their lives, so their ability to do so also increases. The challenge of having to take responsibility for decisions that make a difference is at the same time an opportunity for personal development. It is part of the process of becoming fully human ... Once people become active subjects, making things happen, in one aspect of their lives, they are less likely to remain passive objects, allowing things to happen to them, in other aspects.<sup>25</sup>

Gindin expresses the same idea as follows:

Struggles, as heightened moments with openings to new experiences and awareness, are themselves ways of standing outside the system, even if only partially and temporarily, to create a measure of liberated space. And political organizations, more or less conscious of the ultimate goal, can serve to shape resistance<sup>26</sup> so that in the course of struggle, people learn, change, develop a culture of solidarity and mutual empathy, and institutionalize the cumulative building of capacities.<sup>27</sup>

And again, specifically concerning the issue of self-governance: “A ‘democratic practice’ must literally involve ‘practicing democracy’ so we can learn to maximize our capacities for effective participation.”<sup>28</sup>

**A Further Consideration: When a Radical Rupture Is Necessary** As just argued, we believe that a step-by-step process of learning and becoming by doing will be the nature of the process for most aspects of the transforma-

tion from a social organization in which the majority of humanity is subaltern and treated as objects, to a society in which collective humanity is, and recognizes itself to be, the subject of all social activity. But we hold that some aspects of the transformation will not proceed this way. For those aspects, a radical break or rupture within the process of transformation is necessary (note: “within the process of transformation,” not “instead of a process of transformation”<sup>29</sup>).

The rest of this section presents two examples to illustrate this alternative nature of change by institutions in the dialectical process of human development and institutional change in the transformation from capitalism to socialism. One illustration is the much discussed transformation of the institution of the state. The other example is the much less discussed issue of the transformation of the institution of wages, including the debated issue of wage equality as part of socialism.

It is important to stress that our concern here is not to analyze the complex processes of the transformation of the state (much written about) or wages themselves. For this paper, we have only the much more limited concern with them as illustrations of the necessity of a radical break in some institutions in such a process.<sup>30</sup>

As is well known, Marx and Engels were already very clear on the need to take state power<sup>31</sup> at the time they wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. In a well known passage from the *Manifesto*, they wrote:

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.<sup>32</sup>

This poses the issue to be addressed in this section. On one hand, the process of the development of our human potentials will already have been going on in a continuous way prior to the proletariat seizing state power. It will then have been accelerated by the fight by the subaltern majority of society against the capitalist system that would need to precede their taking state power. After taking state power, however, the proletarian majority still needs to continually develop the ability (the “skills”) and the desire to become

the subjects of history, which Marx held would be a process that would require several generations. On the other hand, we have argued that a rupture in the institution of the state, represented by the sudden change of the state from being an instrument of the capitalist class to becoming an instrument of the proletariat, is necessary to allow the process of socialist transformation to occur.

Why is a rupture needed, a rapid change of the state from being an instrument of one class to being an instrument of another? Before such a transformation, and in most cases immediately after it as well, the capitalists will have the economic power in society. Unless the proletariat can prevent them from using this power to maintain capitalism, no socialist transformation is possible. The proletariat needs political power if it is to be able to end the capitalists' economic power, either step-by-step or in a rapid sweeping elimination. The idea of trying to defeat capitalism on the basis of creating a noncapitalist economic structure within capitalism and under the rules of capitalism — an idea that has floated around throughout the history of capitalism and continues to be advocated by some reformists today — has always failed. We argue that it necessarily will always fail. Already Adam Smith recognized that in any conflict between workers and capitalists under capitalism, the capitalists have enough economic power to generally assure victory. But beyond that, he understood the role of the state; if in exceptional cases the workers might achieve enough economic power to gain an economic victory, the capitalist state will intervene to assure that the general interests of capital are defended.<sup>33</sup> The same point can be made looked at from the other side. If the proletariat does not have state power, the capitalists will. As we have seen repeatedly in history, they will then use their political power to disorganize and suppress the proletariat and destroy their efforts at social transformation. Recall that the necessary human transformation is a process rooted in doing, rooted in collective experience; if the capitalists have state power, they will be able to prevent the process of such necessary experiences from proceeding.

The second illustration of the need for an institutional rupture in the continuous process of transformation from capitalism to communism is wages. Marx was very clear that there would be a continuity in the concep-

tual basis for wages (and more broadly, distribution) from capitalism to socialism. That concept of what was right, what was just, was the exchange of equivalents. Marx described his vision of the exchange of equivalents under socialism (which now no longer consisted of the exchange of goods and services, and now no longer would cause the labour employed in producing the goods to appear as value). Workers would receive back from society goods and services containing the same amount of social labour as the worker contributed to social production. Marx then explained, that notwithstanding that principle and practice would now be consistent and no longer at “loggerheads” as they are under capitalism, “[Under socialism] obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is the exchange of equivalent values ... Hence *equal* right here is still in principle — *bourgeois* right ...<sup>34</sup>

Marx did not discuss the transition from the capitalist structure that would be in place upon seizing state power to the socialist relations he described. One could easily imagine, however, any number of continuous transformations of the capitalist system of various wages per hour to the socialist relations of an equal wage per hour described by Marx, based on the changing consciousness of the workers of their essential social connectedness.<sup>35</sup>

But to continue the process of the transformation to communism beyond the phase of socialism, and hence to allow the continued incremental changes in human development necessary to proceed, Marx argued that a rupture in the wage structure was then necessary. Specifically, wages (which are based on the concept of exchange of equivalents) would need to be eliminated. As is well known, Marx’s vision of communism involved distribution according to need:

[Only] in a higher phase of communist society ... can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!<sup>36</sup>

We then see that we can have incremental changes towards equality in the institution of wages in the first part of the process of the transition from

capitalism to communism, which makes real the claimed but unreal concept under capitalism of the exchange of equivalents. But to continue the transformation to communism beyond its lower phase, a rupture in the institution of wages is needed. Wages need to change from an authentic exchange of equivalents to ceasing to exist.

Again, this radical break in the institution of wages is necessary so that the continuous incremental processes of human transformation can proceed. The human consciousness necessary for a communist mode of production requires all producers to understand the reality that their productive activity is a fully integrated part of society's total productive activity, and further for all members of society to understand the reality that their individual selves are fully integrated parts of the social whole. The social product constitutes the output of all producers interacting, with many of the productivity gains that contribute to the output coming exactly from these social interactions. The contributions to the output come from both current interactions (like Adam Smith's pin factory) and from past interactions in the form of the socially created technology that the individuals work with (including very basic things like language). Likewise, the elements that make up the social whole of society are continually conditioned and shaped by their relations to all the other elements in the social whole, which is to say by their position in the social whole.

If one recognizes production as an essentially collective process, the concept of equivalent contributions to social labour becomes meaningless, since the concept of a quantifiable individual marginal contribution of any part of any thoroughly integrated system is meaningless.<sup>37</sup> Hence, wages with their conceptual base of equal exchange are incompatible with the communist mode of production. The equal wages in the lower phase of communism reinforce the one-sided concept of the social product being composed of its individual contributions, and more generally the one-sided concept of the social whole being composed of its individual members. They obfuscate an understanding of the determining effect of the whole on its parts.<sup>38</sup> Hence, as Marx indicated, a radical break in the institution of wages, a change from a situation of their equality to a situation in which

they cease to exist, is needed to permit the process of the transition from capitalism to move onto the higher phase of communism.

**Conclusion** In the latter part of the twentieth century, Marxism has resurrected, extended, and enriched its discussion of the need to transform the human actors in dialectical interaction with the transformation of the social institutions as central to moving beyond capitalism. This has been one important part of the rebirth of an authentic Marxism that has occurred with the decline of the ideological weight of Stalinism in (much of) Marxist thought. The plasticity of possible human behaviour was expressed tersely and poetically by Stephen J Gould: “Our genetic makeup permits a wide range of behaviors — from Ebenezer Scrooge before to Ebenezer Scrooge after.”<sup>39</sup> The necessary human transformations will be a process extended over significant time, but the general approach to such transformations is conceptually straightforward. If one puts humans into conditions of existence that incrementally both allow and promote the development of their human potential that is blocked by capitalism, (which requires the dialectically linked incremental transformation of social institutions), they will develop their authentic human potential. In a few cases, however, such as taking control of the state or eliminating wages, a radical rupture in institutions is necessary to create the conditions to allow the overall social process of the transformation to communism to continue to develop.

## Notes

1. In Marx's longest (though still very short) writings on a postcapitalist society, the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, he referred to a lower and an upper phase of communism. As such and as he stressed, he was certainly presenting the transition to the communist mode of production as a process. Over the following half-century, the term “socialism” came to be used as a synonym for the lower stage of communism, and we use it that way in this paper, with a stress on its nature as a process.
2. Al Campbell, “Competition, Conscious Collective Cooperation and Capabilities: The Political Economy of Socialism and the Transition,” *Critique* 34/2 (August 2006), pp. 105–126.
3. *Karl Marx Frederick Engels Collected Works* (hereafter *MECW*) 4 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), pp. 130–131. (Engels, *The Holy Family*, 1845).
4. Note that in the next quote, they call for society to first seize the means of production and then go on to control the “whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man.” They do not call on the government to do so on behalf of society. If the government is controlled by society, then it is just a tool by which society exercises that control and there is no important distinction.

- If the government is not controlled by society, for example as in the former Soviet Union, then the two are not at all equivalent.
5. MECW 25 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 270. (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1878).
  6. Notwithstanding that his theory of the dynamics of capitalism correctly indicated the sources of capitalism's ability to repeatedly overcome the crises generated by its own functioning, even a superficial reading of Marx's activist writings and correspondence makes it clear that he felt capitalism had developed to where it was historically ready to be superseded. And while he intelligently stressed his refusal to make a time prediction for the end of capitalism, he clearly expected it would not last beyond the end of the nineteenth century. By the second half of the twentieth century, the unexpected robustness of capitalism (not only to survive, but to flourish after WWII) became a central theme in the permanent ideological war by capitalism to discredit Marxist theory.
  7. MECW 35 (New York: International Publishers, 1996), p. 726. (Marx, *Capital I* (1867)).
  8. MECW 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), pp. 273–274. (Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, 1844).
  9. Released first in 1969 in Italy. Known as *Burn!* (1970) in the United States and *The Mercenary* in Canada. Directed by Gillio Pontecorvo, with Marlon Brando as the only professional actor.
  10. This paper does not specifically discuss the political implications of the theoretical issues it develops, but here we assert they are important as follows. If one expects both aspects of the dialectical relation to involve radical ruptures, one will build one's politics on an assumed sudden transformation of human behaviour that will not materialize, causing the transformation to fail. If one expects both aspects to transform gradually, one will pursue a politics that fails to carry out the institutional transformations necessary when they are necessary, again causing the transformation to fail.
  11. Where institutions are understood to be relations among people.
  12. Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Looking Forward. Participatory Economics for the Twenty First Century* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), p. 16.
  13. MECW 3, p. 342. While the passage was written to indicate several disagreements by Marx with Hegel, Marx thoroughly accepted this important position.
  14. MECW 35, p. 187. While largely ignored until its "rediscovery" at the end of the twentieth century, this theme of the centrality of the human transformation to Marx's vision of communism was written about by a minority of Marxists before that. Two of those were Erich Fromm (1900–1980), for example *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961); and Ernst Fisher (1899–1972), for example *How to Read Karl Marx* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1996: originally written 1968), especially Chapter 2, "Creative Labor."
  15. The idea that such a work complex could be "balanced" is unrealistic because what a given task develops in one person will not be the same as in another person. That is, the key is the interaction of the individual and the task, and the nature of the effect of a given task on a person is not a characteristic of the task itself. Further, we consider that people must actually develop expertise in a given job, to the level of their ability, to have their work optimally contribute to their self-development. A highly fragmented workday would not (depending on the task) allow that. We think Pat Devine's approach discussed next would better accomplish Albert and Hahnel's (and Marx's) goal.
  16. Pat Devine, *Democracy and Economic Planning. The Political Economy of a Self-governing Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 171. Specifically, he lists five groups (and gives examples for each group): Planning and Running; Creative; Nurturing; Skilled; Unskilled and Repetitive. He emphasizes that this particular division is just a suggestion and that the people involved could create any division by the nature of the work that they felt was appropriate.
  17. Michael Lebowitz, "The Rich Human Being: Marx and the Concept of Real Human Development" Federico Caffè Centre Research Report n.3/2004 (Roskilde University, Denmark: Federico Caffè Centre, 2004), p. 7. He makes the point a number of times in his best known work, *Beyond Capital*, Second Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2003). We argue that a limitation of Lebowitz's work on this one point is that while he (correctly) stresses the role of capitalism in the pursuit of its goal of the accumulation of capital, in

- contributing to the creation of richer human beings by generating new human needs (even as it blocks the universal fulfillment of those needs), he fails to address the creation of false needs by capitalism. This leaves one with the incorrect impression that the creation of new human needs by capital is a strictly progressive role that it still plays. For more on this point, see Al Campbell and Ufuk Tutan, "Beyond 'Capital': A Necessary Corrective and Four Issues for Further Discussion," *Historical Materialism* 14/2 (2006), pp. 95–112.
18. Devine, *Democracy and Economic Planning*, p. 158 ff. and p. 162 ff., respectively.
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
  20. Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (NLB, 1988, originally written in 1977). We find the presentation by Devine not only much more compact, but also much clearer, and hence we will not discuss Bahro's original presentation.
  21. Devine, *Democracy and Economic Planning*, p. 164.
  22. *Ibid.*, p. 164, quoting Bahro *The Alternative*, p. 272.
  23. Sam Gindin, "Socialism 'With Sober Senses': Developing Workers' Capacities," in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, (eds.), *The Socialist Register 1998*, (Rendlesham, Great Britain: Merlin Press, 1998).
  24. Devine, *Democracy and Economic Planning*, p. 158, quoting D. Held, "Introduction: New Forms of Democracy," in *New Forms of Democracy*, D. Held and P. Pollitt (eds.), (London: Sage, 1986), p. 12.
  25. Devine, *Democracy and Economic Planning*, pp. 159–160.
  26. It is worth re-emphasizing in relation to this point that there is always resistance to capitalism. This resistance, however, tends to be distorted by capitalism towards a goal of more consumption that does not directly threaten the system, as opposed to resistance to capitalism's dehumanization, a resistance directed towards enhanced human development.
  27. Sam Gindin, "Anti-Capitalism and the Terrain of Social Justice," *Monthly Review* 53/9 (2002), p. 13.
  28. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
  29. Consider as an image a mathematical function that changes continually over time and at some point has a discontinuous jump. This is not a step function, constant before and constant after the jump, but rather a discontinuous jump within a process of continual transformation and change.
  30. We realize that, as is generally the case for making any point that rests on other points, we need to present our view (of Marx's view) of these transformations to use them as illustrations. We provide a minimal basis for how we view them, but again our concern here is not to enter into discussions of the complex nature of these transformations, but rather to focus on them only as illustrations of what this section intends to discuss, radical ruptures in institutions as sometimes necessary in the transformation to socialism.
  31. To avoid confusion, we note specifically that this necessary seizure of power by the proletariat was not envisioned as a transformation to socialism (much less to communism) for Marx and Engels. Rather, it was one necessary condition for such a transformation. Our concern with it, however, is only as a rupture in an institutional structure in the process of transformation.
  32. *MECW* 6 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984), p. 498. (Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848).
  33. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: The Modern Library, 1985), p. 69.
  34. *MECW* 24 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1989), p. 86.
  35. For example, a social policy of increasing the lower wages faster until all differences in wages disappeared. Note that Marx's system was to give a labour-token to each worker for each labour-hour contributed, hence absolutely equal wages.
  36. *MECW* 24, p. 87.
  37. This can be simply argued two ways. Suppose 10 workers collectively produce a good, and production stops if anyone is absent. Clearly, it makes no sense to say each of the 10 produces 100 percent of the good, or any other number. The same principle holds if removing any

one of the 10 workers causes a 20 percent drop in output. Alternatively, suppose that when a first worker stops, then output falls 40 percent, and when a second worker stops that it drops 20 percent more. Which of the 10 do we say makes the “first worker” contribution, and which the “second worker” contribution? Really collective production is conceptually incompatible with individual marginal contributions.

38. Notwithstanding that it remained “constantly encumbered by a bourgeois limitation” as we have discussed, keep in mind that Marx specifically referred to the socialist phase of the transition to communism with its equal wages as an “advance.”
39. Stephen J. Gould, *Ever Since Darwin* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 266.