

Goran Therborn,
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I

The Problem and the Questions

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat: The Words and the Concept

'A Marxist is solely someone who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of *the dictatorship of the proletariat* . . . This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested!'¹ Lenin's words are absolutely unequivocal. But what use should be made of them now that the term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' has been deleted from the programmes and statutes of most Communist parties of the advanced capitalist countries?

There are a number of options open. It is possible to ignore Lenin's thesis, with a brief reference to changes in the world since his time. This is tantamount to a statement of the contemporary irrelevance of the theory of the state developed by Lenin and Marx.² Recent party congresses may then be taken as a starting-point for elaboration of post-Marxian and post-Leninist theories of the 'democratic state'. If this course is followed, perhaps it will turn out that Social Democracy was right after all, or at least that it is right today, sixty years after the October Revolution. Alternatively, Lenin can be invoked as an authority with which to condemn modern 'deviations' and 'betrayals' in a moral or sectarian stand. Such a reiteration of the orthodox Leninist position³ would keep alive an

¹ V. I. Lenin, 'The State and Revolution', *Collected Works*, Moscow 1964, vol. 25, p. 412. Emphasis in the original.

² For a lucid analysis of the development of Marx's theory of the state, see E. Balibar, 'La rectification du *Manifeste Communiste*', in his *Cinq études du matérialisme historique*, Paris 1974.

³ Étienne Balibar has made an important contribution to discussion of this question in *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, NLB, London 1977.

important heritage, but it would also restrict efforts to come to grips with the present problems of the western labour movement.

There is, however, at least one other possibility – to treat Marx and Lenin not as historical authorities whose function is to be rhetorically venerated or scholastically quoted, but as guides to contemporary scientific and political analysis. Beyond oratory or dogma, what then really matters is the content of their theories, not the forms of their expression. For it is, in fact, possible to concede the two main arguments advanced by the French Communist Party (in particular) for the abandonment of the term ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’, and at the same time to retain and employ – scientifically and politically – the real knowledge contained in the Marxist-Leninist concept designated by this formula.

Two principal arguments have been put forward against the latter. One is the ring of the word ‘dictatorship’. This objection should not be dismissed, in a crudely intellectualist manner, as opportunism. The harsh experience of Fascism has taught the European working class, in every concrete way, the difference between democratic and dictatorial regimes of bourgeois class rule. As the Communists slowly learned in the thirties, it is not immaterial which of these forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is dominant. Moreover, restrictions and violations of proletarian democracy in the socialist states teach us that there are also significantly different forms of proletarian dictatorship. Both experiences call for specification of the various types of class rule and class dictatorship. The second argument concerns ‘the proletariat’. The PCF, among others, contends that the category is too narrow a designation for the broad social bloc of workers and employees that party strategy seeks to constitute into the base of a new, socialist state.⁴ More specifically, it has been argued that the leading role of the working class within this bloc should not be ensured by the coercion implied in the term ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’.⁵ In effect, this objection raises the problem of class alliances. There is no doubt that

⁴ Both arguments are presented in Georges Marchais’ report to the 22nd Congress of the French Communist Party, which is published in full in *Le Socialisme pour la France*, Paris 1976. An extract from this speech is appended to Balibar, *op. cit.*, 1977. Similar arguments have been advanced by members of the Italian Communist Party; see, for example, L. Gruppi, ‘Sur le rapport démocratie socialisme’, *Dialectiques* no. 17, Paris 1977.

⁵ Gruppi, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–8.

these can genuinely be posed within the framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat – as Lenin’s policy towards the peasantry in Soviet Russia proves. On the other hand, the successes, errors and failures of socialist practice, from the Soviet Union to Chile, certainly underline the crucial importance of broad and enduring social alliances and majorities for revolutionary politics. This second argument is consequently not without validity either.

Historical developments make necessary much greater refinement and specification of the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is possible, indeed, that these may justify programmatic abandonment of the term itself. However, neither historical experience nor contemporary official arguments affect the basic issues focussed by the concept. ‘The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat,’ Lenin wrote, ‘is a question of the relation of the proletarian state to the bourgeois state, of proletarian democracy to bourgeois democracy.’ He continued, ‘the formula “dictatorship of the proletariat” is merely a more historically concrete and scientifically exact formulation of the proletariat’s task of “smashing” the bourgeois state machine . . .’⁶ In their preface to the 1872 edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels had added: ‘One thing especially was proved by the [Paris] Commune, viz., that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.’

The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then, refers to two fundamental theses. First, the idea that *the very form of organization of the state is a materialization of a particular mode of class rule*. Secondly, in consequence of the first, that *the socialist state of the working class must have a specific form of organization*. The term ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’ is used by Marx, Engels and Lenin as synonymous both with ‘rule of the proletariat’ and with the particular form of state that expresses this rule.

If the above points are correct, then it follows that a strategy for socialism or for a transitional stage of ‘advanced democracy’ must dismantle the governmental, administrative, judicial and repressive apparatuses of the existing bourgeois state. In other words, the working class needs not only an economic programme of nationalizations and social services, but also a political programme of changes

⁶ V. I. Lenin, ‘The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky’, *Collected Works*, vol. 28, pp. 232–3.

in the organization of the state that will bring about a popular democracy.

This is, of course, not the place to contribute to such a programme, which must be formed through discussion in the revolutionary workers' movement of each country. But the elaboration of a strategic programme must be based on scientific Marxist analyses. These must provide answers to questions such as the following: wherein lies the bourgeois class character, not of current government policies, but of the way in which contemporary capitalist states are organized? What forms would have to be taken by a state that reproduces the power of the working class and its allies?⁷

Marxists have devoted unbelievably little systematic attention to these problems since the time of Lenin. Let us recall some of the most important theoretical contributions made recently in Western Europe to analysis of the state. Nicos Poulantzas has produced a number of complex, and in many ways path-breaking, studies of classes and the capitalist state. But nowhere does he directly investigate the forms of state organization. In *Political Power and Social Classes*, he stresses relative autonomy from the economy as the distinctive characteristic of the capitalist state.⁸ Only with extreme brevity does he refer to its system of organization – namely, a 'bureaucratism', 'which expresses above all the political impact of bourgeois ideology on the state'.⁹ Here as well as later¹⁰, Poulantzas focuses more on the bureaucracy as a specific social category than on bureaucracy as a bourgeois form of state organization. In this respect, he displays a basic affinity with his otherwise very different opponent, Ralph Miliband.

Miliband's work *The State in Capitalist Society* (London 1969) is the most ambitious empirical investigation of modern advanced capitalist states yet undertaken by a Marxist; but it too almost com-

⁷ These problems are brushed aside by Balibar as unimportant 'institutional' aspects; see op. cit., pp. 111–12.

⁸ This is also the basis of Poulantzas's rather superficial characterization of the absolutist state as capitalist; see *Political Power and Social Classes*. NLB 1973, pp. 161–7.

⁹ Poulantzas, op. cit., p. 332.

¹⁰ Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, NLB 1975, esp. pp. 183–9. For a brief treatment of the organization of the state apparatuses, see *ibid.*, esp. pp. 28ff. On the other hand, in his analyses of fascism (*Fascism and Dictatorship*, NLB 1975) and of other dictatorships (*The Crisis of the Dictatorships*, NLB 1976) Poulantzas has cast much light on the state apparatuses.

pletely bypasses the problem of organization. In an approach reminiscent of Poulantzas's view of 'bureaucratism', the author seeks to define the class character of the state primarily by reference to the bourgeois ideological orientation of its personnel. In a more recent work *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford 1977), Miliband's discussion of the state assigns a central place to the varying degrees of its 'relative autonomy'.

Theorizations of 'state monopoly capitalism', such as the massive treatise by Paul Boccarda and others¹¹, virtually exclude questions of the state apparatus from their overwhelmingly economic analysis. By contrast, such problems are at the heart of the major strategic and programmatic discussion developing in the French, Italian and Spanish labour movements. However, these so-called Eurocommunist contributions have been primarily concerned with the bearing of ideology on the state and with a number of specific, yet crucial, questions concerning government apparatuses, parliament, regional decentralization, and popular rank-and-file assemblies. The administrative and repressive apparatuses have been tackled mainly in the context of concrete and limited proposals for reform.¹²

In Santiago Carrillo's recent book '*Eurocomunismo*' y Estado (Barcelona 1977), which is the true 'Eurocommunist' counterpoint to *State and Revolution*, many crucial problems of the class character of the state apparatus are rather contemptuously brushed aside. Thus: 'This conception of the state and of the struggle to democratize it presupposes the renunciation, in its classical form, of the idea of a *workers' and peasants' state*; that is, a state which, mounted according to a new plan, brings workers and peasants from their factories and fields to staff its offices and sends into their place functionaries who up to that point used to work in the offices.' (p. 97) The Spanish CP leader is, of course, right to expose the obscuring and utopian features of this 'classical idea'. But what is a socialist state – a state of transition to classless society – if not a strenuous effort to dismantle the barriers between the workers in their fac-

¹¹ *Traité d'économie marxiste et d'économie politique. Le capitalisme d'état*, Paris 1971, 2 vols.

¹² See *Programme commun du parti communiste et du parti socialiste*, Paris 1972, pp. 160–2; J. Fabre-F. Hincker-L. Sève, *Les communistes et l'état*, Paris 1977, pp. 177ff.; and 'Per la riforma del amministrazione pubblica', of which I have consulted the German translation published in the collection *Sozialismus für Italien*, Hamburg/West Berlin 1977.

ories and the functionaries in their offices? Would a democratically governed state lead to classless society if it were administered in a bureaucratic or technocratic manner? Carrillo's failure to confront this problem is further underlined by his cavalier assumption that the executives of existing capitalist corporations could be incorporated as such into the new post-capitalist society (p. 104). For Carrillo, the transformation of the state apparatus is mainly a problem of obtaining hegemony within the ideological apparatuses. Nor does the sympathetic critic of 'Eurocommunism', Fernando Claudin, concern himself with these questions in a book *Eurocomunismo y Socialismo* (Madrid 1977) which appeared simultaneously with that of Carrillo.

A Socialist intellectual, Norberto Bobbio, initiated a highly valuable discussion in Italy in 1975-76 by posing two provocative questions: Is there such a thing as a Marxist doctrine of the state? What are the alternatives to representative democracy? Many of the best minds of the PCI contributed answers. Although Bobbio had also invoked Max Weber and the phenomenon of bureaucracy, the debate revolved mainly around the subject of representative democracy. Major articles on the constitution of a non-authoritarian state - variously termed 'mass democracy' (Ingrao) and 'mixed democracy' (Occhetto) - sought to relate parliamentary representation to direct democracy at the base. But the question of the overall class character of the state was hardly raised.¹³

The 22nd Congress of the French Communist Party did much to stimulate debate on the very concept which it abandoned: the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus, at round-tables organized by journals such as *Dialectiques* (nos. 17 and 18-19) and *La Nouvelle Critique* (nos. 93, 96 and 101), a number of participants touched upon questions and difficulties of great import - even though they were unable to go into them very deeply in their necessarily brief contributions. The same may be said of Althusser's booklet *22ème Congrès* (Paris 1977), which, more than Balibar's above-mentioned book on the dictatorship of the proletariat, tries to come to grips with the concrete political problems now facing the revolutionary labour movement in the West. The collective work edited by Nicos

¹³ The interventions are published in a book *Il marxismo e lo stato*, Rome 1976. The one which most closely touches problems of the non-governmental apparatuses of the state is: Giorgio Ruffolo, 'Eguaglianza e democrazia nel progetto socialista'.

Poulantzas, *La crise de l'état*, includes a few illuminating observations on experiences of the French state apparatus. The PCF has recently put out a book of both analytical and programmatic value which deals directly with political and administrative questions of the state - *Les communistes et l'état*. However, it suffers from an unclear distinction between state power and state apparatus - which leads the authors largely to subsume the latter under the former in their analysis and programme. 'The essence of this transformation does not lie in an internal modification of the state, however indispensable that may be, but in the reversal of the relation between state and workers.'¹⁴ What is doubtful here is the word 'but'. For if the internal organization of the state bears a class character, then a reversal of the relationship between state and workers directly depends, among other things, upon an 'internal modification' of the former.

Although the Swedish CP is a long way from political power, even a brief overview of recent 'Eurocommunist' writings on the state should mention a book by a leading Swedish Communist, Jorn Svensson, *Du skall ta ledningen och makten*. (Thou shalt take power and leadership).¹⁵ In programmatic form, this work lucidly brings out the different class character of the socialist and capitalist states.

On the academic level, a lively Marxist discussion on the state has arisen in West Germany. However, although it is often of high intellectual calibre, it has contributed little to clarification of the character of the state apparatus. Like Poulantzas, most West German authors regard separation and relative autonomy from the economy as the essential characteristic of the capitalist state. Even in the best works, problems of state power, state apparatus, structural dynamics and class struggle are often jumbled together under the notion of 'structural selectivity'.¹⁶ Three particular traditions

¹⁴ Fabre-Hincker-Sève, op. cit., p. 150. Emphasis omitted.

¹⁵ Stockholm 1975. The title refers to a line from Brecht: 'Du musst die Führung übernehmen' (*Lob des Lernens*).

¹⁶ In their criticism of narrowly instrumentalist conceptions of the state, West German academic Marxists sometimes simply dismiss the problematic of *The State and Revolution*; see, for example, C. Offe-V. Ronge, 'Thesen zur Begründung des Konzepts des "kapitalistischen Staates" und zur materialistische Politikforschung', in Altvater, Basso, Mattick, Offe et. al., *Rahmenbedingungen und Schranken staatlichen Handelns. Zehn Thesen*, Frankfurt 1976, p. 54. In an interesting critical review of a number of different analyses, Offe rashly concludes that it is possible to demonstrate empirically the class content of a state's policy only after it has been overthrown by revolution; see 'Klassenherrschaft und

lie as a dead weight upon this discussion. One is the focus on political legitimation inherited from Weber and the Frankfurt School¹⁷; another is a functionalist economic orientation which concentrates analyses of the state on its functions in the reproduction of capital.¹⁸ While these two trends allow consideration of important and substantial problems – though at the price of neglecting political analysis proper – the interpretation of Marx's thought in terms of the 'logic of capital' has led several writers into intensive preoccupation with a philosophical problem largely of their own making – namely, the attempt to 'derive' the 'logical' possibility and necessity of the state from the concepts of commodity and capital.¹⁹

At least one Marxist study of the socialist state deals directly with the question of the class character of its apparatuses: Charles Bettelheim's *Les luttes de classe en URSS* (Paris 1974, 1977) – of which only the first two volumes, dealing with the period up to 1930, have appeared so far. This is an important work, which should be taken seriously even by those who fundamentally disagree with the author's ideas about the 'capitalist' character of the Soviet Union

politisches System. Zur Selektivität politischer Institutionen', in his *Strukturprobleme des kapitalistischen Staates*, Frankfurt 1972. The organizational question is not dismissed altogether in the important work by Joachim Hirsch, *Staatsapparat und Reproduktion des Kapitals*, Frankfurt 1974. But he subsumes the problem of the state apparatus under that of the functionality of its *Besonderung* (separation from civil society) to the reproduction of capital, and devotes no real analysis to it as a crystallization of class power; see esp. pp. 226ff.

A general overview of the achievements of West German Marxist study of the state may be gained from V. Brandes (ed.), *Handbuch 5. Staat*, Frankfurt 1977.

¹⁷ For a good sample of its recent exercises, see R. Ebbinghausen (ed.), *Bürgerlicher Staat und politische Legitimation*, Frankfurt 1976.

¹⁸ An example is the recent work on the West German state by Projekt Klassenanalyse, a very productive and intellectually solid collective, *Der Staat der BRD*, Hamburg/West Berlin 1977. It contains virtually no political analysis proper, of the government, of the repressive, judiciary and administrative apparatuses of the state and their traverse by and insertion in the class struggle.

¹⁹ The central text of this debate is S. V. Flatow–F. Huisken, 'Zum Problem der Ableitung des bürgerlichen Staates', *Probleme des Klassenkampfes*, no. 7, 1973. For a presentation of the later adventures, or misadventures, of this peculiar dialectic, see B. Blanke–H. Kastendiek–U. Jürgens, 'Zur neueren marxistischen Diskussion über die Analyse von Form und Funktion des bürgerlichen Staates', *Probleme des Klassenkampfes*, no. 14/15, 1974. It should be added that this philosophy of the state bears a certain relation to the more substantive problem of the inevitable restriction of state reformist intervention by the economic laws of capitalism. A recent contribution to this discussion is the essay 'Staat, Akkumulation des Kapitals und soziale Bewegung', by Elmar Altvater et al., in Altvater, Basso et al., op. cit.

today. However, Bettelheim starts out in the first volume with a fatal theoretical flaw. Instead of basing his analysis on a systematic, comparative conception of the capitalist and socialist states, he confronts the real history of the USSR with an ideal variant. This is quite acceptable as a starting-point for a critical historical study. But, first, the procedure does not permit any conclusions to be drawn as to the class nature of the actual, 'deviant' Soviet state. Secondly, whereas feudal and capitalist states have exhibited a wide historical range of variations, aberrations and impurities, the above-mentioned approach tends arbitrarily to predefine the socialist state as a single form. Future volumes will show how Bettelheim handles these difficulties. The second volume is much less guided by a Maoist bias; but it focuses mainly on the economic and ideological spheres, and relatively little on the state.²⁰ So far at least, we have to say that Bettelheim has left the basic theoretical problems unanswered.

An outstanding exception among recent Marxist works on the state is Perry Anderson's great study of the feudal state. In support of his thesis that the Absolutist state had a feudal character, Anderson compares it with the later, capitalist states in respect of military organization, administration, diplomacy and sources of revenue.²¹ This is done very convincingly, with profound historical erudition and a sharp analytical edge. The implications of Anderson's work will be extremely useful in the course of the present study, even though he himself does not elaborate, or even state very explicitly, the theoretical rationale of his analysis.

The current discussion of the dictatorship of the proletariat has arisen primarily in Western Europe, and the rapid survey we have made has been confined to contributions by West European Marxists. It should at least be mentioned that there exist other Marxist theorists, whose work is equally, if not more, significant. As far as I know, however, they have not solved the initial questions either. One valuable contribution – of which I have been able to consult only the first two volumes (of four) in German translation – is a collective Soviet handbook entitled *The General Marxist-Leninist Theory of the State and Law*.²² Its strength lies above all in

²⁰ Jean Elleinstein's *Histoire de l'URSS* (4 vols., Paris 1973–5) is mainly a narrative history. It is noteworthy as the first attempt by a politically prominent Communist scholar to engage in serious study of the Soviet Union.

²¹ P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, NLB, London 1975, pp. 29ff.

²² *Marxist-leninistische allgemeine Theorie des Staates und des Rechts*, Berlin 1974, 4 vols. to appear.

the sections on law, and it is concerned more with problems of categorization and description than with strictly theoretical analysis.

In his *Leninism and the Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* – an educational work of some political interest – Konstantin Zarodov motivates his simple assertion that the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is one of the ‘principal laws’ of socialist transition by referring to the necessity of a ‘power supported by force’ with which to defeat the exploiters. Zarodov expresses very well that conception from which most West European Communist parties are now eager to distance themselves. But beneath both positions very important problems remain unanalysed.²³

As for the Chinese, I know of no large-scale study or precise formulation of the organizational characteristics of the proletarian state. Their main emphasis has been on ideological factors, especially the struggle within the party between ‘two lines’ – one representing the proletariat, the other the bourgeoisie. As these lines are given no precise definition or empirical connection with class forces, they have involved above all the following opposition: the current leadership exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas former leaders (Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao, Chen Po-ta or the ‘gang of four’) are denounced, after their fall, as agents of a bourgeois and fascist dictatorship. However, both in theory and in practice, the Chinese have also affirmed a number of concrete characteristics specific to proletarian state and party functionaries: egalitarian remuneration and consumption habits; participation in manual labour; ideological training; and accountability to mass criticism. These are fully in keeping with Lenin’s April Theses and are of importance in the abolition of the separateness of the state apparatus.²⁴

From a strict Trotskyist position, it seems impossible to pose the

²³ K. Zarodov, *O leninismo e a passagem do capitalismo ao socialismo*, Lisbon 1976, 3 vols. (booklets), vol. 2, p. 41. Zarodov’s text is used in the formation of cadres in the Portuguese Communist Party – a party which, at its 1974 Extraordinary Congress, deleted the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat from its programme.

²⁴ I originally intended to refer here to Chang Chun-chiao’s ‘All-round Dictatorship against the Bourgeoisie’ (*Peking Review* No. 14, 1975, also published in pamphlet form) as a recent authoritative Chinese statement. But now that he has been denounced as one of ‘the gang of four’ seeking to restore capitalism, that should be left for the record and replaced by a pamphlet by Hua Kuo-feng, *Continue the Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat to the End*, Peking 1977. The basic Chinese works are, of course, those of Mao Tse-tung – for example, the essays ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People’; ‘On the Ten Great Relationships’, contained in the famous little red

problem of the class character of the state organization; it is defined out of existence by the use of certain categories. Thus, although Trotsky consistently characterized the USSR as a workers’ state, the only argument he ever gave was the fact that it had its roots in, and continued to defend, a nationalized economy. Once the nature of a state is defined by the economic base and content of state policies, then the problem of the class character of the state apparatus is replaced by the ambiguous notion of bureaucracy.²⁵ It must be added, however, that Trotskyist studies of the ‘bureaucracy’ of their Stalinist and post-Stalinist enemies, above all the great works of Isaac Deutscher, have manifested a remarkable analytical sobriety, which stands in stark contrast to the sweeping vituperation of Maoist exposures of the ‘capitalist’ USSR.

The highly developed Marxism of Latin America has produced a number of absorbing works on the state; but again, it has devoted little analysis to the state apparatus. Sometimes, important issues are treated in too cavalier a fashion, even in otherwise penetrating contributions. For instance, Octavio Ianni quite straightforwardly characterizes the populist regimes of Perón and Vargas as petty-bourgeois, at the same time as he stresses that one of their hallmarks was the promotion of trade unions that were effectively controlled by the state.²⁶

The North American Marxist, Erik Olin Wright, has undertaken a careful and systematic comparison of Lenin’s conception of bureaucracy with that of the great bourgeois sociologist, Max Weber. Wright ends his excellent essay by explicitly raising the problem dealt with in the present study: ‘What is needed is . . . a theoretical orientation . . . that provides a systematic understanding of the relationship of social structure to the internal organizational processes of the state.’²⁷

book of the Cultural Revolution, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*. So far, five very carefully (and politically) edited volumes of Mao’s writings have been published.

²⁵ For Trotsky’s views on bureaucracy and the Soviet Union, see *The Revolution Betrayed*, New York 1972.

²⁶ O. Ianni, *A formação do Estado Populista*, São Paulo, 1973. Among recent important Latin American contributions, at least the following should be mentioned: F. H. Cardoso, *O modelo político brasileiro*, São Paulo 1975; J. F. Leal, *La burguesía y el estado mexicano*, Mexico 1972; and idem, *Estado, burocracia y sindicatos*, Mexico 1975.

²⁷ E. Wright, ‘Bureaucracy and the State’, Chapter four in *Classes, Crisis and State*, NLB, London 1978.

Finally, we should not forget an outstanding Asian contribution to the debate – a practical one. For at least a decade the Vietnamese struggle was at the centre of the world revolutionary movement against imperialism. Today, liberated Vietnam is being developed explicitly according to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even if the experience of the European labour movement leads us to accept the arguments against the particular formulation, the heroic combat of the Vietnamese people should serve as a reminder of the importance of the content of the concept, and of the urgent need to clarify it.

An Analytical Model

Our critical look at previous analyses is not meant to suggest that Marxists have generally ignored the class character of the state apparatus. Indeed, we shall draw extensively upon past experiences, observations and reflections.²⁸ However, although there has been no shortage of implications, passing remarks, quotations from classic texts, and ideological polemics, almost no systematic theoretical analysis has been devoted to the problem. In the present theoretical and political conjuncture, I think it appropriate to bend the stick in the other direction: to attempt to develop a formal, comparative analytical model of the class character of the state apparatus, which may serve as a tool both for scientific investigation of the historical types of state, and for a programmatic debate about why and how the state apparatuses of the advanced capitalist countries should be 'smashed'.

In my opinion, such a model should start not from the functionalist problematic of the role of the state in the reproduction of capital, but from the relations between antagonistic classes, as determined by the forces and relations of production. Poulantzas has already developed the idea that the state should be regarded neither as a specific institution nor as an instrument, but as a relation – a materialized concentration of the class relations of a given society. These remarks apply also to its two distinct aspects: state power and the state apparatus. State power is a relation between social class forces expressed in the content of state policies. The class character of these policies may be seen in their direct effects upon the forces

²⁸ There are a number of solid non-Marxist works pertinent to an investigation into the class character of the state apparatus. I shall refer below to those of which I have made direct use.

and relations of production, upon the ideological superstructure, and upon the state apparatus. These points will be elaborated in the second essay of this volume.

State power is exercised through the state apparatus, or more precisely, through a system of state apparatuses. The separate existence of the state is part of a specific division of labour within society. Its internal organization thus reflects in a particular way the social division of labour and the prevailing social class relations, contributing to their reproduction in the ever-ongoing social process. In the historical course of the class struggle, the state apparatuses come to crystallize determinate social relations and thus assume a material existence, efficacy and inertia which are to a certain extent independent of current state policies and class relations. It follows that, although the variance between state power and the state apparatus is limited by the fact that they express the class relations of the same society, at any given moment significant disjunctures appear between the two. The possibilities of variance are substantially increased by the coexistence within a particular state system of several apparatuses, in which different sets of class relations may have crystallized.

These disjunctures have a fundamentally destabilizing effect. For example, a bourgeois revolution, involving the distribution of land to individual peasants, is inherently unstable if it is accomplished by a predominantly proletarian state apparatus of the kind created in Russia after October. Conversely, the nationalization of the 'commanding heights' of the economy is unstable as an expression of working class power, if it is carried out by a bourgeois state apparatus. Thus, the two aspects of the state are analytically distinct, and disjunctures between them affect the mode of the class struggle and confront the revolutionary class with specific tasks vis-à-vis the organization of the state.

What will be presented here is neither a historical study nor a set of categorical definitions, but a theoretical model for concrete analysis and programmatic discussion. The aim is to show that different types of class relations and of class power generate corresponding forms of state organization, and to elucidate the way in which the class character of the state apparatus is determined and revealed. The model, then, is *explanatory*, rather than descriptive of ideal types; and it is based on the *comparative* study of feudal, capitalist and socialist states.

Like any text which is inspired by Marxism, the present work is

subject to exegetic criticism. Yet it does not set out to repeat and reformulate what Marx, Engels and Lenin said but to build upon their foundation. The model should be judged primarily on 'pragmatic' grounds, rather than by the criterion of strict correspondence with Marxist-Leninist social theory. Does it enable new knowledge to be produced? Does it throw fresh light on the relevant phenomena, without obscuring what has already been clarified? These are the most important questions that the reader will have to ask himself or herself.

As an analytical model, the one we shall attempt to construct is open also to both logical and empirical refutation. Its logical coherence depends on the existence of a real causal relation between the forms of state organization and the particular class relations to which they are linked in the model. It may be empirically disproved if the forms of state organization mentioned cannot be identified with the class of the model, or with any other; or if the variations of state organization are more readily explicable by variables other than class struggle and class power. Medieval France and Germany, the France of the Great Revolution, and revolutionary Russia appear to constitute the first crucial empirical tests.

In order to make the text easier to read, the theory will be presented rather discursively. Empirical references will be used mainly for indicative and illustrative purposes, and it is not claimed that they provide a genuine verification. This applies especially to the discussion of the institutions and practices of contemporary states that claim to be socialist. Although I personally believe that it is correct to characterize them as in varying degrees socialist, the references in the text in no way preclude empirical investigation of their nature. They are intended to supply concrete illustrations and to highlight critical aspects that have to be made the subject of further examination and reflection.

Finally, the tentative and approximative character of this essay should be underlined at the outset.

Before we conclude this lengthy introduction, we need to supplement the general conceptualization of the state with two further specifications. Since we are interested in the state as an organization, we must have a grasp of what formal organization involves. Secondly, we will have to examine briefly the characteristic features of feudal, capitalist and socialist class relations, since we will claim that it is these that generate the specific forms of state organization.

A New Approach to the Study of Organizations

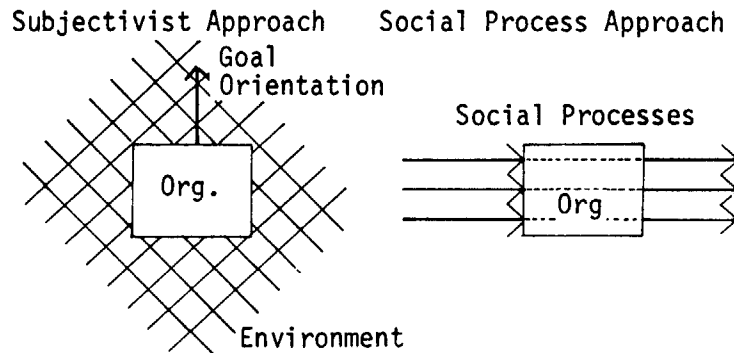
As an apparatus, or system of apparatuses, the state is a type of formal organization. It is distinguished by its specific functions: coercive defence, political governance (by supreme rule-making), administrative management (by rule-application), and judicial regulation of a given social formation. However, it should be possible to analyse the state apparatus in essentially the same terms as other organizations or apparatuses.

An abundant literature already exists on organizations and organizational analysis.²⁹ Although Marxists must take some of this into account, nearly all of it suffers from a fundamental flaw: it does not consider organizations as part of the ongoing historical process of (simple and expanded) social reproduction and revolution. From Weber's conception of rational bureaucracy to modern functionalism, systems approaches and notions of forms of compliance, the conceptualization and analysis produced by organizational theory have generally been situated within a *subjectivist problematic*. They have focussed on the organizational subject – its goals, its decision-making or 'adaptive' behaviour, its modes of legitimation and enforcement of compliance – that is to say, on the creators or leaders of the organization and on their problems. Of course, this is not an unimportant area of investigation, and researchers have not been unaware of the fact that these variables are affected by a wider extra-organizational setting. To some extent they have even understood the ways in which this influence is exerted. However, there remains in all these approaches a basic dichotomy between the organizational subject and its 'setting' – a dichotomy which hinders deeper consideration of the processes of social reproduction and change. This is a more fundamental weakness than the customary lack of a class analysis of organizational structures, because it is in and through these processes that classes and the class struggle operate.

In order to understand the class character of the state apparatus, then, we must begin to develop a new approach to study of the organization. We should view it not as a goal-oriented subject in an environment, but as a formally bounded system of structured processes within a global system of societal processes. This difference

²⁹ For a survey of the principal contemporary approaches, see J. March (ed.), *Handbook of Organizations*, Chicago 1965; A. Etzioni (ed.), *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations*, London 1970; or O. Grusky-G. Miller (eds.), *The Sociology of Organizations*, New York 1970.

of approach is expressed in the following diagram, albeit in a rather simplistic manner:



The approach must be a formal one if it is to be applicable to diverse types of organization. At the same time, it will be of little value if it produces merely a system of empty descriptive generalities, or a set of definitions that reformulate existing knowledge. The schema must make possible a number of specifications and distinctions, and serve as a guide to empirical research. It should not assume, but rather allow us to discover, the class character of particular organizations.

Systems approaches to the study of organizations and politics usually operate as a variant of the subjectivist problematic. Utilizing highly abstract concepts, they typically analyse the organization as a self-maintaining system. Nevertheless, certain ideas developed by systems theory can be taken over and put to different use. Thus, if we conceive of organizations as processes formally structured by specific mechanisms of input, transformation and output, we can relate them directly to the ever advancing social processes of reproduction and change, which provide the inputs and receive the outputs. The class character of an organization may then be determined by the way in which the input, transformation and output processes are traversed and shaped by the class struggle.

What, then, is the formal content of the inputs, transformation and outputs of an organization? We can answer this question by generalizing and extending the four factors involved in productive organizations – work materials, personnel, energy and technology –

in such a way as to yield the following schema: 1. The *tasks* of the organization; 2. The different kinds of *personnel*; 3. The *material resources* necessary to sustain the transformations carried out in the organization and its personnel; 4. The *organizational technology*, i.e., the technique of getting things done, which is applied in the handling of tasks, the patterning of the personnel, and the use of incoming material resources. Every organization has formal procedures that regulate the inputs, transformation and outputs of these factors, and if the basic theses of historical materialism are valid, these procedures will be produced by the class struggle and constitute crystallizations of class relations.

We are now able to outline what happens when a given technology is applied within an organization. The working materials are worked upon (or to put it in other terms, the incoming tasks are handled); the persons are patterned as incumbents of a structure of positions; and the energy is utilized. As outputs, the factors take the form of external activities of the organization: output of decisions and policies; behaviour of its personnel towards other individuals; outflow of material resources. The outputs and personal behaviour should be distinguished according to whether they relate to other organizations of the same type. A state, for instance, relates to foreign states in other ways than it does to the society of which it is part, or to different organizations of that society.

One further specification needs to be made. The problem of the class character of the state apparatus does not refer to the effects of state policies – which involve the analytically distinct, though empirically closely related question of state power – but to their form and intrinsic content.

The highly abstract schema can now be made somewhat more concrete by the identification of no fewer than nine (or, with the output specifications, eleven) variables.

Input mechanisms:

1. Principles regulating the type of task dealt with by the state;
2. Criteria of personnel recruitment to the state apparatuses;
3. Modes of securing state revenue;

Processes of transformation:

4. Modes of decision-making and handling of tasks;
5. Patterning of organizational positions and of relations among their incumbents;

6. Modes of allocation and utilization of material resources;
Output mechanisms:
7. Patterning of decisions and practices of the state
 - a. towards other states
 - b. towards the society of which it is part;
 8. Patterning of relations of the state personnel
 - a. with the personnel of other states
 - b. with other members of the same society;
 9. Modes of outflow of material resources from the state.

As expressions of class relations, these variables will have a strong tendency to vary together as a cluster. However, the above list should be supplemented by a specification of the key variable and, if possible, of their critical limits of variation. This is especially important from the point of view of the dialectical distinction between qualitative and quantitative change.

Technology differs from the other variables of the organization system in that it is not part of the same input-transformation-output process. Although technology enters the organization from the prevailing state of the social forces and relations of production, its functioning is, in a sense, purely internal to the organizational process. Within this process, the technological input is not transformed, but rather *applied* in the transformation of the other inputs: in the handling of tasks, the patterning of personnel, and the utilization of energy. Nor is technology really an output of productive or other organizations. The kind of technology employed has significant *effects* upon the organization's environment, because of its implication in the character of transformation processes and of the output of transformed inputs.

For these reasons, technology should be treated separately as a special variable. For these reasons, too, it should be considered as the strategic variable of the organization system – in this case, the state apparatus. Of all the factors involved, technology has the broadest reach: it is applied in the process of transformation and affects the regulation of all the other inputs and outputs. It is thus in the light of the regulation of these other factors that the highly abstract concept of organizational technology will become somewhat more concrete.

It should be stressed that technology here refers to *organizational* technology, which directly involves institutionalized social relations

of command and compliance, leadership and execution. We shall expand on these points later. Organizational technology is invested in material means of production and communication; but it is not reducible to them. It is analogous to the forces of production – a concept which refers basically to 'die Art und Weise der Arbeit' (the methods of labour), the different ways in which productivity is ensured.³⁰

The analysis would become even more complex if we took into account the fact that the state apparatus is, in reality, a set of apparatuses. Corresponding to the four principal functions of the state, four types of apparatus can be distinguished: the governmental apparatus (i.e. the rule-making legislative and executive bodies, both central and local), the administration, the judiciary, and the repressive apparatus (police, military, etc.). In practice, these types are not always clearly differentiated, but where they are, each one of them normally comprises a number of apparatuses.³¹

Although the state is, in a fundamental sense, always one, the level of integration of its apparatuses varies considerably, and it should not be taken for granted that they share a common class character. For the state is the concentrated expression of a highly complex set of class relations, which are refracted in disjunctions of varying profundity between the different apparatuses. Within limits imposed by the general nature of the state, it is especially probable that the class character of its diverse apparatuses will vary with the link between the tasks of the apparatus and the concerns of classes rooted in the mode of production. It may thus be expected that, allowing for a possible period of revolutionary 'smashing', the army of capitalist states would retain feudal traits longer than, say, the fiscal apparatus; that the agricultural apparatuses would have a more pronounced petty-bourgeois and small bourgeois character; or that the welfare apparatus, whilst remaining bourgeois, would be

³⁰ Cf. G. Therborn, *Science, Class and Society*, NLB 1976, pp. 362ff.

³¹ What Althusser has called the ideological apparatuses of the state should more precisely be analysed as part of the ideological superstructure. The family, for example, evidently cannot be considered as part of the state, whereas an ideological apparatus like the school system is organizationally patterned by the *administrative* apparatus of the state. It also seems more fruitful to treat the judiciary and the police-army as distinct apparatuses. Miliband's amalgamation of them (in *The State in Capitalist Society*, London 1969) makes it more difficult to analyse both the special function of the feudal judiciary and the relative independence of the courts in capitalist society.

affected by its close relationship with the working class. In the rest of this text, however, the state apparatus will be generally treated as a single whole.

Modes of Production and Types of Class Relations

According to the Marxian metaphor of base and superstructure, the character of the state depends upon the particular combination of relations and forces of production that constitutes the economic base of society. As I have elaborated at some length in my *Science, Class and Society*, the relations of production, which determine the class content of human social relations, involve three aspects: the distribution of the means of production, the goal of production, and the structure of the social relations that link the immediate producers to one another and to the appropriators of the fruits of their surplus labour. Before we proceed any further, we must specify those class relations that are characteristic of the feudal, capitalist and socialist modes of production.

Feudal class relations and feudal class rule: The principal means of production are here distributed among individual landlords, who basically owe their property to inheritance, to their original military eminence, or to other services rendered to a superior lord. Although the immediate producers are thereby collectively separated from the means of production, their labour is not immediately directed and supervised by the landlords. Their class subjection to the owners of the means of production, as indeed relations among the feudal aristocrats, is based rather on non-economic mechanisms: differences in military capability, non-economic manners and resources, and kinship. The unequal relation is one of degree rather than kind: the supreme lord is no more a god than are his peasants beasts of toil. Under this system, production is oriented essentially towards noble consumption.

From these basic features of the relations of production, certain political and ideological characteristics of feudal class rule can be seen to follow. Expansion typically involved conquest of foreign lands and subjection of the immediate producers tied to them. The combination of the individual mode of appropriation with a rigorous kinship system made of marriage an important economic and political affair. The nature of relations between the producers and their lords, and the orientation of production gave an important place to breeding, manners, qualitative personal relationships,

ritual and ceremonial consumption, as attributes of the ruling aristocracy. These became still more significant as the development of the means of repression made obsolete the knightly army and the military role of the nobility.

Capitalist class relations and bourgeois rule: the direct producers are here separated from the means of production not as a collective, but as individuals without capital. The means of production take the form of commodities appropriated by any individuals who have the exchange values necessary to purchase them. Relations within and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are market relations of exchange and competition. The basic relation of exploitation between the two classes combines a market bond – that links buyers and sellers of the commodity labour-power – with the process of extraction of surplus value. This appropriation of the labour product is conducted under conditions of direct control by the capitalists over the use of labour-power, where the goal of production is the accumulation of capital.

These social relations entail at least two important general characteristics of bourgeois class rule. One is the combination of personal freedom and equality (expressed in exchange and competition on the market) with the lack of freedom and equality inherent in the domination of capital over labour. The second essential feature is the separation of mental from manual labour, and the hierarchical subordination of the latter to the former.³² In contrast to the unity of tasks realized under the feudal and handicraft systems, the direct management and supervision of production by capital is necessitated by the very dynamics of capital accumulation. The intrinsic importance of specialized, quantifiable knowledge gives rise to the separation within the capitalist enterprise of mental from manual labour – and more generally of conception from execution. The former tasks are reserved for the owners and representatives of capital.

The principles of capitalist organization of the work process were

³² This does not mean that a kind of subordination of manual to mental labour is theoretically inconceivable outside capitalism. However, the prolific writings on the 'post-capitalist', 'post-industrial' society by Daniel Bell and *tutti quanti* do not put forward a convincing case that this is an essential feature of the present epoch. After all, science and the university have hardly replaced capital accumulation and private enterprise as the main determinants of social relations in advanced Western societies.

formulated with unsurpassed candour and explicitness by Frederick Taylor, architect of the so-called Taylor system of 'scientific management': 'The managers assume . . . the burden of gathering together all of the traditional knowledge which in the past has been possessed by the workmen and then of classifying, tabulating and reducing this knowledge to rules, laws and formulae . . . All possible brainwork should be removed from the shop and centered in the planning or lay-out department'.³³

It should be noted that this subordination is quite distinct from the pre-capitalist, feudal or mandarin, *contempt* for manual labour. What the bourgeoisie sets against it is not possession of general 'culture', good breeding or manners, but specific mental activities – mental labour.³⁴

The proletariat as the ruling class: The dictatorship of the proletariat – that is, its class rule – is transitional by its very nature. This is not to say that it inevitably leads to classless communist society: a given proletarian dictatorship may develop into a new form of class rule or relapse into an old one. What is meant by describing it as inherently transitional is that it is a contradiction in terms. The proletariat has no other class to exploit; but how is it then defined as a ruling class after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie?

The working class becomes the ruling class by destruction of the power of the bourgeoisie and construction and defence of a socialist mode of production. However, it continues to occupy a distinct position in the production process; differences between 'town' and 'country' (i.e., between industrial proletariat and peasantry) still exist, as does, most importantly, the division between mental and manual labour; petty-commodity production usually persists alongside socialist production.

The basis of this transitional mode of production, in which the working class remains a distinct ruling class, is the following: although the means of production are in the hands of the collectivity led by the direct producers, and although they are oriented towards

³³ F. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, New York 1967, p. 111; and 'Shop Management' in idem, *Scientific Management*, New York 1947, pp. 98–9. Both quotations are taken from Harry Braverman's excellent book *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, New York 1974.

³⁴ For a Marxist tribute to the mental, managerial labour of the 'hard men in top hats who organized and presided over these vast transformations of the human landscape – material and spiritual', see E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848–75*, London 1975, pp. 56–7.

the creation of use-values for society as a whole, nevertheless the direct producers remain separated from management in a dual relationship of *collective* supremacy and leadership, and *individual* subordination to managerial expertise. The class rule of the proletariat is consequently troubled by a deep-rooted contradiction. The lingering hierarchy of specialization continues to confront the collective supremacy of labour – the directive capacity, solidarity, egalitarianism and organization of a previously (and, in non-socialist countries, still) exploited and downtrodden class. After the overthrow of capitalism, the class struggle concerns fundamentally the efforts of the proletariat to abolish itself as a distinct class, and thus to avoid subjection to a new or old form of class exploitation.

It follows from the peculiar nature of post-capitalist society that the non-proletarian forces need not be bourgeois – need not, that is, be seeking to restore the capitalist mode of production. The enemies of the working class in power are all those forces that oppose its self-abolition as a class.

Dynamics, Temporalities and Contradictions

The dynamic of our analytical model of the state apparatus is provided by the developmental logic of the class struggle and of the various modes of production. The state apparatus feeds back into society a contribution to the regeneration of the class relations that formed it. It does this by reproducing the state-society relationship inscribed within it, and by structuring the way in which the things done by the state are actually performed. With the development of the modes of production and their articulation within the social formation, the relations of size and strength among the different classes undergo change. Both the state apparatus and the class relations that formed it are reproduced or transformed by the interventions of the state – by that state power which is the central focus of the class struggle and its changing relationship of forces.

In the historical development of this social dynamic, a number of temporalities affect the organization of the state. These will have to be examined more closely in a future analysis. Of particular importance are trend and conjunctural temporalities, both of the mode of production and of the concrete social formation.

The principal conjunctural variations of the mode of production are evidently periods of expansion and of stagnation or crisis. As far as trends are concerned, a distinction can be drawn between com-

petitive and monopoly capitalism. In a similar way, a socialist society that is faced with the tasks of industrialization should probably be differentiated from socialism that develops on an already existing industrial foundation; the strength of the working class and its relations with other classes and strata are crucially affected by the level of economic development. In the case of feudalism, there is perhaps another definite distinction between the classical, medieval period and the era of the rise of mercantile capital. Mercantile capital not only coexisted with feudalism within the social formation; it also entered into the reproduction of the feudal mode of exploitation itself, connecting the economic units of the latter with one another.

Particular social formations are part of a wider international system, and are modified by profound changes elsewhere within it. Here we should mention the impact on feudal societies and states of the first bourgeois revolution and of the decisive defeat of subsequent revolutions from below in 1848; the response of capitalist states to the first successful proletarian revolution; and the effect of independent socialist revolutions upon existing socialist societies. The principal conjunctural variations affecting the social formation are war and peace, victory and defeat.

The state-society relationship, the concrete class character of the state apparatus, the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of the individual apparatuses – all these are significantly affected by their location in every dimension of historico-social time. The interrelation of the different temporalities poses special problems. For example, many of the controversies over the notion of state monopoly capitalism would be more fruitful and conclusive if they directly confronted this interrelation. Both supporters and opponents of the theory discuss state monopoly capitalism as the outcome of a trend, representing a new phase in the development of capitalism. But the features emphasized by its proponents – including the ‘fusion’ of state and monopoly capital into a ‘single mechanism’ – seem to have spread most extensively in the advanced capitalist countries during the two world wars – that is to say, as conjunctural phenomena. Clearly, it becomes necessary to consider the continuity and discontinuity of the wartime and post-war periods. The fact that the effects of these temporalities are on the whole disregarded in the exposition that follows further underlines the very general and preliminary nature of this contribution to analysis of the class

character of the state apparatus. We are still only at the beginning of a Marxist study of the state.

The state apparatus is part of a complex social totality in constant process. Uneven development and internal contradiction of its parts form the basis of change within this totality, defining the location and topography of the social battlefield. The structure and modifications of the state apparatus are overdetermined by the relations and forces of production – by their mutual reinforcement or contradiction. The latter affect the entire organization of the state by directly structuring the existence and inter-relations of classes as well as the relationship between state and economy. Moreover, the state personnel is also impregnated with the social phenomena of ideological qualification-subjection. But the state apparatus also manifests a specifically political dialectic, which, like the ideological one, is overdetermined by that of the economic base.

A state apparatus operates simultaneously as an expression of class domination (that is, as a particular form of the class division of labour in society) and as the *execution* of the supreme rule-making, rule-applying, rule-adjudicating, rule-enforcing and rule-defending tasks of society. The two aspects constitute an intrinsic unity: execution of these tasks is class domination, and class political domination is the execution of these tasks. But the forces of execution may also enter into contradiction with the relations of domination in the state apparatus. Thus, both military and administrative developments rendered feudal cavalry and vassalage inadequate; and the late feudal state had to enlist non-noble mercenary armies and functionaries in order to execute the repressive and administrative tasks of feudal domination. The growth of new apparatuses of the bourgeois state – related to social services and state planning – has necessitated forms of organization which conflict with the classical bureaucracy. The socialist state, for its part, has to face the contradiction between collective class domination and non-proletarian, expert execution.

There is, then, a dynamic specific to the state apparatus. The new tasks and problems confronting the state basically derive from the changing social totality in which it operates. But the successful organization of class domination in the state apparatus itself generates new problems of government, administration, judicature and repression – problems which call into question the existing organizational forms of domination. This contradiction between

domination and execution, which may take many, diverse forms, has to be resolved one way or the other, and it thus becomes an internal force for change within the state apparatus. This contradiction is in turn just one aspect of the general political dialectic of domination-execution, which is grounded in the fact that the state is a unification of a fundamentally divided class society. It is invested at one and the same time with the exercise of ruling class domination and the common tasks of society. The essay on state power will discuss these points further.

After these lengthy preliminary remarks, we must now look at the class character of various types of state, and suggest provisional answers to some of the questions that have arisen. Since the present text is a contribution to a debate that has been largely confined to Europe, these answers will refer mainly to the history and contemporary situation of that continent. Further specifications of a similar kind would be needed in order to deal adequately with the states of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

II

(Provisional) Answers

Inputs into the State

Technologies of Organization

The feudal polity was primarily a military institution, equipped for war and armed peace. Initially, its most distinctive technology of rule took the material form of the expensively armoured knight. However, by the fourteenth century, English longbowmen and Swiss pikemen were already rendering the cavalry obsolete.³⁵ What then was the basic technology of the feudal state – the feudal technique of rule?

Feudal class relations were, as we have noted, characterized by a general hierarchy of rights and privileges, the holders of which were bound to one another by ties of personal loyalty. In a society where the vast majority of the population were kept in ignorance of almost everything outside the field of everyday work (except the other worlds of heaven and hell), the higher, aristocratic positions provided self-confidence, a relatively broad outlook, and, as the generations went by, a rounded upbringing and manners capable of ensuring obedience and respect.

This *general noble authority*, held together by hierarchical bonds of *personal loyalty* and classically expressed in a code of honour and fidelity, constituted the fundamental technology of feudal rule. It could function with reasonable efficiency in a social formation which

³⁵ S. Finer, 'State and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military', in C. Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Europe*, Princeton 1975, pp. 103ff. Cf. O. Hintze, 'Wesen und Verbreitung des Feudalismus', *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. 1, *Staat und Verfassung*, Leipzig 1941, pp. 84–5.