

Impossibility of Capitalist Development



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Before anything, we must affirm, once more, the radical difference that exists in our time between the development of capitalist society and its economic growth. During the long epoch of its formation and apogee, they were paired together, although with oscillations. Moreover, by observing closely, not only the modern experience, but also that of previous social forms, from the dawn of the Neolithic period, the dissociation between development and growth appears clear, until it becomes a rupture, and as it continues the economic growth corrodes the acquired social development in proportion to itself. It is not an abrupt cut, which can be traced back to a certain date, but something that is clearly perceptible in the course of a few decades. A society or type of civilization is developing so long as the structural and superstructural factors contained in its original impulse, those that have constituted its reason to be, its historical necessity, its human justification, are being developed and propagated. For a type of civilization — or, suffice to say, a class — has never been formed and elevated to the rank of dominant, except as a positive, even if incomplete, representation of all classes, even those bearing the worst luck. Its system ought to provide for everyone a superior material, cultural, and moral wellbeing, or at least a bit of freedom in comparison with the previous situation. That content is the only thing that may be called social development.

We have seen it with great clarity during the rise of capitalist society. More than any other civilization since the emergence of classes and the State, it has increased the general culture, political freedom, nutritional possibilities, and everything related to the production and reproduction of human life, not to mention all of the positive consequences brought about by those three factors. The greater mastery over nature characteristic of capitalist civilization, even though it was by and for the bourgeoisie mainly, impacted more or less the poor and exploited classes.

The same cannot be said of capitalism today. Its mastery over nature, from physics and chemistry to genetics and psychoanalysis, continues to increase. But, in general, it is no longer just worse for the great mass of poor classes. Such sturdy metals are now being produced which enable space cabins to penetrate the dense layers of the atmosphere, but, from the frying pan to the car, the products offered on the market are of a poor quality which is deliberately calculated to force people to rebuy them soon after; we know how to manufacture fabrics that last more than a lifetime, but the suits or stockings sold for tens or hundreds of millions are made to soon become rags; we know how to produce foods of high quality and purity, but they have become hard to obtain, a dish for potentates; for the great masses, from the simple bread, there are only adulterated products, which when not toxic, are wrapped in plastics that modify their chemical compositions; we know how to select animal species from butcher shops and stables of the greatest supply, but the steak, the chicken, the pig, etc., contain the hormones with which the animals have been artificially primed, while milk is an aquaculture depleted of the substances most indispensable to infant nutrition; we can build living quarters that are more enduring than a cathedral, but the houses or apartments of the common men fall into ruin before they have even finished paying.

As an inseparable complement to the above, radio and television, which are powerful instruments of information and cultural training, deceive and idiotize billions of people in a premeditated fashion and on all continents, always followed on by the daily press; in the centers of technical and university education, the youth is channeled and molded according to state-capitalist projects, while the quality of education deteriorates year after year; psychoanalysis itself serves in factories, vocational orientation, advertising, and policing repugnant operations that degrade the individual and collective mind.

It would prove impossible to enumerate all the aspects in which capitalism (or more precisely, so that the reader does not exclude any country, society based on waged-labor) is perverting daily life, corrupting what it has also created. However, it is necessary to complete the previous brief outline, pointing out two even more serious aspects. The first is the present condition of the working class, the slave of work and lack of sleep, without time to itself in this era of automation, without any freedom in the factory, regularly disciplined and monitored by the trio of capital, labor unions, and State, which additionally subject it to piece-work, the most vile form of exploitation; obliged, in order to avoid misery, to subject to the dust-storm of that same exploitation the wife as well as the husband; deprived of its skill by intermittent work; always at the mercy of state planning; increasingly dispossessed in relation to what it produces and to the total amount of wealth usurped by capital. The instruments of labor and its products have never been so alien and oppressing. The very cars in which many workers travel only strengthen the bonds that imprison them, which have turned the whole of society into a concentration camp plundered daily by those responsible for organizing it through trade and taxation.

The second and most decisive of the two aspects mentioned is political totalitarianism, simultaneously police-based and militaristic, which has been invading the entire world, including the countries wherein bourgeois democracy endures, worm-eaten. On its own, the increasingly overwhelming weight of armies, production for war, and police, represents a major degenerative factor in modern-day civilization. It is not just a matter of the waste to absolute losses that their existence entails, much larger than the official budgets, which are already enormous; nor of the wasteful, parasitic, harmful, or criminal work entrusted to tens of millions of people; worst of all is the role of war industries, military and police activities, regardless of blocs or political regimes. In effect, if the industrialization induced by capitalism had never been for consumption, but rather through the sale of goods and the enrichment of the bourgeoisie, with the enormous volume of war production – without forgetting the production of waste – it would become an industrialization for industrialization's sake, whose relationship with necessary consumption is increasingly tenuous and false. For their part, the police and the armies are the incarnation of the power for power's sake of an anonymous capital, surpassed by technology and the needs of mankind, that survives to itself as a form of social organization. In ancient Egypt, there came

a time when the cult of death consumed more than half of the work of the population. In modern-day capitalism, it is not a matter of cults, but of an industrial and physical practice of death that is approaching the same balance and which is already capable of killing in a few minutes the entirety of the human species.

How do we explain these facts and such a situation, being thus that the production of wealth is increasing and has seen an important acceleration in recent decades?

Save for any unknown exception, all the reputed Marxist or anarchist tendencies, the “councilists” included, have been unable to overcome that stumbling block.

In their conception, which is a bastardized form of vulgar materialism, the growth of production and development are inseparable. It is strictly forbidden to speak of the decadence of the present civilization so long as the sum of gross national products does not inevitably decline, apart from any temporary crisis, nor capitalization become a systematic and generalized decapitalization. They do not realize that before this ever happened, the present social destructiveness of capitalism would have to continue for fifty, a hundred years, two centuries, it is impossible to know, and that then the social revolution would be a thousand times more difficult or even impossible. Indeed, these tendencies are self-deprecating, they deny their own revolutionary volitions implicitly from the moment they adopt as an economic criterion of positivity that which is characteristic of capitalism: the expanded reproduction of capital.

It's true, Marx has said nothing conclusive about it, much less Bakunin. Therefore, whatever we or others say will be looked at with disdain by those who are confined to more or less erudite exercises of materialist theology. This is one of the forms of religious thought we must combat within the revolutionary ranks. I say thus that the expanded reproduction of capital becomes grotesque, harmful to society and to humanity without distinction, stemming from a certain correlation between it and Man.

I do not allude to the toxicity created by industrial and automobile pollution, nor to the agricultural toxicity of insecticides, chemical fertilizers, and animal fattening, as capitalism itself will be forced to limit them, since it will not suppress them. Neither do I mean the supposed disproportion between the number of inhabitants in our planet and its resources in consumable products and raw materials, a new heavenly curse that threatens us with a revival of Malthusianism. Soil fertility is far from being well-used in quantity and quality, while the subsoil has barely begun to be utilized. At the same time, the plethora of population of a social system is not only measured by nature, but by the dialectical interaction between it and

that other natural force endowed with subjectivity, which is Man. And since the form of association between men themselves constitutes a very important part of this interaction, it is not at all unrealistic to contemplate, in a society without classes, an absolute abundance founded on its dominion, the key to the greatest mastery over nature. The transmutation of matter from hydrogen or any other element, entirely scientific farming and herding, which presuppose the end of commerce as a medium, will open up unsuspected horizons.

Having made these qualifications, the reader will be able to understand unequivocally that the toxic relationship between the expanded reproduction of capital and society does not come from an external cause, nor from any fatalism, but from something which is intrinsic to it today. To put it as briefly as possible, it comes precisely from the level reached by capitalist accumulation, an excessive concentration of instruments of labor in the hands of the State or a few international companies, which is dislocating and degrading – when it is not corrupting – the material and spiritual conditions of life for men. In its earlier stage, the accumulation of capital by the bourgeoisie implied a numerical, technical, and cultural development of the proletariat and of the population in general, which in itself allowed for greater freedom for individuals, independently of bourgeois democracy, and likewise of free competition between private capitalists. The process, the relationship between the type of civilization and society, has been reversed. From the great international trusts and the state, who is both industrialist and banker, what is imperative to the same demands of accumulation, which is now planned, is to lower the technical and cultural level of the proletariat, to model its mind in consonance with the accelerated circulation of rubbish commodities, baptized the “society of abundance”, cracking down on freedom at work and outside of it, to create a type of man and woman without personality, normalized, bland, and manageable, at the whim of economic, political, and trade-union leaders, all interchangeable categories. Undeniable fact: the working class is today much more dominated by the owners of capital than fifty years ago. Even its numerical growth, subject to discussion, is counterbalanced by an enormous extension of work that is useless or otherwise harmful to society. In the previous period, an important feature to note, the capitalists responded to wage gains that reduced surplus-value through technological introductions that increased the quantity, quality, and cheapness of products. Today wage increases are usually associated with a much greater progression of surplus-value, always with a calculated limitation on the quality of products and uninterrupted price increases. Technology is therefore used in contradiction with and to the detriment of the majority.

Its use in depth, in accordance with the material and moral conveniences of the human whole, has become impossible in the form of capital. It requires, in effect, that technical knowledge and culture in all its aspects stop being exclusive to a minority and become accessible to all. And this, in turn, requires a very significant reduction in the work-hours per person, the abolition of superfluous work, the operation of the instruments of production according to a distribution of use-values, not exchange-values or commodities. In summation, it is necessary to suppress the expanded reproduction of capital, the waged-labor which is its precondition,

and whatever social relations they have engendered, in short, all that has been capitalist civilization.

Hence, the distinction between the development and growth of capitalism is now a notion of primordial importance, pregnant with content. Without it, any project of revolutionary struggle is suspended in a vacuum, while the immediate possibilities of education and subversive intervention of the proletariat or of any other social stratum are squandered. On the other hand, industrial growth is idealized as a factor of stabilization and, what is even worse, the crisis of overproduction is mythologized, conferring on it the magical and exclusive power of pushing the proletariat to revolution.

Cyclical crises of overproduction have accompanied the entire period of development of capitalism. They represented a failure of its functioning whose repair gave it greater flight. But the system has learned to bypass them. What one might call a disruption remains in a lower percentage of growth. But even if there were an economic misalignment as intense as or worse than 1929, a revolutionary situation would not appear as a forced consequence – it must be reiterated – nor would capitalism lose the possibility of resuming its growth.

The dialectic of historical development does not put the social revolution on the agenda because balances of payment and investments are out of order, nor because unsold goods pile up in enormous quantities and throw millions upon millions of workers into unemployment. On the contrary, such a situation would threaten us with serious reactionary consequences. The last and most intense of these crises established Hitler, consolidated Stalin, liquidated what was left of the world revolutionary movement, and unleashed the war.

No, no; what creates the possibility and need for communist revolution is much deeper than that, it is essential, not accidental. It resides in the very functioning of capitalist civilization, whatever the state of its affairs. It is not a question of any particular aspect of the system, but of all of it, structures and superstructures, the economic, the political, the cultural in its many facets, the customs and relations between men, which are their own. All this has become a restrictive, inadequate obstacle to individual and collective flourishing. Unemployment is one of the consequences of capitalism, yet it is not what generates the need for revolution, but rather the conditions of labor, consumption, and life imposed upon the world proletariat, waged-labor, whatever the wage. Likewise, the aforementioned crisis of overproduction is or has been a bump in the path of industrial development, but it is not its appearance, but rather the persistence of capitalist industrialism which calls forth the suppression of the system, since the instruments of production have more than acquired the capacity to free themselves from their mercantile frugality. And so on.

In summation: the salaried form of labor is in absolute contradiction with the capacity of the instruments of labor. The separation between one and the other has become unnecessary, and is therefore destructive, whatever the rates of growth may be.

There is the synthesis of the enormous difference between the mechanistic and sometimes pedantic economism of so many revolutionary groups and the dialectical conception of historical becoming. Materialism serves them to convert man into a mere object, not to say a toy, of the ups and downs of the capitalist economy; the latter discovers in the process of capitalist growth itself the material factors of subversion against it, and among them gives precedence, the decisive role, to the proletariat, to Man, for being the conscious material factor.

As for the rest, the industrial growth of underdeveloped countries, like Spain, will always be subordinate to that of the leading countries, and in Spain, as in the latter, it must be the proletariat who cuts off growth in order to enter into the communist possession of human life.

To top it all, in such countries, industrial growth is first and foremost a growth in American, German, English, Russian, and Chinese capital in some cases. The same applies then. The proletariat has no country, and neither will the instruments of production once expropriated and at its service.

G. Munis, September 1972

These are our organisational points of unity, to which every member and sympathiser must adhere:

1. We denounce capitalism, whatever its apparent form of government, as a social system based on the exploitation of the modern working class (proletariat) and the destruction of the environment.
2. We denounce the self-proclaimed “socialist” countries; they are state-capitalist countries in which the state assumes the role of private capitalist.
3. We support communism—a global society without states, borders, classes, or markets—as the only way to save humanity from extinction under capitalist barbarism.
4. We reject all interclassist struggles and ideologies—e.g., nationalism, feminism, environmentalism—as alien to the proletariat and contrary to its interests as a universal class, whose struggle carries within itself the potential for the liberation of the entire human species.
5. We denounce unions and parliamentary elections as instruments of economic exploitation and political submission of the proletariat to the capitalist system.
6. We affirm, in this moment, the total decay of the capitalist system in all its incarnations—its inability to continue contributing positively to general social development—and the immediate need for a world proletarian revolution to overthrow it.
7. We advocate the establishment of a class political organisation, also global, to act as a compass in the class war, always pointing the path forward to freedom.
8. We agitate for the self-organisation of the working class and the formation by it of its own organisations of struggle as the only basis of its social power and instrument of its emancipation.

**If these positions seem agreeable to you, or you would like clarification about them and/or our perspective, then contact us directly at:
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