SELECTIONS FROM THE
PRISON NOTEBOOKS
OF
ANTONIO GRAMSCI

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without a systematic attempt to discover and study the causes which govern the nature of the class represented and the way in which it has developed. Hence, scarcity of State and government personnel; squalor of parliamentary life; ease with which the parties can be disintegrated, by corruption and absorption of the few individuals who are indispensable. Hence, squalor of cultural life and wretched inadequacy of high culture. Instead of political history, bloodless erudition; instead of religion, superstition; instead of books and great reviews, daily papers and broadsheets; instead of serious politics, ephemeral quarrels and personal clashes. The universities, and all the institutions which develop intellectual and technical abilities, since they were not permeated by the life of the parties, by the living realities of national life, produced apolitical national cadres, with a purely rhetorical and non-national mental formation. Thus the bureaucracy became estranged from the country, and via its administrative positions became a true political party, the worst of all, because the bureaucratic hierarchy replaced the intellectual and political hierarchy. The bureaucracy became precisely the State/Bonapartist party. [1930]

THE "PHILOSOPHY OF THE EPOCH"

The discussion on force and consent has shown that political science is relatively advanced in Italy, and is treated with a certain frankness of expression—even by individuals holding responsible positions in the State. The discussion in question is the debate about the "philosophy of the epoch", about the central theme in the lives of the various states in the post-war period. How to reconstruct the hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group, an apparatus which disintegrated as a result of the war, in every state throughout the world? Moreover, why did this apparatus disintegrate? Perhaps because a strong antagonistic collective political will developed? If this were the case, the question would have been resolved in favour of such an antagonist. In reality, it disintegrated under the impact of purely mechanical causes, of various kinds: 1. because great masses, previously passive, entered into movement—but into a chaotic and disorganised movement, without leadership, i.e. without any precise collective political will; 2. because the middle classes, who during the war held positions of command and responsibility, when peace came were deprived of these and left unemployed—precisely after having learned how to command, etc.; 3. because the antagonistic forces proved to be incapable of organising this situation of disorder to their own advantage. The problem was to reconstruct a hegemonic apparatus for these formerly passive and apolitical elements. It was impossible to achieve this without the use of force—which could not be "legal" force, etc. Since the complex of social relations was different in each state, the political methods of using force and the ways in which legal and illegal forces were combined had to be equally diverse. The greater the mass of the apolitical, the greater the part played by illegal forces has to be. The greater the politically organised and educated forces, the more it is necessary to "cover" the legal State, etc. [1930–32]

POLITICAL STRUGGLE AND MILITARY WAR

In military war, when the strategic aim—destruction of the enemy's army and occupation of his territory—is achieved, peace comes. It should also be observed that for war to come to an end, it is enough that the strategic aim should simply be achieved potentially: it is enough in other words that there should be no doubt that an army is no longer able to fight, and that the victorious army "could" occupy the enemy's territory. Political struggle is enormously more complex: in a certain sense, it can be compared to colonial wars or to old wars of conquest—in which the victorious army occupies, or proposes to occupy, permanently all or a part of the conquered territory. Then the defeated army is disarmed and dispersed, but the struggle continues on the terrain of politics and of military "preparation".

Thus India's political struggle against the English (and to a certain extent that of Germany against France, or of Hungary against the Little Entente) knows three forms of war: war of movement, war of position, and underground warfare. Gandhi's passive resistance is a war of position, which at certain moments becomes a war of movement, and at others underground warfare. Boycotts are a form of war of position, strikes of war of movement, the secret preparation of weapons and combat troops belongs to

* See the books which after 1919 criticised a "similar" state of affairs (but far richer in terms of the life of "civil society") in the Kaiser's Germany, for example Max Weber's book *Parliament and Government in the German New Order: a Political Critique of Bureaucracy and Party Life. Text translated and preface by Enrico Ruts*, pp. xi, 200—the translation is very imperfect and imprecise.

** I.e. antagonistic to the existing capitalist and bourgeois order.
underground warfare. A kind of commando tactics is also to be found, but it can only be utilised with great circumspection. If the English believed that a great insurrectional movement was being prepared, destined to annihilate their present strategic superiority (which consists, in a certain sense, in their ability to manoeuvre through control of the internal lines of communication, and to concentrate their forces at the "sporadically" most dangerous spot) by mass suffocation—i.e. by compelling them to spread out their forces over a theatre of war which had simultaneously become generalised—then it would suit them to provoke a premature outbreak of the Indian fighting forces, in order to identify them and decapitate the general movement. Similarly it would suit France if the German Nationalist Right were to be involved in an adventurer coup d’état; for this would oblige the suspected illegal military organisation to show itself prematurely, and so permit an intervention which from the French point of view would be timely. It is thus evident that in these forms of mixed struggle—fundamentally of a military character, but mainly fought on the political plane (though in fact every political struggle always has a military substratum)—the use of commando squads requires an original tactical development, for which the experience of war can only provide a stimulus, and not a model.

The question of the Balkan komitadji requires separate treatment.

14 "Arbitrarily." During the First World War, the "orditi" were volunteer commando squads in the Italian army. The term was adopted by d'Annunzio for his nationalist volunteer "legions", and was also used by the "orditi del popolo", formed to combat the fascists squads in the summer of 1921. This latter organisation emerged outside the left parties, but the mass of its local leaders and members were communist or socialist. The PSI (who signed a "conciliation pact" with the fascists at this time) condemned the organisation; they advocated a policy of non-resistance. The PCI also condemned the organisation, for sectarian reasons, preferring to concentrate on its own, purely communist, defence squads. Gramsci had written and published articles welcoming the organisation before the official condemnation, and even afterwards did so obliquely, by criticising the PSI's attitude. However, as his comments later in this note indicate, he did not feel that working-class "orditi" could in fact hope to stand up to the fascist squads, who enjoyed the connivance of the State. It was only mass as opposed to voluntary action which could provide a viable response.

In the late nineteenth century, Turkey still occupied large parts of the Balkans—what are now Albania, Northern Greece, Southern Yugoslavia and Southern Bulgaria—including the whole of the area traditionally known as Macedonia (now divided between Yugoslavia, Greece and to a lesser extent Bulgaria). In 1885 a revolutionary Macedonian committee was set up in Sophia by the Macedonian nationalists Delcev and Guvev, and this committee began to send armed bands (komitadji) across the border into Turkish territory. Their aim—strongly opposed by the Young Turks—was at least some measure of Macedonian autonomy. All the surrounding countries—Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece—formed their own armed bands (leiti) in the years that followed (as did the Vlachs), to protect their own interests in the area. These bands fought each other at the same time as they fought the Turks.

15 Presumably a reference to the X勤劳 bands, who rose against British rule unsuccessfully in 1867 and continued sporadic activity during the latter years of the century.
position. True, i.e. modern, commandos belong to the war of position, in its 1914–18 form. The war of movement and siege warfare of the preceding periods also had their commandos, in a certain sense. The light and heavy cavalry, crack rifle corps, etc.—and indeed mobile forces in general—partly functioned as commandos. Similarly the art of organising patrols contained the germ of modern commandos. This germ was contained in siege warfare more than in the war of movement: more extensive use of patrols, and particularly the art of organising sudden sorties and surprise attacks with picked men.

Another point to be kept in mind is that in political struggle one should not ape the methods of the ruling classes, or one will fall into easy ambuscades. In the current struggles this phenomenon often occurs. A weakened State structure is like a flagging army; the commandos—i.e. the private armed organisations—enter the field, and they have two tasks: to make use of illegal means, while the State appears to remain within legality, and thus to reorganise the State itself. It is stupid to believe that when one is confronted by illegal private action one can counterpose to it another similar action—in other words, combat commando tactics by means of commando tactics. It means believing that the State remains perpetually inert, which is never the case—quite apart from all the other conditions which differ. The class factor leads to a fundamental difference: a class which has to work fixed hours every day cannot have permanent and specialised assault organisations—as can a class which has ample financial resources and all of whose members are not tied down by fixed work. At any hour of day or night, these by now professional organisations are able to strike decisive blows, and strike them unawares. Commando tactics cannot therefore have the same importance for some classes as for others. For certain classes a war of movement and manoeuvre is necessary—because it is the form of war which belongs to them; and this, in the case of political struggle, may include a valuable and perhaps indispensable use of commando tactics. But to fix one's mind on the military model is the mark of a fool: politics, here too, must have priority over its military aspect, and only politics creates the possibility for manoeuvre and movement.

From all that has been said it follows that in the phenomenon of military commandos, it is necessary to distinguish between the technical function of commandos as a special force linked to the modern war of position, and their politico-military function. As a special force commandos were used by all armies in the World War. But they have only had a politico-military function in those countries which are politically enfeebled and non-homogeneous, and which are therefore represented by a not very combative national army, and a bureaucratised General Staff, grown rusty in the service. [1929–30]

On the subject of parallels between on the one hand the concepts of war of maneuver and war of position in military science, and on the other the corresponding concepts in political science, Rosa [Luxemburg]'s little book, translated (from French) into Italian in 1919 by C. Alessandri, should be recalled. In this book, Rosa—a little hastily, and rather superficially, theorised the historical experiences of 1905. She in fact disregarded the “voluntary” and organisational elements which were far more extensive and important in those events than—thanks to a certain “economic” and spontaneous prejudice—she tended to believe. All the same, this little book (like others of the same author's essays) is one of the most significant documents theorizing the war of manoeuvre in relation to political science. The immediate economic element (crises, etc.) is seen as the field artillery which in war opens a breach in the enemy's defences—a breach sufficient for one's own troops to rush in and obtain a definitive (strategic) victory, or at least an important victory in the context of the strategic line. Naturally the effects of immediate economic factors in historical science are held to be far more complex than the effects of heavy artillery in a war of manoeuvre, since they are conceived of as having a double effect: 1. they breach the enemy's defences, after throwing him into disarray and causing him to lose faith in himself, his forces, and his future; 2. in a flash they organise one's own troops and create the necessary cadres—or at least in a flash they put the existing cadres (formed, until that moment, by the general historical process) in positions which enable them to encadre one's scattered forces; 3. in a flash they bring about the necessary ideological concentration on the common objective to be achieved. This view was a form of iron economic determinism, with the aggravating factor that it was conceived of as operating with lightning speed in time and in space. It was thus out and out historical mysticism, the awaiting of a sort of miraculous illumination.

**“Bersaglieri”—an élite corps of the Italian army, founded by Lamarmora in 1836.**

**Rosa Luxemburg: The General Strike—the party and the unions. The Italian edition was published by Società Editrice "Assault" in Milan, 1919.**
General Krasnov asserted (in his novel) that the Entente did not wish for the victory of Imperial Russia (for fear that the Eastern Question would be definitively resolved in favour of Tsarism) and therefore obliged the Russian General Staff to adopt trench warfare (absurd, in view of the enormous length of the Front from the Baltic to the Black Sea, with vast marshy and forest zones whereas the only possible strategy was a war of manoeuvre. The assertion is merely silly. In actual fact, the Russian Army undertook a war of manoeuvre and sudden incursion, especially in the Austrian sector (but also in East Prussia), and won successes which were as brilliant as they were ephemeral. The truth is that one cannot choose the form of war one wants, unless from the start one has a crushing superiority over the enemy. It is well known what losses were caused by the stubborn refusal of the General Staffs to recognize that a war of position was “imposed” by the overall relation of the forces in conflict. A war of position is not, in reality, constituted simply by the actual trenches, but by the whole organizational and industrial system of the territory which lies to the rear of the army in the field. It is imposed notably by the rapid fire-power of cannons, machine-guns and rifles, by the armed strength which can be concentrated at a particular spot, as well as by the abundance of supplies which make possible the swift replacement of material lost after an enemy breakthrough or a retreat. A further factor is the great mass of men under arms; they are of very unequal calibre, and are precisely only able to operate as a mass force. It can be seen how on the Eastern Front it was one thing to make an incursion in the Austrian Sector, and quite another in the German Sector; and how even in the Austrian Sector, reinforced by picked German troops and commanded by Germans, incursion tactics ended in disaster. The same thing occurred in the Polish campaign of 1920; the seemingly irresistible advance was halted before Warsaw by General Weygand, on the line commanded by French officers. Even those military experts whose minds are now fixed on the war of position, just as they were previously on that of manoeuvre, naturally do not maintain that the latter should be considered as expunged from military science. They merely maintain that, in wars among the more industrially and socially advanced States, the war of manoeuvre must be considered as reduced to more of a tactical than a strategic function; that it must be considered as occupying the same position as siege warfare used to occupy previously in relation to it.

The same reduction must take place in the art and science of politics, at least in the case of the most advanced States, where “civil society” has become a very complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic “incursions” of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.). The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare. In war it would sometimes happen that a fierce artillery attack seemed to have destroyed the enemy’s entire defensive system, whereas in fact it had only destroyed the outer perimeter; and at the moment of their advance and attack the assailants would find themselves confronted by a line of defence which was still effective. The same thing happens in politics, during the great economic crises. A crisis cannot give the attacking forces the ability to organize with lightning speed in time and in space; still less can it endow them with fighting spirit. Similarly, the defenders are not demoralized, nor do they abandon their positions, even among the ruins, nor do they lose faith in their own strength or their own future. Of course, things do not remain exactly as they were; but it is certain that one will not find the element of speed, of accelerated time, of the definitive forward march expected by the strategists of political Cadornism.

The last occurrence of the kind in the history of politics was the events of 1917. They marked a decisive turning-point in the history of the art and science of politics. Hence it is a question of studying “in depth” which elements of civil society correspond to the defensive systems in a war of position. The use of the phrase “in depth” is intentional, because 1917 has been studied—but only either from superficial and banal viewpoints, as when certain social historians study the vagaries of women’s fashions, or from a “rationalistic” viewpoint—in other words, with the conviction that certain phenomena are destroyed as soon as they are “realistically” explained, as if they were popular superstitions (which anyway are not destroyed either merely by being explained).

The question of the meagre success achieved by new tendencies...
in the trade-union movement should be related to this series of problems. One attempt to begin a revision of the current tactical methods was perhaps that outlined by L. Dav. Br. [Trotsky] at the fourth meeting, when he made a comparison between the Eastern and Western fronts. The former had fallen at once, but unprecedented struggles had then ensued; in the case of the latter, the struggles would take place "beforehand". The question, therefore, was whether civil society resists before or after the attempt to seize power; where the latter takes place, etc. However, the question was outlined only in a brilliant, literary form, without directives of a practical character. [1933-34: 1st version 1930-32.]

It should be seen whether Trotsky's famous theory about the permanent character of the movement is not the political reflection of the theory of war of manoeuvre (recall the observation of the cosack general Krasnov)—i.e., in the last analysis, a reflection of the general-economic-cultural-social conditions in a country in which the structures of national life are embryonic and loose, and incapable of becoming "trench or fortress". In this case one might

18 This is presumably a reference to the failure of communists in Italy between 1921 and 1926 to win more than a minority position within the trade-union movement, despite the betrayals of the CGIL's reformist leaders.

19 The "Fourth meeting" is the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern, at which Gramsci was present. Trotsky gave the report on NEP, in the course of which he said: "... it will hardly be possible to catch the European bourgeoisie by surprise as we caught the Russian bourgeoisie. The European bourgeoisie is more intelligent, and more fastidious; it is not wasting time. Everything that can be set on foot against us is being mobilized by it right now. The revolutionary proletariat will thus encounter on its road to power not only the combat vanguards of the counter-revolution but also its heaviest reserves. Only by smashing, breaking up and demoralizing these enemy forces will the proletariat be able to seize state power. By way of compensation, after the proletarian overturn, the vanquished bourgeoisie will no longer dispose of powerful reserves from which it could draw forces for prolonging the civil war. In other words, after the conquest of power, the European proletariat will in all likelihood have far more elbow room for its creative work in economy and culture than we had in Russia on the day after the victory. The more difficult and galling the struggle for state power, the less possible will it be to challenge the proletariat's victory after the victory." Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Vol. II, pp. 221-22, New York 1953.

20 i.e., Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. Paradoxically, in view of Gramsci's analogy here, in the military debate of 1920-21 Trotsky was the main opponent of war of manoeuvre, or the tactic of the revolutionary offensive, which was put forward by those civil war generals who supported the idea of a "proletarian military science"—Frunze, Budenny, and also Tukhachevsky. Moreover, he also delivered the main attack at the Third Comintern Congress on the "theory of the offensive" in the political sphere; its main supporters were the PCI (see General Introduction), the Left in the German party, and Italian Communist. It should also perhaps be noted that the reference to Foch's unified command being a possible military equivalent of the "United Front" in politics was hardly a happy analogy, since Foch in fact had leanings towards Napoleonic offensive tactics.

say that Bronstein, apparently "Western", was in fact a cosmopolitan—i.e., superficially national and superficially Western or European. Ilitch [Lenin] on the other hand was profoundly national and profoundly European.

Bronstein in his memoirs recalls being told that his theory had been proved true... fifteen years later, and replying to the epigram with another epigram. In reality his theory, as such, was good neither fifteen years earlier nor fifteen years later. As happens to the obstinate, of whom Guicciardini speaks, he guessed more or less correctly; that is to say, he was right in his more general practical prediction. It is as if one was to prophesy that a little four-year-old girl would become a mother, and when at twenty she did so one said: "I guessed that she would"—overlooking the fact, however, that when she was forty one old one tried to rape the girl, in the belief that she would become a mother even then. It seems to me that Ilitch understood that a change was necessary from the war of manoeuvre applied victoriously in the East in 1917, to a war of position which was the only form possible in the West—where, as Krasnov observes, armies could rapidly accumulate endless quantities of munitions, and where the social structures were of themselves still capable of becoming heavily-armed fortifications. This is what the formula of the "United Front" seems to me to

21 In *My Life*, pp. 157-58, Trotsky wrote: "Writing afterward in the inexact and slovenly manner which is peculiar to him, Lunacharsky described my revolutionary concept as follows: Comrade Trotsky held in 1905 that the two revolutions (the bourgeois and socialist), although they do not coincide, are bound to each other in such a way that they make a permanent revolution. After they have occurred upon the revolutionary period through a bourgeois political revolution, the Russian section of the world, along with the rest, will not be able to escape from this period until the Socialist Revolution has been completed. It cannot be denied that in formulating this view Comrade Trotsky showed great insight and vision, albeit he erred in the extent of fifteen years." The remark about my error of fifteen years does not become any more profound through its later reversion by Raidek. All our estimates and slogans of 1905 were based on the assumptions of a victorious revolution, and not of a defeat. We achieved then neither a republic nor a transfer of land, nor even an eight-hour day. Does it mean that we erred in putting these demands forward? The defeat of the revolution blancket all prospects—not merely those which I had been expounding. The question was not of the defeat of revolution but of the analysis of its inner forces and of foreseeing its progress as a whole."

22 See *Ricordi*, Series II, No. 1: "He who therefore has faith becomes obstinate in what he believes and goes on his way impetuous and resolute, scorning difficulties and dangers... Wherever it comes to pass that, since worldly affairs are subjected to a thousand hazards and accidents, in the course of time there are many ways in which unhelped for help may come to whoever has persevered in his obstinacy...".

23 For the united front policy, launched by the Comintern Executive in December 1921, see General Introduction.
mean, and it corresponds to the conception of a single front for the
Entente under the sole command of Foch.

Illich, however, did not have time to expand his formula—though
it should be borne in mind that he could only have expanded it
theoretically, whereas the fundamental task was a national one;
that is to say it required a reconnaissance of the terrain and identifi-
cation of the elements of trench and fortress represented by the
elements of civil society, etc. In Russia the State was everything,
civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was
a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the
State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once
revealed. The State was not an outer ditch, behind which there
stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less
numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying—but
this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each indi-
vidual country.

Bronstein's theory can be compared to that of certain French
syndicalists on the General Strike, and to Rosa [Luxemburg]'s
theory in the work translated by Alessandri. Rosa's book and
theories anyway influenced the French syndicalists, as is clear from
some of Rosser's articles on Germany in Vie Ouvrière (first series
in pamphlet form). It partly depends too on the theory of
spontaneity. [1930–32]

THE TRANSITION FROM THE WAR OF MANOEUVRE (FRONTAL ATTACK)
TO THE WAR OF POSITION—IN THE POLITICAL FIELD AS WELL

This seems to me to be the most important question of political
theory that the post-war period has posed, and the most difficult
to solve correctly. It is related to the problems raised by Bronstein
[Trotsky], who in one way or another can be considered the
political theorist of frontal attack in a period in which it only
leads to defeats. This transition in political science is only indirectly
(mediately) related to that which took place in the military field,
although certainly a relation exists and an essential one. The war
of position demands enormous sacrifices by infinite masses of people.
So an unprecedented concentration of hegemony is necessary, and
hence a more "interventionist" government, which will take the

As Alfred Rosser was a revolutionary syndicalist during the First World War,
and edited La Vie Ouvrière together with Pierre Monatte. They were both among
the first leaders of the PCF, and Rosser was editor of Humanité from 1923 to
1924. He was expelled in 1930 for supporting the Joint Opposition in the Russian
Party.

offensive more openly against the oppositionists and organise per-
manently the "impossibility" of internal disintegration—with con-
trols of every kind, political, administrative, etc., reinforcement of
the hegemonic "positions" of the dominant group, etc. All this
indicates that we have entered a culminating phase in the political-
historical situation, since in politics the "war of position", once
won, is decisive definitively. In politics, in other words, the war of
manoeuvre subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions
which are not decisive, so that all the resources of the State's
hegemony cannot be mobilised. But when, for one reason or another,
these positions have lost their value and only the decisive positions
are at stake, then one passes over to siege warfare; this is con-
centrated, difficult, and requires exceptional qualities of patience
and inventiveness. In politics, the siege is a reciprocal one, despite
all appearances, and the mere fact that the ruler has to muster all
his resources demonstrates how seriously he takes his adversary.

[1930–32]

"A resistance too long prolonged in a besieged camp is
demoralising in itself. It implies suffering, fatigue, loss of rest, illness
and the continual presence not of the acute danger which tempers
but of the chronic danger which destroys." Karl Marx: Eastern
Question. 14 September 1855.

POLITICS AND MILITARY SCIENCE

Tactic of great masses, and immediate tactic of small groups.
Belongs to the discussion about war of position and war of move-
ment, in so far as this is reflected in the psychology both of great
leaders (strategists) and of their subordinates. It is also (if one can
put it like that) the point of connection between strategy and
tactics, both in politics and in military science. Individuals (even
as components of vast masses) tend to conceive war instinctively
as "partisan warfare" or "Garibaldine warfare" (which is a higher
form of "partisan warfare"). In politics the error occurs as a result
of an inaccurate understanding of what the State (in its integral
meaning: dictatorship + hegemony) really is. In war a similar
error occurs, transferred to the enemy camp (failure to understand
not only one's own State but that of the enemy as well). In both
cases, the error is related to individual particularism—of town or
region; this leads to an underestimation of the adversary and his
fighting organisation. [1930–32]
INTERNATIONALISM AND NATIONAL POLICY

A work (in the form of questions and answers) by Joseph Vis-sarionovitch [Stalin] dating from September 1927: it deals with certain key problems of the science and art of politics. The problem which seems to me to need further elaboration is the following: how, according to the philosophy of praxis (as it manifests itself politically)—whether as formulated by its founder [Marx] or particularly as restated by its most recent great theoretician [Lenin]—the international situation should be considered in its national aspect. In reality, the internal relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is "original" and (in a certain sense) unique: these relations must be understood and conceived in their originality and uniqueness if one wishes to dominate them and direct them. To be sure, the line of development is towards internationalism, but the point of departure is "national"—and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise. Consequently, it is necessary to study accurately the combination of national forces which the international class [the proletariat] will have to lead and develop, in accordance with the international perspective and directives [i.e., those of the Comintern]. The leading class is in fact only such if it accurately interprets this combination—of which it is itself a component and precisely as such is able to give the movement a certain direction, within certain perspectives. It is on this point, in my opinion, that the fundamental disagreement between Leo Davidovitch [Trotsky] and Vissarionovitch [Stalin] as interpreter of the majority movement [Bolshevism] really hinges. The accusations of nationalism are inept if they refer to the nucleus of

the question. If one studies the majoritarians' [Bolsheviks'] struggle from 1905 up to 1917, one can see that its originality consisted in purging internationalism of every vague and purely ideological (in a peremptory sense) element, to give it a realistic political content. It is in the concept of hegemony that those exigencies which are national in character are knotted together; one can well understand how certain tendencies either do not mention such a concept, or merely skim over it. A class that is international in character has—in as much as it guides social strata which are narrowly national (intellectuals), and indeed frequently even less than national: particularistic and municipalistic (the peasants) to "nationalise" itself in a certain sense. Moreover, this sense is not a very narrow one either, since before the conditions can be created for an economy that follows a world plan, it is necessary to pass through multiple phases in which the regional combinations (of groups of nations) may be of various kinds. Furthermore, it must never be forgotten that historical development follows the laws of necessity until the initiative has decisively passed over to those forces which tend towards construction in accordance with a plan of peaceful and solidary division of labour [i.e., to the socialist forces]. That non-national concepts (i.e., ones that cannot be referred to each individual country) are erroneous can be seen ab aburdo; they have led to passivity and inertia in two quite distinct phases: 1, in the first phase, nobody believed that they ought to make a start—that is to say, they believed that by making a start they would find themselves isolated; they waited for everybody to move together, and nobody in the meantime moved or organised the movement; 2, the second phase is perhaps worse, because what is being awaited is an anachronistic and anti-natural form of "Napoleonicism" (since not all historical phases repeat themselves in the same form). The theoretical weaknesses of this modern form of the old mechanism are masked by the general theory of permanent revolution, which is nothing but a generic forecast presented as a dogma, and which demeblishes itself by not in fact coming true. [1933]
Problem of the "Collective Man" or of "Social Conformism" 44

Educative and formative role of the State. Its aim is always that of creating new and higher types of civilisation; of adapting the "civilisation" and the morality of the broadest popular masses to the necessities of the continuous development of the economic apparatus of production; hence of evolving even physically new types of humanity. But how will each single individual succeed in incorporating himself into the collective man, and how will educative pressure be applied to single individuals so as to obtain their consent and their collaboration, turning necessity and coercion into "freedom"? Question of the "Law": this concept will have to be extended to include those activities which are at present classified as "legally neutral", and which belong to the domain of civil society; the latter operates without "sanctions" or compulsory "obligations", but nevertheless exerts a collective pressure and obtains objective results in the form of an evolution of customs, ways of thinking and acting, morality, etc.

Political concept of the so-called "Permanent Revolution", which emerged before 1848 as a scientifically evolved expression of the

44 See too NM. pp. 150–51: "Tendency to conformism in the contemporary world, more widespread and deeper than in the past: the standardisation of thought and action assumes national or even continental proportions. The economic basis of the 'collective man': big factories, Taylorisation, rationalisation, etc. On social 'conformism', it should be stressed that the problem is not a new one, and that the alarm expressed by certain intellectuals is merely comic. Conformism has always existed, what is involved today is a struggle between 'two conformisms', i.e. a struggle for hegemony, a crisis of civil society. The old intellectual and moral leaders of society feel the ground slipping from under their feet; they perceive that their 'sermons' have become merely 'sermons', i.e. external to reality, pure form without any content, shades without a spirit. This is the reason for their reactionary and conservative tendencies; for the particular form of civilisation, culture and morality which they represented is decomposing, and they loudly proclaim the death of all civilisation, all culture, all morality; they call for repressive measures by the State, and constitute resistance groups cut off from the real historical process, thus prolonging the crisis, since the eclipse of a way of living and thinking cannot take place without a crisis. The representatives of the new order arise, on the other hand, inspired by 'utopia' to propagaten utopias and fanciful schemes. What is the point of reference for the new world in gestation? The world of productions work. The greatest utilitarianism must go to found any analysis of the moral and intellectual institutions to be created and of the principles to be propagated. Collective and individual life must be organised with a view to the maximum yield of the productive apparatus. The development of economic forces on new bases and the progressive installation of the new structure will heal the contradictions which cannot fail to exist, and, when they have created a new 'conformism' from below, will permit new possibilities for self-discipline, i.e. for freedom, including that of the individual."

Sociology and Political Science

The rise of sociology is related to the decline of the concept of political science and the art of politics which took place in the nineteenth century (to be more accurate, in the second half of that century, with the success of evolutionary and positivist theories). Everything that is of real importance in sociology is nothing other than political science. "Politics" became synonymous with parli-
mentary politics or the politics of personal cliques. Conviction that the constitutions and parliaments had initiated an epoch of "natural" "evolution", that society had discovered its definitive, because rational, foundations, etc. And, to and behold, society can now be studied with the methods of the natural sciences! Impoverishment of the concept of the State which ensued from such views. If political science means science of the State, and the State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules, then it is obvious that all the essential questions of sociology are nothing other than the questions of political science. If there is a residue, this can only be made up of false problems, i.e. frivolous problems. The question therefore which faced Bukharin when he wrote his Popular Manual[44] was that of determining what status could be accorded to political science in relation to the philosophy of praxis: whether the two are identical (something impossible to maintain, except from the most crudely positivist viewpoint); or whether political science is the body of empirical or practical principles which are deduced from a vaster conception of the world or philosophy properly speaking; or whether this philosophy is only the science of the concepts or general categories created by political science, etc.

If it is true that man cannot be conceived of except as historically determined man—i.e. man who has developed, and who lives, in certain conditions, in a particular social complex or totality of social relations—it is then possible to take sociology as meaning simply the study of these conditions and the laws which regulate their development? Since the will and initiative of men themselves cannot be left out of account, this notion must be false. The problem of what "science" itself is has to be posed. Is not science itself "political activity" and political thought, in as much as it transforms men, and makes them different from what they were before? If everything is "politics", then it is necessary—in order to avoid lapsing into a wearisome and tautological catalogue of platitudes—to distinguish by means of new concepts between on the one hand the politics which corresponds to that science which is traditionally called "philosophy", and on the other the politics which is called political science in the strict sense. If science is the "discovery" of formerly unknown reality, is this reality not conceived of in a certain sense as transcendent? And is it not thought that there still exists something "unknown" and hence transcendent? And does the concept of science as "creation" not then mean that it too is "politics"? Everything depends on seeing whether the creation involved is "arbitrary", or whether it is rational—i.e. "useful" to men in that it enlarges their concept of life, and raises to a higher level (develops) life itself.*

HEGEMONY (CIVIL SOCIETY) AND SEPARATION OF POWERS

The separation of powers,46 together with all the discussion provoked by its realisation and the legal dogmas which its appearance brought into being, is a product of the struggle between civil society and political society in a specific historical period. This period is characterised by a certain unstable equilibrium between the classes, which is a result of the fact that certain categories of intellectuals (in the direct service of the State, especially the civil and military bureaucracy) are still too closely tied to the old dominant classes. In other words, there takes place within the society what Croce calls the "perpetual conflict between Church and State", in which the Church is taken as representing the totality of civil society (whereas in fact it is only an element of diminishing importance within it), and the State as representing every attempt to crystallise permanently a particular stage of development, a particular situation. In this sense, the Church itself may become State, and the conflict may occur between on the one hand secular (and secularising) civil society, and on the other State/Church (when the Church has become an integral part of the State, of political society monopolised by a specific privileged group, which absorbs the Church in order to the better to preserve its monopoly with the support of that zone of "civil society" which the Church represents).

Essential importance of the separation of powers for political and economic liberalism; the entire liberal ideology, with its strengths

* In connection with the Popular Manual and its appendix Theory and Practice, the philosophical review by Armando Catinli (Nuova Antologia, 16 March 1933) should be consulted; it appears from this that the equation "Theory—practice = pure mathematics: applied mathematics" was formulated by an Englishman (Wittaker, I think).44


44 The doctrine developed by Montesquieu in his Esprit des Lois—is the basis of the contemporary bourgeois political system in England as he saw it—whereby executive, legislative and judiciary functions are exercised independently of each other. The principle inspired the American Constitution and the other constitutions

45 See note 69 on p. 419.