

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR OF REPRODUCTION

Struggles
and
Movements

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Marianosa Dalla Costa
& Giovanna F. Dalla Costa





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LABOR OF REPRODUCTION**

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EDITED BY

MARIAROSA DALLA COSTA &

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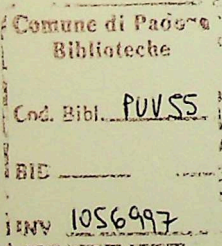
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Dedication

To our grandfather, Giovanni Dalla Costa, who, after seeing his home and harvest burn down, and realizing he would no longer be able to live off his land, emigrated to France. Here he worked in the mines to earn the money necessary to go to America. He arrived in Alaska in 1892, in the place which later was to be called Nome, and here he was renamed Jack Costa. Other members of his family landed in South Brazil; but he would never see them again. Jack Costa, with his brother Frank, dug for years in the icy lands of Klondike searching for gold and, at last, they found it.

Today, again, a new globalization process is sending millions of emigrants around the world. Separated from their land, from their families, in other nations and continents, they still seek some means of survival and a different future for themselves and their children.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
RESEARCH REPORT NO. 1000

THE REACTION OF HYDROGEN PEROXIDE WITH
SODIUM HYDROGEN SULFIDE IN AQUEOUS
SOLUTION AT VARIOUS TEMPERATURES
AND CONCENTRATIONS

BY
J. H. GOLDSTEIN AND
R. W. WILSON

RECEIVED JANUARY 15, 1954
REVISED MARCH 10, 1954

ABSTRACT
The reaction of hydrogen peroxide with sodium hydrogen sulfide in aqueous solution has been studied at various temperatures and concentrations. The rate of reaction is first order in hydrogen peroxide and first order in sodium hydrogen sulfide. The activation energy for the reaction is 14.5 kcal/mole. The reaction is catalyzed by sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide. The rate of reaction is independent of the concentration of sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide. The reaction is inhibited by sodium chloride and sodium sulfate.

INTRODUCTION
The reaction of hydrogen peroxide with sodium hydrogen sulfide in aqueous solution has been studied by Goldstein and Wilson (1). The reaction is first order in hydrogen peroxide and first order in sodium hydrogen sulfide. The activation energy for the reaction is 14.5 kcal/mole. The reaction is catalyzed by sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide. The rate of reaction is independent of the concentration of sodium hydroxide and sodium sulfide. The reaction is inhibited by sodium chloride and sodium sulfate.

EXPERIMENTAL
Materials
Sodium hydrogen sulfide was prepared by the reaction of sodium metal with hydrogen sulfide gas. The sodium metal was purified by melting under vacuum and then cutting into small pieces. The hydrogen sulfide gas was prepared by the reaction of iron(II) sulfide with hydrochloric acid. The sodium hydroxide was prepared by the reaction of sodium metal with water. The sodium chloride and sodium sulfate were prepared by the reaction of sodium metal with hydrochloric acid and sodium sulfate, respectively.

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—The Editors

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One of the pleasures of the last few years has been to have had the opportunity to work with a number of people who have helped me in various ways. I would like to thank them here. First, I would like to thank my wife, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my children, who have been a source of joy and inspiration. Finally, I would like to thank my friends, who have been a source of love and support. I would like to thank the following people in particular: [Names of people are too faint to transcribe accurately]

1988

INTRODUCTION

Mariarosa Dalla Costa

Today, it is in the mountains of Chiapas, the seas of Mururoa, the delta of the Niger and in cities like Paris that human reproduction most openly stands out as an issue and a terrain of rebellion. This serried sequence of struggles leaped onto the world scene in 1994 to symbolize the great problems which are the object of the debate about reproduction and growth. First among them are the relationships between monetary and non-monetary economies, the new global economy and subsistence economies, formal and informal work, paid and unpaid labor, individuality and community, 'Western' civilization and other forms of civilization. In brief, the relationship between the presumed inevitability of oncoming "higher" levels of development and people's right to elaborate their own future autonomously, asserting above all the right to preserve and defend an economic, social and environmental reality which is in danger of being swallowed up by yet another technological "leap," for no other reason than the quest for profit.

Technology, then, is a myth to be contested. What Marx already denounced as machines for waging war on the workers have increasingly become death machines turned against all humankind and its habitat.

All the essays collected in this volume are concerned with these questions, more or less directly, as they cast light on what is at stake in the struggles and transformations revolving around a further expansion of capitalist relations. This book follows another collection by the same editors *Paying the Price* (Zed Books, 1995), to which it is thematically connected. In *Paying the Price*, the main issue was the significance of the international debt crisis and structural "adjustment" policies for social reproduction and, therefore, women's work and women's struggles. The book argued that these policies, in their systematic, negative approach to reproduction, were designed to break the levels of power expressed by the women's struggles, particularly those concerned with their living conditions. It claimed that the aim of "adjustment" was to impose "debt slavery" on the debtor countries as a function of a further entrenchment of capitalist relations, in the continual attempt to refound class relations and hierarchies within the new global economy.

This new book is intended to continue down the same path by developing a series of hypotheses that were first presented and debated at the Thirteenth World Congress of Sociology (Bielefeld, July 18-23 1994) at the sections on "Women's Development and Housework" and "Development, Democracy and Women's Human Rights" coordinated by myself, Silvia Federici and Giovanna Franca Dalla Costa for Research Committee 02 "Economy and Society". The debt crisis and structural adjustment policies continue to provide the framework for analyzing the relationship between the transformations induced by capitalist development and the demands advanced by the movements which have emerged on the world stage, with attention to the women's, ecological and indigenous peoples movements, all of which aim at a radically different form of development, not based on a capitalist logic.

Today, women are making their voice heard on a broad series of increasingly dramatic problems revolving around the conditions in which life is produced and developed. In this sense, if this book has a protagonist, it is certainly the work of reproduction, an emerging iceberg with a cargo of struggles laden with the rejection of unpaid labor, the pole around which the demand for new living conditions transversally links distant areas. The labor of reproduction which is one of the great issues that reflect the ongoing type of development, for more than twenty years, has formed the focus of a wide and analytical debate, in various countries—a debate that is leaving its mark, with increasing frequency, in the official documents of international organizations, like the United Nations Development Program's, *Human Development Report 1995*. For our part, we feel that, if the condition of women is a significant index of how civilized a society is, the conditions in which the work of reproduction is carried out are a significant index of how humane a given form of development is.

Silvia Federici looks at the changes in the work of reproduction produced by the new international division of labor (NIDL), and their impact on the conditions of women and feminist politics. She criticizes current accounts that reduce the NIDL to the reorganization of commodity production, ignoring the transformations that have occurred in the production and reproduction of labor-power. Arguing that the expansion of capitalist relations is still premised on the separation of the workers from the means of (re)production, she shows how structural adjustment and the politics of economic privatization (the pillars of the global economy) have led to the dismantling, in much of the Third World, of subsistence economies and the formation of a proletariat exclusively dependent on monetary relations, although deprived, in most cases, of access to a monetary income. Federici maintains that these processes have transformed the Third World into an immense reserve of labor-power for the metropolitan areas, and shifted much of the work necessary for the reproduction of the metropolitan work-force on the shoulders of women in and from

the Third World. Federici concludes that this situation must be the focus of feminist organizing internationally, insofar as it deepens the power relations among women and undermines women's struggles over reproduction. Thus, the decisive issue for the construction of an international feminist movement is not the struggle against gender discrimination, but rather the subversion of the new international division of labor and of the projects for economic globalization and capitalist accumulation from which it stems.

In Giovanna Franca Dalla Costa's essay, the work of reproduction is read in terms of the problems peculiar to one Latin American country, Venezuela, during the Caldera presidency, which began with a softer approach to structural adjustment policies that had already created an explosive situation and paved the way for a number of coup attempts. One aim of the new administration's project was to re-industrialize the country by relaunching small and medium-sized industry while also introducing methods for bringing Venezuela up to the international standards of flexibility and efficiency. The other was a series of innovative social solutions achieved through the creation of a network of small firms, possibly with the participation of those citizens directly interested in the projects for the development of the *economia solidaria*, under the guidance of a Ministry for Social Development. A network of families was supposed to correspond to this network of small firms, as the ministry's direct talking-partner, in an approach that placed less emphasis than in the past on transforming the family according to the Western nuclear model.

Meanwhile, there may be a rethinking about the role the extended family can play in a resource-hungry country such as Venezuela. New forms of organization of social life—indeed a *network* of social relations—have been devised to integrate and link the new productive and reproductive realities which the *economia solidaria* planned to create. In this socio-economic context, housework, a formidable variable of "adjustment," already subject to various pressures in any phase of development

or crisis, has become the object of new means of integration and control. At the level of the "network," a confrontation has been growing between the state response, on the one hand, and the increasingly heavy pressure coming from the women, on the other. Presumably, the state response has taken into account women's strong demand to serve as real partners in the definition of social and economic policies. But it has only allowed women to mobilize "from below," without giving them any real say at the decision-making level. At the same time, on the side of women, there has been an increasing pressure on the government at a grassroots level or "through the network," in a climate of growing conflict and in the face of the parallel growth of feminist organizations, demanding different terms of development. These include life guarantees for everyone coupled with a reassertion of women's autonomy.

Alda Britto da Motta's essay, focuses on the condition and the struggles of female domestic workers in Brazil. It shows the need of domestic workers to free themselves from the space-time continuum of "the masters" house. Domestic workers want space and time that are completely their own. It is clear that there is a convergence between the demands and struggles of Brazilian domestic workers and those of women in the "advanced" countries who, far from being "queens of the home," are deprived of space and time of their own, and since the early 1970s, have made of this demand their first step in the building their autonomy.

While the growth of women's organizations in the "developing countries" is now recognized, not only in Latin America but throughout the world, a country which owes a great deal to their heroic commitment (and that of the journalists who have recorded their voices) is Algeria. Andrée Michel's essay is devoted to them. It analyses the trends that have shaped the country's "maldevelopment," and highlights how women have been made the scapegoats for the policies of previous presidencies, in order to divert the people's attention from the real problems. Michel criticizes the Algerian government for having allowed the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, a movement that has attacked "modernity"

“modernity” as a source of all evil, symbolized by the emancipation of women who exercise a profession and go out without the veil.

Michel maintains that the Algerian fundamentalists have not only violated the most basic human rights, but have opposed any expression of women’s autonomy, which had consolidated over the years, by demanding that reproductive labor become women’s indisputable and non-contractable destiny. Andrée Michel urges that the strength expressed by the Algerian women form the fulcrum for the growth of ties between citizens on both shores of the Mediterranean, capable of imposing a development founded on social justice, liberty and tolerance. Present in her essay, too, is the crucial role of international debt and its relationship with distorted development models. In this context, Michel reiterates that it is not enough to demand the debt’s cancellation; something must also be done to ensure that the debt is not reproduced as would happen if the same model of development were reintroduced, and the same social and sexual inequalities in the First and the Third World were reproduced.

In my own contribution, I have covered some of the themes mentioned at the start of this introduction, crossing the bridge thrown by the Zapatista revolt towards the struggles in “advanced” Europe, a bridge which in real time has linked the “primitive” and continued expropriation of the land with the present expropriation of labor. On that bridge, I have met new protagonists, the indigenous people’s movements which, in the last two decades, have achieved ever greater organization and an ever greater hearing, giving new substance to the Western debate on development. Their presence has disclosed how the “primitive” unsustainability of development has simply become broader and more lethal. Their presence has given new substance and a new articulation to the debate on human rights as collective and not only individual rights, as the right to diversity rather than the obligation to homogeneity and the right to reject development. Their presence has brought the word “dignity,” which has long been out of use in Western civilization, back to the center of political discourse—the dignity

of solitude, the capacity to withdraw, of being able to wait, to conceal one's own heritage. I do not know how many feminists who began their path as activists in the 1970s have identified themselves in the word's various meanings, but this was certainly the path of one part of that feminism. It was the sole salvation in front of the blindness of a female culture that invaded the arenas where knowledge is built with inquiries, questionnaires and useless data, to the detriment of the mental space needed for the growth of thought, creativity and self-determination. This has been the dignity of saving one's own collective history from misleading and hasty historico-sociological reconstructions, so that it may have a future in other places and other times. Now the time for it has come and its place is appearing in outline. The indigenous and ecological movements are feminism's first talking-partners.

It is significant that in the indigenous people's movements, it was the women who immediately asserted themselves as the emergent force, and disposed of the presumed immobility of customs attributed to their community. In this process, they have made people aware of the richness of their activities and their 'charters of rights'. *Their struggle against the unsustainable contradiction they experience in capitalist development—which continually undermines their living and working conditions in economies for the most part not founded on money—is linked to the struggle against the unsustainable contradiction experienced by women in the "advanced" areas.* These are the struggles of the unwaged woman working in a wage economy who, for that very reason is denied the right to survival.

First through the studies of academics, then more directly through their increasing presence in international forums, indigenous women have sent us a powerful message about their rich heritage, about a different form of knowledge, based on the respect for the most basic ecological equilibriums, as the key for the construction of another type of development. A large part of international feminism has now incorporated their voices. Significantly, various documents at the NGO Forum flanking the

UN Conference on Women in Beijing, on August-September 1995, in addition to denouncing structural adjustment and land expropriation as a major cause of poverty, also raised the issue of the defense of 'traditional' knowledge against its expropriation by scientists and businessmen for commercial ends. Clearly, this different type of knowledge is now the terrain for a confrontation between the logic of capitalism and the logic of a different development. The outcome will depend on the strength of the struggles and the movements.

The labor of reproduction and its crises is the main theme of the essay by George Caffentzis. It examines the theoretical and practical implications of three perspectives that, in recent times, have conceptualized the sphere of social reproduction and the relation between market and non-market activities, with all their accompanying dichotomies : production/reproduction, formal/informal, moral values/market values. After showing the limits of the marxian approach on this question, Caffentzis discusses the alternatives offered in the works of Gary Becker, M. Granovetter, Michel Foucault and contrasts them with the feminist theories that identify the work of reproduction as the pillar of the capitalist creation of surplus value and the accumulation process.

As he shows, neither Becker's approach, that reduced all social relations to market relations, in the context of a triumphant commodity/consumer logic, nor the Foucaultian attempt to interpret the production of life as the working of a new form of 'Power,' can account for the contemporary crises in social reproduction. These are the crises reflected in the human and ecological catastrophes of which capitalist development increasingly is the bearer: war, famines, desertification, the flight of masses of refugees and emigrants. From this vantage-point, Caffentzis concludes that only the feminist theory of reproduction developed in the early 1970s, succeeds in giving a convincing explanation of the present crises, because it takes into account the struggle against reproductive labor and its repercussions on capitalist accumulation.

Reproductive labor, then, returns to close this book as a source of struggles and, thus, a source of crisis in social repro-

duction. For this very reason, reproductive labor must be seen as something more than a source of capitalist value. For in its antagonism to the process of accumulation, it is now a privileged terrain for those movements that have started exploring new paths for a different development, everywhere on the planet.

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the war. It mentions the military operations in the West and the East, and the political and economic conditions in Germany and the Allied countries. The author notes the increasing strain on the German economy and the morale of the German people, as well as the growing unity of the Allied forces.

The second part of the report discusses the military situation in detail. It covers the movements of the German army in the West, particularly in the region of the Scheldt and the Meuse. It also mentions the operations in the East, including the capture of Riga and the advance towards Moscow. The author provides a detailed account of the tactical and strategic decisions made by the German High Command and the Allied forces.

The third part of the report deals with the political and economic aspects of the war. It discusses the impact of the war on the German economy, the role of the government in mobilizing resources, and the political situation in Germany. It also mentions the political and economic conditions in the Allied countries, particularly in the United States and Great Britain. The author notes the growing influence of the United States in the world and the increasing pressure on Germany to seek a negotiated peace.

The report concludes with a summary of the main points discussed and a prediction of the future course of the war. The author expresses confidence that the Allied forces will eventually achieve a decisive victory over Germany.

DEVELOPMENT AND REPRODUCTION*

Mariarosa Dalla Costa

Zapata and the workers

Zapata's determined gaze and slightly stooped shoulders, in the well loved photograph paraded in the Italian metropolitan workers' demonstrations, was one of the striking journalistic images¹ of 1994, creating a bridge in real time between the Mexican revolt of January and the struggles of Europe's industrial workers and unemployed. A bridge was thrown, through space and historical time, linking the struggles against the continuing "primi-

tive" expropriation of the land to those against the post-Fordist expropriation of labor, which are responsible for the increasing dismantlement of the public system of social rights and guarantees. The "primitive" expropriation of the land, begun five centuries ago with the enclosures in England and still continuing today² with the more recent forms of colonization and exploitation of the Third World, is now linked even photographically to the contemporary forms of expropriation and poverty creation in the advanced capitalist countries.

How to build and impose on expropriated men and women the discipline of wage labor (with the unwaged labor it presupposes) was the problem capital posed five centuries ago at the beginning of capitalist accumulation. It is still the problem today for the continuation of the capitalist mode of production and its combined strategies of development and underdevelopment. The creation of mass poverty and scarcity, together with the imposition of terror and violence, as well as the large-scale relaunching of slavery, were the basic instruments used to resolve the problem in the first phase of capitalism.

The expropriation of the free producers from all their means of production, as well as the individual and collective resources and rights that contributed to guaranteeing their survival, was studied by Marx in the section on primitive accumulation in *Capital*, Vol. 1, Part 8 (1976). We refer to it for a discussion of the enclosures and all the other measures that accompanied them, notably the bloody legislation against the expropriated, the forcing down of wages by an act of Parliament and the ban on workers' associations. The laws stipulating the compulsory extension of the working day, another fundamental aspect of the period, from the middle of the 14th to the end of the 17th century, are dealt with in *Capital*, Vol. 1, Part Three, Chapter 10, where the subject studied is the working day³.

Concerning land expropriation, Marx observed that

The advance made by the 18th century shows itself in this, that the law itself now becomes the instrument by

which the people's land is stolen, although the big farmers made use of their little independent methods as well. The Parliamentary form of the robbery is that of 'Bills for Inclosure of the Commons', in other words decrees by which the landowners grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people." (Marx, 1976, p. 885)

The "little independent methods" are explained in a footnote to the same passage, quoting from a report entitled *A Political Inquiry into the Consequences of Enclosing Waste Lands*:

The farmers forbid cottagers to keep any living creatures besides themselves and children, under the pretence that if they keep any beasts or poultry, they will steal from the farmers' barns for their support; they also say, keep the cottagers poor and you will keep them industrious, etc., but the real fact, I believe, is that the farmers may have the whole right of common to themselves. (Marx, 1976, p. 885, note 15)

This footnote gives a powerful picture of the step-by-step process of expropriation that was used to produce the misery and poverty essential to establish the discipline of wage labor. But just as powerful an image is given by the isolation of people from all living beings, that characterized and still characterizes the human condition in capitalist development. The human being is isolated not only with respect to his/her own species, but also with respect to nature—that 'other' is treated increasingly as a commodity.

Deprivation and isolation are the two great accusations, the two great terrains of rebellion, symbolised by the poster of Zapata whose watchword was "Tierra y Libertad." The reappropriation of land was seen by the Zapatistas in 1911 as a fundamental question, because it opened up the possibility of reappropriating a collective life free from misery. For even then the reappropriation of the land was pregnant with a multitude of meanings: the

reappropriation of a territory where one could express a different sense of life, of action, of social relations and work; and a place where one could imagine and build a different future. From this viewpoint, Zapata's nine-year revolutionary epic is one of the great suppressed memories of official Mexican history.

Today's explosion of the Zapatista rebellion shows how real the problem of the reappropriation of land remains, but also how much it has been magnified by the complex of issues raised by movements in the North and South over the land question. 'Land,' here, not only refers to a means of subsistence—though this would already be an excellent reason for a reappropriation movement, since many economies based on a non-capitalist relation with the land have guaranteed the possibility of life for millennia to a large number of people to whom capitalist development can only offer hunger and extinction. It also refers to land as the earth: a public space to be enjoyed without frontiers; an ecosystem to be preserved because it is the source of life and, hence, of beauty and continual discovery; and a material reality of which we are part, to be reaffirmed, in contrast to the exaltation (especially by male intellectuals) of virtual reality.

The creation of misery starts and proceeds from *the fixing of a price for the land* as well as land expropriation as Marx pointed out. Pricing the land is the solution used for colonies, where the aspirant capitalist is unable to find a sufficient number of waged workers. When the settlers arrive at their destination, they find a 'free' land where they can settle and work independently.

We have seen that *the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production*. The essence of a *free* colony, on the contrary, consists in this, that the bulk of the soil is still public property, every settler on it can therefore turn part of it into his private property and his individual means of production, without preventing later settlers from performing the same operation. This is the secret both of the prosperity of the colonies and of their cancerous afflic-

tion—their resistance to the establishment of capital.
(Marx 1976, p. 934)

In this context, we can leave to one side the obvious criticism that the “public” land freely settled by the settlers belonged, in reality, to the indigenous populations.

Marx continues:

There (in the colonies) the capitalist regime constantly comes up against the obstacle presented by the producer who, as owner of his own conditions of labour, employs that labour to enrich himself instead of the capitalist. *The contradiction between these two diametrically opposed economic systems has its practical manifestation here in the struggle between them.* Where the capitalist has behind him the power of the mother country, he tries to use force to clear out of the way the *modes of production and appropriation which rest on the personal labour of the independent producer.* (Marx 1976, p. 931)

Wakefield, the economist Marx quotes in this context, proclaims aloud the *antagonism between the two modes of production*: “To this end he demonstrates that the development of the social productivity of labour, cooperation, division of labour, application of machinery on a large scale, and so on, are impossible without the expropriation of the workers and the corresponding *transformation of their means of production into capital*” (1976, p. 932).

Wakefield’s theory of colonisation tries to solve the problem of ensuring an adequate supply of labor for the capitalist’s needs by what he calls “systematic colonisation,” which, as Marx notes, England tried to enforce for a time by Act of Parliament. Of Wakefield’s theory, Marx adds:

If men were willing to turn the whole of the land from public into private property at one blow, this would certainly destroy the root of the evil, but it would also destroy—the *colony*. The trick is to kill two birds with one

stone. Let the government set an *artificial price on the virgin soil, a price independent of the law of supply and demand*, a price that compels the immigrant to work for a long time for wages before he can earn enough money to buy land and turn himself into an independent farmer. The *fund* resulting from the sale of land at a price relatively *prohibitory* for the wage-laborers, this *fund of money* extorted from the *wages of labour* by a violation of the sacred law of supply and demand, is to be applied by the government in proportion to its growth, to the importation of paupers from Europe into the colonies, so as to keep the *wage-labour market* full for the capitalists. (1976, p. 938)

Marx also pointed out that the *land price laid down by the state* must be "sufficient," which quoting from Wakefield (1833, vol. II, p. 192) he explains means that "it must be high enough 'to prevent the labourers from becoming independent landowners until others had followed to take their place'."

The reference to the setting of a price on the virgin soil is more than just a reminder of a past problem and its analysis in Marx's *Capital*. Today, putting a price to the land and land expropriation, by illegal, pseudo-legal and violent means, are on the agenda throughout those areas of the Third World where capitalist expansion is trying to destroy economies and societies based on a different relation with the land; economies that have guaranteed people's subsistence from time immemorial and, by the same token, resist the wage-labor discipline and the isolation, hunger and death that accompany its imposition. Silvia Federici (1995) and George Caffentzis (1995) have underlined the destructive role that the commercialization of land has played in 'development' policies in Africa. In their studies of Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria in particular, they have stressed the importance of this measure in the strategies of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other investors, also showing, however, how this procedure has become a terrain of struggle and resistance for the African population.

There are many other policies and measures that are creating hunger and poverty, including the lowering of export prices for agricultural products, which ruins the Third World farmers, and the adjustment policies that, internationally, have been implemented in response to the "debt crisis." This topic has been discussed in a recently edited volume (Dalla Costa M. and Dalla Costa G.F., eds., 1995), and has been analysed extensively by the Midnight Notes Collective (1992), among others.

This essay focusses, instead, on the two major operations of land expropriation and the fixing of a price to land. Both are usually ignored by political analysts, but remain as fundamental today for extracting a profit out of the Third World as they were at the dawn of capitalism in Europe. In fact, the present development strategy, based on the 'information revolution,' continues to imply a strategy of underdevelopment, and to require these hunger and poverty-creating operations, in order to constantly refund and re-stratify the global working class.

Obviously, the continuing imposition of the wage-labor discipline worldwide does not imply that all those who are expropriated are destined to become wage-laborers. Today, as five centuries ago, this will be the fate of only a small part of the population; those who can will find employment in the sweat shops of the Third World, or of the countries to which they emigrate. The others will be faced only by the prospect of death by hunger, which may explain the tenacity of resistance and the intensity of the struggles. With reference to the Zapata poster in Milan, it explains the revolt in Chiapas. The *price* of capitalist development understood as a whole, in its combined aspects of development and underdevelopment, is *unsustainable* because it consists of *death*. As I have argued elsewhere (Dalla Costa M., 1995), a central assumption must be that, *from the human viewpoint, capitalist development has always been unsustainable* since it has assumed, from the start, and continues to assume, extermination and hunger for an increasingly large part of humanity. The fact that it is founded on a class relationship, and must continually refund it at a global level, in conflict with the power that

waged and unwaged men and women are building through their struggles and resistance, only makes its *original unsustainability* more evident and more lethal in time.

The hunger and poverty producing operations that have accompanied the continuous and progressive expropriation of the land, and its turning into a commodity/capital, have obviously been redefined in ideological and technological terms over time. The "food policies" implemented during this century, officially in order to solve or mitigate the problem of malnutrition, have always been closely linked to "reforms" of the relationship with the land. The outcome has been better nutrition for the few, insufficient nutrition, or hunger, for the many, and above all a powerful tool for social control, used to break those organisations that people, in many areas of the world, had created to obtain a better nutrition and a better standard of living.

The "social reforms" characteristic of these policies have always produced new divisions and a new hierarchy between the waged and the unwaged, as well as within these two groups. Harry Cleaver's essay (1977) remains fundamental for its analysis and the globality of its information, as well as for its reports on numerous struggles and the policies adopted to fight them. We fully agree with his assumption that food crises are basically produced by capitalism's political economy. It is significant, as Cleaver points out, that experiments carried out by the Rockefeller Foundation in China, in the 1920s and 1930s, clearly demonstrated the stabilising effect of better food supplies, coupled with some land reform measures, on peasant unrest. In the 1950s, politicians were still talking about an Asian rice policy as a tool for halting peasant revolt in many parts of that continent. Later, the issue officially became a humanitarian one.

The Green Revolution, on the other hand, was put into effect in the 1960s, in both East and West, on the basis of a technological leap in the mechanical, chemical and biological inputs in agricultural policy. The aim was to apply Keynesian principles to agriculture, linking wage increases to increases in productivity. But, as Cleaver argues, the whole history of this technological

breakthrough in agriculture was linked to the de-composition of the class power of the waged and the unwaged, the continual creation of new divisions and hierarchies, and the increasing expulsion of workers having different forms of relationship with agriculture.

Agricultural technology has increasingly been subjected to criticism and analysis by feminist scholars, being closely linked to large scale agriculture, which has caused the expropriation and the expulsion from the land of the unwaged workers, who were making a living from it, and of waged agricultural workers, who were displaced by continual technological change. Important in this connection is the work of Vandana Shiva (1989), whose approach is not a Marxist one, and uses the notion of the "female principle" against a male reductionist science. An outstanding physicist, Vandana Shiva abandoned India's nuclear programme because she realized that the "reaction of nuclear systems with living systems" was being kept secret from the people. In her well-known work, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (1989), she illustrates the ongoing systematic loss of resources for health and subsistence, caused by the reduction of the biodiversity, imposed in India by the agricultural policies of recent decades. Shiva also exposes the dependence and poverty created by the imposition of new laboratory hybrids; the drought and human and environmental disasters created by dams and their irrationality by comparison with earlier forms of water-management. The history of the enclosure, expropriation and commercialisation not only of the land, but also of its plants, animals, and waters is revived in Shiva's analysis, which is centred on the events of these last decades. There are other important works belonging to the ecofeminist current, first of all the works of Maria Mies (1986 and, with Shiva, 1993), to mention only the most famous ones. In contrast Mary Mellor's book (1992), while it has many points of contact with the above cited studies, is more concerned with defining a "feminist green socialism."

I share much of the critique advanced in this blossoming of feminist studies on the relationship between human beings and

nature, and on the North-South relationship. I cannot compare more extensively my position to that of ecofeminist scholars here. The only point I can make is that some ecofeminist scholars look primarily at the struggles and forms of resistance that are taking place in the Third World, while they see the First World primarily as an area of excessive consumption, whence the assertion of the need for a reduction of production and consumption. As for myself and the circuit of scholars I have worked with since the early 1970s, we think that while the strategic importance of Third World struggles must be recognized, equal importance should be given to the struggles in the advanced capitalist areas, not only as areas of consumption, but also as areas where labor is expended. Hence our stress on the importance of the struggles of waged and unwaged workers in the advanced capitalist countries and their relationship with struggles in other parts of the world. We also see a need to analyze consumption in a more articulated way; since by definition, consumption by workers, including housewives, has never been high and, today, is falling dramatically. But these are just a few hints in a debate that will develop further.

Let us now return to our discourse. Vandana Shiva (1989) says of water and drought:

The drying up of India, like that of Africa, is a man-made rather than a natural disaster. The issue of water, and water scarcity has been the most dominant one in the 1980s as far as struggles for survival in the subcontinent are concerned. The manufacture of drought and desertification is an outcome of reductionist knowledge and models of development which violate cycles of life in rivers, in the soil, in mountains. Rivers are drying up because their catchments have been mined, de-forested or over-cultivated to generate revenue and profits. Groundwater is drying up because it has been over-exploited to feed cash crops. Village after village is being robbed of its lifeline, its sources of drinking water, and the number of villages facing water famine is in direct

proportion to the number of “schemes” implemented by government agencies to ‘develop’ water” (p. 179).

Commercial exploitation of forests, over-exploitation of ground water for commercial agriculture and inappropriate afforestation are the major reasons identified for the water crisis.” (p. 181)

Time and again, Vandana Shiva points out, famous British engineers who learned water management from indigenous techniques in India, commented on the “sophisticated engineering sense, built on an ecological sense, that provided the foundation for irrigation in India.” Major Arthur Cotton, credited as the “founder” of modern irrigation programmes, wrote in 1874:

There are multitudes of old native works in various parts of India...These are noble works, and show both boldness and engineering talent. They have stood for hundreds of years...When I first arrived in India, the contempt with which the natives justifiably spoke of us on account of this neglect of material improvements was very striking; they used to say we were a kind of civilised savages, wonderfully expert about fighting, but so inferior to their great men that we would not even keep in repair the works they had constructed, much less even imitate them in extending the system. (p. 187)

The East India Company, as Vandana Shiva adds, took control of the Kaveri Delta in 1799, but was unable to check the rising river bed. Company officials struggled for a quarter century; finally, using indigenous technology. Cotton was able to solve the problem by renovating the Grand Anicut. He wrote later:

It was from them (the native Indians) we learnt how to secure a foundation in loose sand of unmeasured depth...The Madras river irrigations executed by our engineers have been from the first the greatest financial success of any engineering works in the world, solely

because we learnt from them...With this lesson about foundations, we built bridges, weirs, aqueducts and every kind of hydraulic work...We are thus deeply indebted to the native engineers.

But the lesson has obviously been erased by the full flood of the capitalist science of development and profit, what Vandana Shiva calls "maldevelopment" (4). British engineers in the 1700s and 1800s recognised that indigenous technology and knowledge tended to preserve water resources and make them available for the local people. Today, capitalist water-management projects cause drought and deny survival to entire populations. One woman from Maharashtra State in India sings against the dam that she has to help build so that crops such as sugar cane can be irrigated while women and children die of thirst (Shiva 1989):

As I build this dam
I bury my life.
The dawn breaks
There is no flour in the grinding stone.

I collect yesterday's husk for today's meal
The sun rises
And my spirit sinks.
Hiding my baby under a basket
And hiding my tears
I go to build the dam

The dam is ready
It feeds their sugar cane fields
Making the crop lush and juicy.
But I walk miles through forests
In search of a drop of drinking water
I water the vegetation with drops of my sweat
As dry leaves fall and fill my parched yard.

Responding to this mad “enclosure” of water has increasingly become a key issue on the agenda of the political networks that monitor and struggle against projects of this kind. The immediate future will show the effects of these efforts. An exemplary case is the Bangladesh flood control plan (Del Genio 1994), presented by the World Bank in London in December 1989. Even though it was claimed to differ from previous projects because of its low environmental impact, other estimates of its effects were so dramatic that an international coalition of organizations, opposed to the World Bank’s approach to the canalization of rivers, was created in Strasbourg in May 1993.

Considering solely the human impact, the building of the Narmada dam in India was expected to require the evacuation of 500,000 inhabitants and aroused strong opposition from the ‘tribals’ and the organisations supporting them. The Bangladesh Flood Action Plan (FAP), coordinated by the World Bank on behalf of the Group of Seven, would require the forced transfer of 5-8 million persons in a territory with a population density ten times that of India.

Del Genio’s article illustrates the reasons cited to justify the plan—on the one hand, mystifying assumptions and, on the other, the lethal techniques of the Green Revolution. This plan insists on the need to “propagate modern, mechanised agriculture capable of coping with the food crisis,” so as to increase the cultivation of modern high-yield varieties of rice which, in turn, requires a large and regular quantity of water and a system of flood control and irrigation to make it available.

The drawbacks of the high-yield varieties include a dependence on the market and laboratories, since they are unable to reproduce, and the reduction of the genetic diversity of local seeds. Awareness of these drawbacks is growing in the world, and rural workers’ grass-roots organizations are putting up an increasing resistance against these agricultural improvements, supposedly more appropriate for satisfying their nutritional needs. As for flood control, some of the yearly regular floods bring nutrients that ensure the soil’s fertility and top up the water-table as they expand

across the plain. Other, purely destructive floods need to be controlled through works different from those being planned, if the aim is to be achieved without destroying the environment, including the humans in it. In this connection, it is worth remembering the level of sophistication achieved in biodiversity, through the long-term cooperation between humans and nature. Among the hundreds of local rice varieties developed in response to the demands of territory and climate, a sub-variety called Aman is capable of growing over 15cm in only 24 hours, if the level of the water rises.

As for transferring 5-8 million persons by coercion, this is in itself inconceivable, since to uproot a population is like cutting a tree's roots, in this case a forest's. The first and obvious question that comes to mind is: where and how are the uprooted peasants supposed to find the money needed to pay the costs of agricultural modernization (machinery, fertilisers, etc.)? The answer is always the same, and has been repeated thousands of times over in the history of the Green Revolution: only the big proprietors and the big enterprises can sustain the costs. And the others? The work for the dam meanwhile has begun...

The peasants and many others working with them in international networks are organizing forms of resistance and opposition. The building of the Asswan dam, and the consequent loss of the soil nutrients, for the peasants who lived off the flooded soil, in addition to the other serious consequences the dam precipitated, inevitably come to mind. First of all, the flooding of part of Nubia and, with it, the burial of major relics of that civilisation, and the abandonment of the land by those who lived there. But this is just one case among the many that could be cited. When I was in Egypt in 1989, there was talk of a project to turn the Red Sea into a lake. I hope that the growth of the ecological movement, the movements of the native populations and others will have relegated this project to the nightmares of a past era.

Returning to Vandana Shiva, the same observations that she and many other scholars are making today about dams and other Western water-management projects in the Third World, can

equally be applied to the technologies that are imposed on Third World agriculture, in livestock raising, and in the destruction of forests to cultivate export crops. All these processes involve the destruction of the biodiversity, of the ecological equilibriums, and of the life-cycles that guaranteed subsistence. In short, the production of profit for the big companies involves the denial of survival for the population.

Even though her cultural and theoretical approach is far from Marxist, when Vandana Shiva identifies the logic of the continual enclosure of segments of nature and its effects, she has no difficulty in concluding that the foundations of capitalist accumulation are the science and practice of the culture of death. Her merit is also to have contributed to bringing to international attention struggles and movements otherwise ignored or neglected. Our argument here is that the Chipko movement, in which women organize to stay in the forest even at night, embracing the trees to prevent the logging companies from cutting them down, should be placed on the same level as all the other struggles that are being waged worldwide against various forms of expropriation and the attack against individual and collective rights—both the right to survival, or better, to life, and the right to self-determination.

The economic and life system of the Indian “tribals”⁵ who created the Chipko movement—which forms the focus of Vandana Shiva’s studies and practical activity—is based on a combination of agriculture, livestock raising and the use/conservation of the forest. The forest has a central and many-sided role in the whole system. The forests bear “soil, water and pure air,” sing the Chipko women (Shiva 1989: 77), and they play an important nutritional role. Whatever crisis may hit crops or livestock, say the Chipko women, the children will never suffer hunger, if there is a forest near. Thus embracing the trees to stop them from being felled is like occupying the land to prevent it from being expropriated, or struggling in defence of jobs or a wage, or a guaranteed income, when survival depends solely on money.

This is what we see if we want to spotlight how the different parts of the working social body struggle simultaneously, and in different forms, against the same system that exploits and besieges them in different ways.

This is important for understanding how opposition to capitalist development is growing worldwide, and is refusing to pay its price while seeking other paths for a different future. But the struggles of the Chipko women, and all the other movements for the maintenance and defence of an age-old experience and knowledge in humankind's relationship with nature, are all the more vital for us. This means that the political debate in the 'advanced' areas, empowering the voice of those who refuse to pay the price of this development, must necessarily be an ecological debate as well.

Vandana Shiva (whose work I consider here, even if briefly, because it is representative of an entire school of feminist studies, developed by women in the world's various Souths) also denounces the genetic manipulation of living species. The tampering of the nutritional resources of entire communities is compounded by the genetic manipulation of the species. This topic has attracted extensive attention, in recent years, from the various circuits of women scholars and activists.

With engineering entering the life sciences, the renewability of life as a self-reproducing system comes to an end. *Life must be engineered now, not reproduced.* A new commodity set is created as inputs, and a new commodity is created as output. Life itself is the new commodity..." (Shiva, 1989, p. 91). "The market and the factory define the 'improvement' sought through the new bio-technologies... Nature's integrity and diversity and people's needs are thus simultaneously violated. (Shiva 1989: p. 92)

This biotechnological trend is matched by the determination to patent and 'bank' the genetic heritage of the living species. This was denounced by a women's meeting in Miami in preparation

for the Rio conference (Women's Action Agenda 21, 1991), but such criticism is widely shared. After patenting cotton, the agro-industrial corporations now want to do the same for rice and soy, two of the fundamental foodstuffs for many sectors of the world's population. Increasingly, food, which is already difficult to obtain because of the combination of expropriation of land, technological innovations in farming methods, and the disparity between prices and wages (when there are any), is manipulated, placed beyond reach, privatised, monopolised, patented, 'banked.' A new enclosure. *Food! No Access!*

In this parabola of technological conquest over nature, expropriation reaches its acme: human beings are expropriated, the living species are expropriated, the earth's own reproductive powers are expropriated to be transformed into capital. This mode of production pretends to capitalize the generation and reproduction of life. What a long road capitalism has travelled from the time when, indifferent to life, it was satisfied with nothing more than the appropriation of an excessive number of working hours⁶. That is, when it simply pretended to transform all life into work and, to that end, it drained the life of free workers and also enchained masses of slaves, not caring about the contradiction implicit in the simultaneous exploitation of free and slave labor.

The growth of the various rebellions and struggles worldwide, in rejection of this type of development, is matched by that of massive, lethal and monstrous structures and forms of domination. Considering only the most recent past, from the Gulf War on, the increasingly warlike character of this development has undeniably produced an escalation of war, that removes any residual doubts over whether or not development is founded on the science and practice of death. Mentioning the wars in the Gulf, ex-Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda-Burundi is only to acknowledge the wars that have received most media coverage in the last three or four years. We certainly do not want to forget the many wars that have been waged worldwide without ever entering the limelight.

If anything, the escalation of war in recent years has confirmed the vacuousness of what the major powers have declared about disarmament. *Rather, war has become increasingly the instrument par excellence for disciplining the working social body at the global level, through annihilation, terror, division, deportation, and the lowering of living conditions and life expectations. In the end, humans, when they are not massacred directly, are increasingly 'enclosed' in refugee camps, and the more or less concealed concentration camps of war situations.*

But, at the same time, *the other face of war as a form of development* has been revealed ever more clearly, through the growing monstrosity of the enterprises its macabre laboratory generate. War has always been a great laboratory, but since the greed of capitalist technology has begun to pursue life in the attempt to steal and capitalize its secrets, death has increasingly been discovered as a terrain for profit. In this case, too, there has been a shift from the 'primitive' indifference to the death of masses of individuals, expropriated of their means of production and sustenance, to the usage of death, dead bodies, or bodies destined in a cavalier way to die, in the experimentation of new technologies, or commercialized body parts in the trafficking in organs. Besides the traditional markets of arms, post-war reconstructions, and the techno-industrial experimentation on which our 'peace economy' rests, war today offers, above all, the biggest mass of living/dying guinea-pigs on whom to test, on a mass scale, the new technologies designed to acquire more knowledge of the body and how to operate on it. Here too, it is clear how the part of guinea-pigs has been played above all by the people of the 'non-advanced' nations, even if a similar role has recently been emerging for citizens of the main industrialized countries, those from the most vulnerable sectors of the population, who are being dispatched to war or used, without knowing it, in 'peace-time'.

But war continues to offer new and horrifying terrains on which to reap profits. Trafficking in children,⁷ for example. How many for pornography?⁸ How many for trafficking in organs?⁹ How many for slavery¹⁰ and for the traffic in war cripples?¹¹ How

many for prostitution? How many to be sold for adoption to childless couples? Trafficking in adult males and females also goes on, for all the reasons mentioned above, apart from the last.

It is strange that, in the discussions about sustainable development, there is usually no mention of the *unsustainability* for humankind and the environment of the *form* that development has increasingly taken, namely *war*.

The poster with the image of Zapata, from which we set out, comes to us from the Chiapas revolt and the war and truce that resulted from it. Carried as a banner by the workers in Milan, it gave voice to the two great expropriations, that from the land and that from labor. At the same time, it poses, with all the force expressed in the struggles carried on, throughout the world, by those who have been expropriated, the question of what is the contemporary relationship between waged and unwaged labor in this development. In the Third World as in the First, what future is there for unwaged labor?

Zapata and the women.

It may be a provocation, but not an illegitimate one, to think that, in relaunching the increasingly dramatic question of the relationship between these two great sectors of labor, the poster of Zapata also relaunches the feminist question that stimulated the women's movement in the early 1970s: that of the unwaged labor expended in the reproduction of labor-power. The woman is, in fact, the unwaged laborer par excellence and she experiences in this development a *doubly unsustainable contradiction* (Dalla Costa, M., 1995; Dalla Costa, G.F., 1989). On the one hand, her condition, which has been created by capitalist development, is unsustainable, in its typical form in the 'advanced areas,' insofar as she is an *unwaged worker*, who is responsible for reproducing labor-power in a *wage economy* (Dalla Costa, M., James S. 1972). On the other, her situation has become increasingly unsustainable as an unwaged worker in an unwaged *subsistence economy*, where the expansion of capitalist relations increasingly

deprives her of the means to fulfil the tasks of reproduction for herself and the community. This contradiction and, with it, the unsustainability of the woman's condition, cannot be solved within capitalism, which is its root. To be solved, it requires a totally different conception and organization of development. By the same token, women's struggles around their condition amplify the demands of other unwaged social subjects, from whose labor this capitalist development continually accumulates value.

Numerous studies of which I mention only some (Michel, Agbessi Dos Santos, Fatoumata Diarra, 1981, Michel 1988; Boserup 1982; Shiva 1989) have shown how the continual realization of capitalist projects in the rural areas of the Third World, beside expropriating the land, makes it more difficult for women to gain access to the basic means for the production of subsistence, from wood for fuel to water for the home and forage for the animals. Now, hours or days have to be spent in fetching things that were previously fairly close. These resources too have been swallowed up by enclosure/ appropriation/ commoditization/ capitalization.

Feminist authors (Mies 1992) have noted the paradox whereby rural women are blamed for harming the environment, precisely because of the activities by which they try to acquire these resources, as well as for having too many children. Supposedly, they destroy the forests, if they go there in search of wood; they pollute and use up the water sources, if they go to fetch water; they use up the earth's resources, if they have too many children. It is a typical case of blaming the victims. At the same time, their working and living conditions, and the entire community's life, are continually undermined by the debt policies imposed on the Third World countries by the major financial agencies, policies of which the expropriation/ privatization of the land is only one, but fundamental aspect (Dalla Costa M. and Dalla Costa G.F., eds., 1993).

When it is not directly the expropriation and expulsion of the rural communities, without anything in exchange, the capitalist 'development alternative' not only removes an assured sub-

sistence and replaces it with an uncertain wage, but deepens the gap between the male and the female conditions. Significant, once more, in this respect, is the example (Shiva, 1989) also quoted by Mies (1992) of the Chipko women, who oppose the felling of trees for commercial purposes, in the Himalayan forests. As often is the case, the men were less determined in their opposition, because they were tempted by the prospect of the jobs they would get in the saw-mills.

But the women wondered how much of that money/wage they would have received and thus they opposed the creation of a hierarchy based on having or not having a wage. Above all, they asked what would happen to all of them once the forest, the basis of their subsistence, would be swallowed by the saw-mills, which would also be closed since there would be no more wood to cut. The women said clearly that they needed no jobs from the government or private businessmen as long as they kept their land and their forests.

In Shiva (1989), there are many other episodes of this kind. After five centuries in which the same scenario has been repeated, the lesson has been learned in the most remote corners of the earth. Thus, there is a great determination not to put one's life in the hands of the planners of development and under-development¹², to stop others from plunging whole populations into a total uncertainty, bound to produce hunger, tomorrow if not today; a determination to avoid being turned into beggars or refugee camp inmates.

Ecofeminist practices and positions, linking nature, women, production and consumption in a single approach, are often criticised for "romanticism" by male scholars. One wonders, just to raise the most simple question, what value do these scholars attribute to the right to survive of those communities—and there are many of them—whose subsistence and life system are guaranteed precisely by the existence of this relationship with nature; while 'development plans' almost always presuppose the sacrifice of the vast majority of the individuals that constitute these communities. Significantly, Mary Mellor (1993) observes in this

connection: "I see all this as something that men should prove to be unfounded, rather than as something that the feminists must justify."

As it emerges, with increasing clarity, from the "charters" that various first nation peoples have elaborated, with the growth of their movement, over the last decades, together with the right to land, i.e., the right to survival/life, there is an increasingly strong demand for the right to identity, dignity, to one's own history, to the maintenance of the complex of collective and individual rights belonging to one's own culture, and the right to work out one's own future starting from one's own premises. Obviously, there is no intention here of skating over the contradictions within the existing customs and systems of rules, above all those between men and women. If anything, what needs immediate clarification is that capitalist development, far from offering solutions to these problems, most often aggravates them. Politicians promoting development often try to suppress the women's movements which deal with these questions. Nevertheless these movements have grown and are creating an increasing number of new networks, that struggle, denounce and demonstrate great determination in changing a state of affairs clearly causing women harm.

In this connection, the Chiapas revolt is exemplary since it brought to international attention how the Maya women defined their rights with respect to men and society at large. Work and grass-roots debate in the communities produced a code of rights.¹³ Some rights concern the economic/social/civil plane, such as the right to work, to a fair wage, education, basic health care, the necessary food for oneself and one's children, the right to decide autonomously the number of children one wants to have and to rear, to choose one's companion without being required to marry him, to suffer no violence inside or outside the family. Other rights concern the political plane, such as the right to take part in managing the community, to hold office if democratically elected, to hold positions of responsibility in the Zapatista National Liberation Army (ZNLA). The code repeats that women must have all the rights and obligations deriving from revolutionary laws and

regulations. And in fact, women participate fully in the highest offices in the ZNLA.

When I was in Chiapas in the winter of 1992-93, and in San Cristobal I was struck by the numerous posters put up by women's right activists alongside the posters in praise of the guerrilla heroes. A year later, the great work achieved by these women took on new substance and became known throughout the world, disclosing how much progress had also been made within the community with regard to the relationship between the sexes. It is significant that an important issue, in the code of women's rights, corresponding to the centrality it has won in the Western world, is violence. I should only add that, during my visit, the year before the revolt, I was told in San Cristobal that the Maya women were no longer willing to go to the hospital to have their children for fear of being raped—evidently not by the members of their communities.

It seems clear that these women's elaboration of their rights was not postponed to a mythical and improbable phase, "after" the movement, that was aiming at a radical change in the state of things, but formed an integral part of it. The same thing happened in the elaboration of their rights by the Eritrean women during the Eritrean liberation war, and it is repeated in an increasing number of situations. These facts show how it is invalid to presume a lack of movement in 'non-advanced' societies because of a supposed observance of tradition.

I would also like to underscore that the relationship with nature¹⁴ is for all of us a fundamental contribution made by the movements of the indigenous, yet there is great resistance to it being recognized as such in the political discourse of urban male intellectuals that try to find a way to change the world.

As the Chipko movement shows—and numerous other examples are available from various parts of the planet—the *leaders are increasingly women in movements that link the maintenance, recovery and reinterpretation of a relationship with nature with a defence of economic subsistence and the conservation of*

the identity and historical-cultural dignity of the communities/civilizations to which they belong.

Insofar as their primary task is the reproduction of individuals in waged and non-waged economies, insofar as *they are unwaged subjects par excellence in both types of economy*, and their possibilities of autonomous subsistence are progressively undermined in the proceeding of capitalist development, *women* emerge as the *privileged interpreters* for the unwaged of the earth's future. Today, their critique and their theoretical contribution form a necessary moment in the formulation of a different development, or in any case in reasserting the right not to be developed against their will and interest.

On the other hand, international networking between feminist scholars, women active in various organizations concerned with women's condition, development and the condition of indigenous peoples, have created a greater awareness of these experiences of resistance and struggle, also among Italian women researchers. Several among these internationally known initiatives are cited by Cicolella (1993). One is the *Green Belt Movement* founded in 1977 by Wangari Maathai, from Kenya, who starting from the idea of 'afforestation for life,' has created green belts around cities in 12 African countries, where forests had been replaced by open spaces. The *Gabriela* group, in the Philippines, began its activities by safeguarding a mountain precious for its natural equilibrium and fragile ecosystem. The *Third World Network*, founded by a Chinese jurist Yoke Ling Chee, aims at forms of development that respond to people's real needs and, above all, are independent of aid from the industrial nations. The *Mapuche* movement in Chile, led by Alicia Nahelcheo, who was already active against the Pinochet dictatorship, is today struggling against development projects, the expropriation of land to build power stations, and the cropping for commercial purposes of the araucaria tree, whose fruit is a basic foodstuff.

But these are only a few examples. The ways in which many men and women try to guarantee their survival, and fight against this type of development, can be expected to multiply. Mean-

while, broad initiatives are growing at the international level¹⁵ designed to challenge the legitimacy of the World Bank and the IMF, and to block their directives. At the economic and social level, these are the key centers in the management of contemporary development, as well as the main factors in the poverty and degradation of the 'developing' countries.

Strong critiques and resistance against this form of development have produced a vast and articulated debate, in the course of which various interpretations of what a different development should be have emerged. Recent summaries (Gisfredi 1993) of the major positions stress the central role of the environment and the cultural context for the elaboration of any autochthonous project.[**] They also stress the significance of typologies that, in identifying the fundamental goals of development, list as basic needs, not only those concerning purely physical survival, but those concerning security, welfare, identity and liberty, against violence, material poverty, alienation and repression, which typify government rule in many "developing" countries.

A central element in these types of approaches remains self-reliance, which is guaranteed by mobilising all the human and material resources available locally and by using technologies compatible with the cultural and natural environment. Other approaches could be mentioned. To the list of basic needs, self-reliance, and eco-development, presented by the Dag Hammerskjold Foundation (1975), others have been added, as the debate has since significantly developed. The most questioned idea is 'sustainable development,' which emerged from the famous world commission for the environment and development chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland. The main criticism moved to it is that it confuses development with economic growth and confuses "everyone's future" with the future of the First World.

In any case, it is clear that any new approach concerning development makes sense only in so far as it expresses the demands of those men and women who have so far paid the heaviest price for development, while gaining the least from it; and in so far as it recognises *the right to reject development*, in all situ-

ations where people refuse it, as it often happens in many different parts of the world. As Gustavo Esteva said, as early as 1985, in his comments on a conference of the Society for International Development: "My people are tired of development, they just want to live." (quoted in Shiva 1989: p13)

Granted the perspective described above, a look at the contribution made by movements wanting to approach the question of development from a feminist viewpoint shows, in my view, that the most interesting approaches include eco-feminism, because its starting-point is respect for human life and the life of living beings in general. Since it appreciates, rather than devaluing, the knowledge and experience of women in indigenous communities, eco-feminism relaunches a perspective that valorizes the relationship with nature as the source of life and subsistence, the right to self-determination, and rejects the capitalist model of development.

I think that a cross between this feminism and the more radically anti-capitalist feminism, that has analysed the condition and struggles of women and the unwaged in this model of development, may make a very interesting contribution. In this context, I would like to recall, if only briefly, Vandana Shiva's conception of nature which forms the foundation of her discourse.

Shiva uses a reading of Indian cosmogony in which Nature (*Prakrti*) is an expression of Sakti, the female principle, dynamic primordial energy, the source of abundance. Joining up with the male principle (*Purusa*), *Prakrti* creates the world. Women, like any other natural being, have in themselves the female principle and, therefore, this capacity for creation and the maintenance of life. According to Vandana Shiva, the reductionist vision typical of Western science continually expels the female principle from the management of life, by the same token interrupting the life cycles and therefore the regeneration of life itself, creating destruction in its place. The reductionist vision with respect to nature and women ensures that they are reduced to means for the production of commodities and labor-power.

Patriarchal categories which understand destruction as "production" and regeneration of life as 'passivity' have generated a crisis for survival. Passivity, an assumed category of the 'nature' of nature and women, denies the activity of nature and life. Fragmentation and uniformity as assumed categories of progress and development destroy the living forces which arise from relationships within the 'web of life' and the diversity in the elements and patterns of these relationships. (Shiva 1989: p 3)

Feminism as ecology, and ecology as the revival of Prakrti, the source of all life, become the decentred powers of political and economic transformation and restructuring. (Shiva 1989: p 7)

Contemporary women's ecological struggles are new attempts to establish that steadiness and stability are not stagnation, and balance with nature's essential ecological processes is not technological backwardness but technological sophistication. (Shiva 1989: p 36)

The discourse on land, on water, on nature return to us, brought by the indigenous peoples' movements and the knowledge of indigenous women, the most precious of the riches that ancient civilizations hid and the secrets that they kept.

But with the land, there also returns to us the immense potential of a human diversity that has been able to resist and preserve its cultural heritage. And now it gives forceful expression to the will to work its own future autonomously. The need for a relationship with the earth, for liberty, time, for an escape from the constraints of labor and the relations that the capitalist model of development wants to continue to impose on us, also represents something the expropriated Western humanity is thirsting for. Perhaps, the fact that the Chiapas revolt was heard so widely across the world, is because it gave many people their first perception of the real possibility of a different life project, which they had resignedly relegated to an impossible dream world—a world in which life would not be all work, nor nature an enclosed park, in which relationships are prepackaged, pre-codified and

atomized. It is evidently because these deep and painful chords were struck in the psyche of the expropriated Western humanity that the whole social body vibrated with the Chiapas rebels, beating a thousand keys, transmitting, declaring, sustaining. A thousand arms and a thousand legs were moved, and a thousand voices heard.

A hinterland of communication and liaison has been constructed with the growth of the indigenous, "first nation" movements across the Americas and in the world, during the last twenty years. Relations, analyses and information have been more closely and more strongly interwoven, especially in opposition to the North America Free Trade Agreement. And all of this has become the primary tissue for communication between, and action by, different sectors in the working social body. Workers and non-indigenous people, ecological movement militants, women's groups, and human rights activists have been attracted into a complex support action, helping and monitoring from various parts of the world. But it is clear that, in the last analysis, what has moved all these individuals, groups and associations is the fact of having recognised their own demands in the demands of the indigenous peoples' movements; of having seen their own liberation in the indigenous peoples' movement's chances of liberation.

The indigenous people have brought the keys, and they are on the table. They can open other doors to enter the Third Millennium. Outside, the full flood has arrived, breaking the concrete banks and drowning the latest high-yield variety of rice...The peasants take out their hundreds of seed varieties, while Aman pushes its stems out above the water.

Notes

1. See *Il Manifesto*, February 8 1994, but many other newspapers have used the same image.
2. This is the subject of the third part of *Midnight Notes Collective* (1992).

3. In lectures on *Capital* that I used to give each year, I devoted some comments in 1970 to the fundamental question of the two opposite tendencies characterising the history of the working day. They were published later (Dalla Costa M., 1978). In my university courses, I continue illustrating fundamental parts of *Capital*, especially those concerning primitive accumulation. The social processes in this period that were neglected by Marx in *Capital*, e.g., the great witch-hunt, have been analysed by the feminist scholars I worked with (Fortunati 1981; Federici and Fortunati 1984), with the aim of clarifying the capitalist sexual division of labor and the construction of proletarian women's individuality in capitalism. It is no coincidence that this period is considered as crucial by various currents of feminist thought.
4. The term *maldevelopment* and its French equivalent *maldeveloppement* were originally coined with a biological meaning in mind, rather than a political one. The reference to the idea that the wrong type of development is male-related is clear.
5. India has about 50 million members of tribes, recognised as such by the Indian constitution because of their particularly disadvantaged situation. They are found most extensively in the states of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Maryana, and are at most marginally integrated into the market economy. Their specific social organization tends to be non-masculinist and generally speaking egalitarian, with a particularly 'sustainable' approach to natural resources. But they are considered as without caste, and are despised and exploited as cheap or unpaid labor when they are forced to join agricultural or industrial units. Consequently, 'tribals' referring to India, has not only a social-anthropological meaning but a juridical one as well.
6. "Capital asks no questions about the length of life of labour-power"... "What experience generally shows to the capitalist is a constant excess of population"... "*Après moi le déluge!* is the watchword of every capitalist and every capitalist nation" (Marx, 1976, Vol. 1, p. 376, 380, 381).
7. In *La Repubblica*, May 17, 1994, an article entitled, "Where have the Sarajevo children disappeared to?" Wondering where the children evacuated from the Bosnian war have ended up, the article quoted

spine-chilling figures from the humanitarian organizations on trafficking in children, and reported the case of one 14-year-old girl who ended up with Italian go-betweens and managed to escape. Also mentioned is an article in the weekly, *Focus*.

8. The large number of children used in the pornography market was re-ferred to with increasing frequency in the Italian media in 1993-94.
9. International criminal networks and international crime organizations with legal terminals are growing around the clandestine traffic in organs. The Italian public television broadcasted a series of programs on this issue. One of the most interesting, on March 5, 1994, on the second state channel, provided evidence of a relationship between these organizations and legal terminals in France.
10. It seems worthwhile putting this question given the incredible figures on slavery published recently: 200 million in the world, according to the *Economist* of January 6, 1990. 100 million are reportedly children, according to *Il Manifesto*, 8.06.1994, which quotes a UNICEF report published on the previous day.
11. *Il Mattino di Padova*, 4.06.1994, published an article on the discovery and denunciation of an organization that was exploiting women and war cripples from ex-Yugoslavia. In Mestre (Venice), the former were sent to work as prostitutes, the latter as beggars.
12. An effective description of the creation of under-development through development, in the Port Harcourt area in Nigeria, is provided by Silvia Federici (1992).
13. Since January 1, 1994, the day when the revolt broke out, there has been a continual flow of information in the press. In Italy, *Il Manifesto* and other newspapers have reported the main demands of the rebels and, with them, those of the women of Chiapas as they were being put forward. Two articles, with precise information on the Zapatistas' demands and mobilisation, are Gomez (1994) and Cleaver (1994). A brief synthesis of the women's rights, as stipulated in the Women's Revolutionary Law, is to be found in Coppo and Pisani (eds. 1994). I must add that a book not to be missed for learning about the condition of the Maya women, this time in Guatemala, is Burgos (1991), *My name is Rigoberta Menchù*.

14. It must be recognized that, in recent years, there has been a growth, internationally, of attempts to link different theoretical perspectives with approaches whose focus is the relationship with nature, particularly Marxism and ecology. The magazine best-known for publishing this type of debate is *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, which is explicitly located in an eco-Marxist perspective. In this magazine, a particularly broad discussion has developed around the O'Connor (1992) theses on the "second contradiction of capitalism." On the relationship between the left and ecological issues, see, among others, Ricoveri (1994).
15. Just to mention two initiatives: the Circle of the Peoples coordinated a wide range of associations in a counter-summit against the Naples Summit of the Group of Seven on July 8-10, 1994, and, in the first ten days of October of the same year, a large number of associations took part in a counter-summit in Madrid for the annual assemblies of the World Bank and the IMF, that year marking the fiftieth anniversary of Bretton Woods and the international financial organisations created there. For the same event, the League for the Rights of the Peoples worked at the Lelio Basso Foundation in Rome to produce a statement on the Bretton Woods institutions to be published when the summit was on in Madrid, just as it was done for the IMF general assembly in Berlin in 1988.

* This article was first published in English in *Common Sense* n. 17, 1995. Some of its main thesis have been since then further developed in "Some Notes on Neoliberalism, on Land and on the Food Question" (Dalla Costa M. 1997) and in "The Native in Us, The Land We Belong To." (Dalla Costa M. 1998)

** Autochthon, from the Greek [ott pl.] are of the earliest known inhabitants of any country and/or an animal or plant that is native to a region, Greek meaning "from the earth itself." [Editor]

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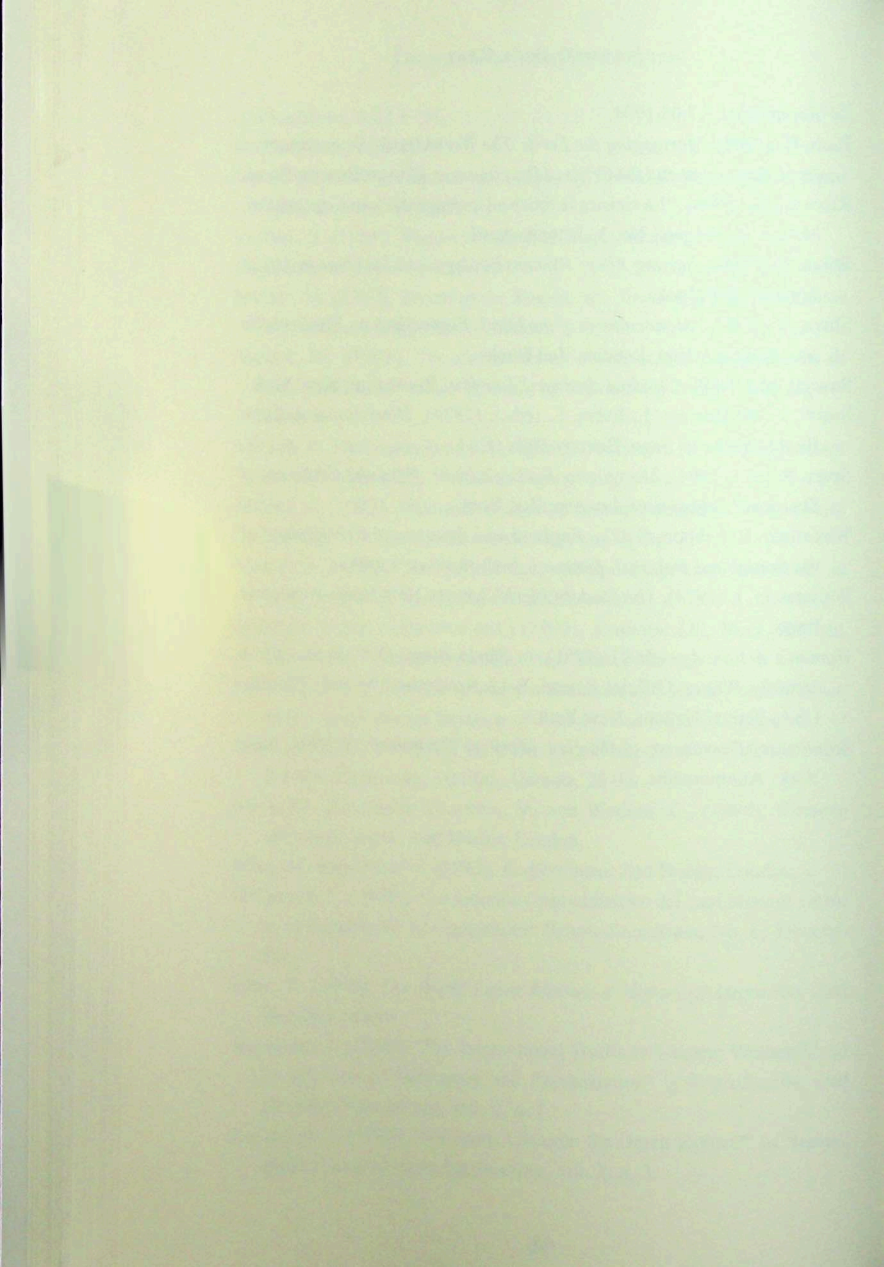
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REPRODUCTION AND FEMINIST STRUGGLE IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR

Silvia Federici

Introduction

Starting with the recognition that patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale constitute the structural and ideological framework within which women's reality today has to be understood, the feminist movement worldwide cannot but challenge this framework, along with the sexual and the international division of labour which are bound up with it. (Mies 1986)

.....capitalist development has always been *unsustainable* because of its *human impact*. To understand this point, all we need to do is to take the viewpoint of those who

have been and continue to be killed by it. A presupposition of capitalism's birth was the sacrifice of a large part of humanity—mass extermination, the production of hunger and misery, slavery, violence and terror. Its continuation requires the same presuppositions. (M. Dalla Costa, 1995)

It is generally recognized that over the last two decades the women's liberation movement has acquired an international dimension, as feminist groups and movements have formed in every part of the world and, in the wake of the United Nations sponsored global conferences on women, feminist networks and initiatives have also grown worldwide. Thus, there seems to be today a broader understanding of the problems that women are facing in different countries than at any other time in the past.

However, if we examine the perspectives that inspire feminist politics in the United States and Europe, we must conclude that most feminists have not yet reckoned with the changes that the new global economy¹ has produced in the conditions of women, or have recognized their implications for feminist organizing. In particular, many feminists fail to acknowledge that the restructuring of the world economy is responsible not only for the global spread of poverty, but also for the emergence of a new colonial order, that deepens the divisions among women, and that this new colonialism must be a main target for feminist struggles if women's liberation is to be possible. Presently, despite the fact that most feminists, in the United States and Europe, are concerned with global issues, such an awareness is missing. Thus, even those who are critical of the global economy and of the policies pursued by international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.), often settle for reformist positions that condemn gender discrimination, but leave the structural problems connected with the global hegemony of capitalist relations intact. Many feminists, for instance, deplore the "unequal burden" that structural adjustment and other austerity programs place on women (Beneria and Feldman eds. 1992; Elson 1992; Bakker 1994),² and recommend that development agen-

cies pay more attention to women's needs, or incentivize women's "participation in development planning." More rarely they take an open stand against the programs themselves, or the agencies that impose them, or acknowledge that poverty and economic exploitation are across the world a male destiny as well.³ There is also a tendency to think of the problems that women internationally are facing through the category of 'human rights,' and therefore to privilege legal reform as the primary arena for governmental intervention,⁴ an approach that again fails to challenge the international economic order and the economic exploitation upon which it is based. Also the discourse on violence against women, has generally centered on rape and domestic violence along the lines set by the United Nations⁵, while it has often ignored the structural violence inherent in the logic of capitalist accumulation: the violence of economic policies that condemn millions of women, men and children to starve, the violence that accompanies the land expropriations demanded by the World Bank for its "development projects" and, not last, the violence of the wars and counter-insurgency programs that, through the 1980s and 1990s, have bloodied almost every corner of the world and represent the other side of development.

As I have suggested, one of the main limits of contemporary feminist politics is that they are not strategically rooted in an analysis of the changes that have taken place, since the late 1970s, in the material conditions of women's lives, as a consequence of the restructuring of the world economy and the international division of labor. We do have many case studies detailing the impoverishment that women across the world have experienced, and the new forms of exploitation to which they are being subjected. What is often missing, however, is an overall analysis of the ways in which women's work, and particularly the work of reproduction, has been restructured internationally, and the implications of this restructuring for the possibility of a feminist international movement. These are the questions that I address in this essay.

My first objective is to demonstrate that the global economy, and the new international division of labor, are rooted in the crisis

of social reproduction provoked, in the Third World, by the policies adopted by international capital since the late 1970s. For millions of people in Africa, Asia, Latin America would not have become dependent on the world economy for their survival except for the fact that they lost every means of subsistence, as a result of war and economic "adjustment." Second, on the pauperization of the Third World an international reorganization of reproduction has been built that transfers from the "North" to the "South" a significant part of the work required for the reproduction of the metropolitan work-force, which means that third world women are being "integrated" in the world economy as producers of labor-power to be used and "consumed" in the industrialized regions of the world, as well as producers of commodities for export. Last, I argue that these processes have opened up a crisis in feminist politics, as they have introduced new divisions and hierarchies among women, that consolidate the mechanisms of female exploitation. This, I argue, is a crisis that must be addressed as a matter of political priority, if international feminism in the "metropolises" is to be a women's liberation project and not simply a vehicle for the further "rationalization" of the world economic order.

The New International Division of Labor (NIDL)

In order to evaluate the consequences of the new international division of labor (NIDL) for the conditions of women it is necessary, however, to reconsider what we mean by this concept; for the conventional theory provides a partial vision of the changes that have occurred on this terrain. As is well-known, the NIDL is usually identified with the restructuring of commodity production that has taken place internationally since the mid 1970s when, in response to intensifying labor conflict, the multinational corporations began to relocate in the "developing countries" part of their industrial outfits, above all in the labor-intensive sectors, like textile and electronics. The new international division of labor is thus equated with the formation of Free Trade Zones (FTZ)-

-industrial zones free from any regulation and organized for export-oriented production—and with the capacity acquired by the transnational corporations (TNCs) to restructure their productive activities on the basis of a true “global assembly line” (Michalet 1976; Nash and Fernandez-Kelly eds. 1983; Grunwald and Flamm 1985; Alger 1988; Ward 1990; Carnoy et al 1993).⁶

It is on the basis of this theory that both the media and economic planners have relaunched the myth of capitalism as the great equalizer, and the promoter of “interconnectedness,” this time presumably achieved on a planetary scale. As the argument goes, we are witnessing the industrialization of the third world. This process (we are told) will both eliminate the hierarchies that historically have characterized the international division of labor, and have a positive impact also on the sexual division of labor. For the women who form the bulk of the work-force in the Free Trade Zones presumably benefit from their engagement in industrial labor, by gaining a new independence and the skills necessary to compete on the international labor market (Lim 1983 : 81).

Although accepted by neo-liberal economists,⁷ this theory has not been exempt from criticism.⁸ Already in *The New Helots* (1987), Robin Cohen observed that the movement of capital from the “North” to the “South” was not quantitatively sufficient to justify the hypothesis of a “New” International Division of Labor. By the end of the 1980s, in fact, only 14% of the world manufacturing activities was taking place in “developing countries,” and the industrial “boom” was concentrated in a few areas: South Korea, Honk Kong, Taiwan, Mexico (Cohen 1987: 242-243; Guelfi 1985: 142). It has also become evident that the introduction of Free Trade Zones, by its nature, does not develop the industrial basis of the host countries, nor does it have a positively effect on their employment levels, while it is a drain on the local resources (Nash and Fernandez-Kelly eds., 1983). As for the women employed in the Free Trade Zones, their organizations have often denounced that this work is a form of “underdevelopment,” if not a hidden form of slavery, both from the viewpoint of

income levels and of the technological know-how. (McAfee 1991: 87-89; Sistren 1986).⁹ As is well-known, wages in the Free Trade Zones are kept below subsistence and are many times lower than the minimum wages in the industrialized countries;¹⁰ in addition, women there are forced to work long hours in very unsafe conditions, they are persecuted when they try to organize and are subjected to constant abuses, like daily body searches, to check if they take anything out of the plants, compulsory forms of birth control, to ensure that they do not get pregnant and disrupt production (National Labor Committee 1995), and cruel prohibitions concerning their movements. In these "free" zones, women are often locked up, to make sure that they fill their 'quotas,' so that, for hours and hours, they cannot take a break from a job that, at times, continues even into the night. As a result, both in Mexico and China, hundreds have died, because they could not flee from buildings shaken by an earthquake or burning up in flames.¹¹

These, however, are not the only, or the main reasons why the conventional theory about the new international division of labor should be revised. Most important is the fact that the only area of work and economic activity which the conventional theory recognizes is the production of commodities, while it gives no attention to *reproduction*, despite two decades of feminist writings and debates showing the crucial role of this process for the accumulation of capital. Thus, the conventional theory of the NIDL has practically nothing to say about the macroscopic changes that the expansion of capitalist relations has introduced in the reproduction of labor-power and the conditions of social reproduction in the third world. It is significant that the only aspect of reproduction mentioned by theorists of the NIDL is the impact of work in the Free Trade Zones on women's family life and housework management.¹² This, however, is only part of a much wider process that has devastated people's lives throughout the third world, and without which the introduction of the Free Trade Zones, and the restructuring of the international division of labor, would not have been possible.

If we look at the globalization of the economy and the NIDL from the viewpoint of both production and reproduction, we arrive at a very different conception of what both these developments represent, and the mechanisms and policies that sustain them. We can recognize, first, that the expansion of capitalist relations is premised today as well (no less than at the times of the English Enclosures, the *conquista* of the Americas, and the Atlantic slave-trade) on the separation of the producers from the means of their (re)production. This means that the global economy is built upon a major restructuring of social reproduction and class relations worldwide, designed to destroy any economic activity that is not market-oriented, beginning with subsistence farming, and that it has been leading to the formation, in every part of the third world, of a proletariat deprived of any means of reproduction, and thus forced to depend on monetary relations for its survival, even though it is most often deprived of any access to a monetary income.

This is the situation that has been created in much of Africa, Asia, South America by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) through the "debt crisis," the enforcement of Structural Adjustment Programs and the politics of economic liberalization which, combined, are the pillars of the new world economic order, precisely because they have separated millions of people from any income and means of reproduction, and have forced them to depend upon, and compete on the international labor market.

If we look at the NIDL from the viewpoint of these economic policies we also draw a picture far different from that projected by the advocates for the New World Order.¹³ The devastating consequences of these policies for the populations affected are by now so abundantly and unequivocally documented (Altvater et al 1987; Gai 1991; McAfee 199; Rau 1991) that even the World Bank has had to concede to possible mistakes. What needs to be stressed, however, is that these policies have undermined the conditions of social reproduction in much of the third world, and erased the most important achievement of the anti-colonial

struggle, i.e. the commitment by the new independent states to invest in the reproduction of the national proletariat. They have also led to a state of generalized poverty that has no precedents in the post colonial period.

The crisis of social reproduction in the third world has directly resulted from the massive cuts in government spending for social services, the continuous currency devaluations, the wage freezes, the liberalization and privatization policies that constitute the core of 'structural adjustment' and "neo-liberalism." As part of these policies, we must also mention the ongoing land expropriations that are being carried on in many third world regions, in homage to the commercialization of agriculture and the privatization of land property relations,¹⁴ and because of the increasing institution of a state of endemic warfare. Endless wars, massacres, entire populations in flight from their lands and turned into refugees or exposed to famines: these are not just the consequences of a dramatic impoverishment that intensifies the contrasts due to ethnic, political or religious differences, as the media encourage us to believe. Rather, they are the necessary complements of the privatization process (Hanlon 1991; Macrae and Zwi 1994; de Waal 1997), and of the attempt to create a world where nothing escapes the logic of profit, the ultimate means to expropriate populations who, until recently, had access to some land and natural resources (forests, rivers) which now are being appropriated by multinational corporations.

Structural Adjustment and economic liberalization have also dismantled the local industry in much of the third world, and marked the end of the development plans pursued in the 1960s on the basis of 'import-substitution,' that were supposed to guarantee third world nations a certain degree of industrial autonomy. For opening the domestic markets to foreign imports has allowed the transnational corporations to flood them with their products, with which the local industries could never compete.¹⁵ The introduction of Free Trade Zones, wherever it has taken place, has not remedied this situation, but has only exploited it, as the impoverishment of the population in so many third world countries has

enabled foreign companies to impose wages below subsistence levels. This is the reason why the Free Trade Zones function today primarily as a springboard for emigration (Sassen 1990: 99-114).¹⁶

That the industrialization of the third world is a myth is also proven by the fact that, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the transfer of capital and industries from the first to the third world has been superseded by the transfer of capital and labor from the third to the first world. The scale of this phenomenon can be measured by the fact that the remittances of the emigrants represent the second largest international monetary flow after the revenues of the oil companies, and in some parts of the third world (e.g. in Mexico) entire villages are dependent upon them. According to World Bank statistics, from \$24 billion in the 1970s, remittances have grown in the 1980s to \$65 billion, and these figures refer only to the remittances that pass through the banks and do not include those "in kind," like the furniture, TV sets and other goods that emigrants bring back with them in their visits home (Stalker 1994: 122-123).

The first consequence of the impoverishment to which economic liberalization has condemned the third world proletariat has been, in fact, the take off of a vast migratory movement from the "South" to the "North," that has followed the transfer of capital caused by the payment of the external debt. This migratory movement of biblical proportions,¹⁷ structurally connected to the new economic order and bound to globalize the labor-market, is a telling evidence of the ways in which the international division of labor has been restructured (Colatrella 1999).

It demonstrates that the debt crisis and the politics of "structural adjustment" have determined a situation of *global apartheid*, as they have transformed the Third World into an immense pool of labor, that functions with respect to the metropolitan economies in the same way as the "homelands" functioned with respect to the white areas in South Africa. Not accidentally, it is regulated by a similar system of passes and restrictions,¹⁸ which guarantees that in the countries of arrival immigrants are twice deval-

ued, both as immigrants and (increasingly) as undocumented workers. (Contrary to what is commonly assumed, it is by introducing restrictions that force immigrant workers to be undocumented that the state can use immigration to cut the cost of labor. For only if foreign immigrants are socially and politically vulnerable, can immigration be used to contain the demands of the local working class) (Sassen-Koob 1983:184).

For those who cannot emigrate, or do not have access to remittances sent by emigrants, the alternative is a life of hardships and a burden of work hardly imaginable by people who live in the 'advanced' capitalist countries. Lack of food, medicines, potable water, electricity, schools, viable roads, mass unemployment, are now the daily reality in most of the third world. It is a reality that is reflected in the constant outbreak of epidemics, in the disintegration of family life,¹⁹ in the phenomenon of children who live in the streets or work in near slavery conditions (Sawyer 1988). This reality is also reflected in the intense struggles, often taking the form of riots, by which every day, in the 'adjusted' countries, the population resists the closing of the local industries, the hike in the prices of basic goods and transports, and the financial squeeze to which they are subjected in the name of paying the debt (Walton and Seddon 1994).

Just on the basis of this situation, it should be possible to agree that any feminist project that is concerned exclusively with sexual discrimination, and fails to place the feminization of poverty in the context of the advance of capitalist relations, is condemned to irrelevance and/or co-optation. In addition, if we examine the restructuring that the new international division of labor has introduced in the work of reproduction, we clearly see that either the feminist movement opposes this process, or it becomes the accomplice of a deeply anti-feminist politics. For an essential aspect of the NIDL is an international redistribution of reproduction work (as well as a redistribution of production) that not only creates deeper divisions among women, but also strengthens the hierarchies inherent to the sexual division of labor.

Emigration, Reproduction and International Feminism

If it is true that the remittances sent by emigrants constitute the main international monetary flow, after the revenues of the oil companies, then we must conclude that the most important commodity that the third world exports to the first world today is labor. In other words, also in the present phase of capitalism, capitalist accumulation is above all the accumulation of workers, and today this process occurs primarily in the third world. This means, however, that a significant part of the reproduction work necessary to produce the metropolitan work-force is performed by third world women. Behind emigration, in fact, an immense "gift" of domestic labor is hidden.²⁰ It is labor that is never taken into account in the computation of the third world's external debt and yet is essential for the accumulation process in the industrialized countries, where emigration serves to offset demographic decline, to keep wages down, and to transfer surplus from the colonies to the "metropolises" (Nash and Fernandez-Kelly eds.1983: 178-179). Thus, *through emigration, third world women directly contribute to the accumulation of wealth in the 'advanced' capitalist countries*, not only as producers of goods but also as (re)producers of workers, for the factories, the hospitals, agriculture and commerce. This is a fact that the international feminist movement must acknowledge, both in order to unmask what "integration in the global economy" actually involves, and to demystify the ideology of "aid to the third world," that hides an immense theft of unpaid work at the expense of third world women.

In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, other phenomena have developed that demonstrate the attempt to redistribute the work of reproduction of the metropolitan work-force on the shoulders of third world women. Among the most significant we must include :

(a) the employment, on a large scale, of emigrant women coming from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean Islands, South America, as domestics in the industrialized countries, as well as in the oil

producing countries of the Middle East²¹. As Cynthia Enloe has observed, the economic politics of the International Monetary Fund have enabled the governments in Europe, the United States and Canada to resolve the housework crisis that was at the origin of the feminist movement, and to “free” thousand of women for extra-domestic work. The employment of Filipino or Mexican women who, for a modest sum, clean houses, raise children, prepare meals, take care of the elderly, has allowed many middle class women to avoid a burden of work that they did not want, or could no longer perform, without, at the same time, reducing their standard of living (Enloe 1990: 178-179). Enloe adds that many European and North American women have justified this choice, with the illusion that, by hiring a domestic worker, they are contributing to resolve the problem of poverty in the world. However, this solution represents a set back for the feminist struggle; for solidarity among women enters into crisis when what brings women together is a “maids and madams” relation, which is all the more problematic as it is tainted by all the social biases that still surround housework—for instance, that it is not real work and, therefore, should be paid as little as possible, that it must be accompanied by an emotional involvement in the lives of the people it reproduces, that it does not have well defined boundaries (Romero 1992: 97-112). The employment of a domestic worker, moreover, once again makes women (rather than the state) responsible for reproduction, and weakens the struggle against the sexual division of labor in the family, since it spares women the task of confronting their male partners concerning the sharing of the housework (*ibid.*: 102). As for immigrant women, taking jobs as domestics is a painful choice, since the work is low paid, and demands that they care for other people’s families while they often had to leave their own behind, and face many years of loneliness, and the dangers connected to a position that socially and legally is very vulnerable. Not accidentally, the destiny of Flor Contemplacion, the Filipino domestic worker who was hung in Singapore in March 1995, upon the false charges of her employer,

has become a symbol of their condition for the women who from the third world go abroad to work as domestic workers.

(b) the development of a vast international *baby-market*, organized through the mechanism of adoptions. Already, by the end of the 1980s, it was calculated that an adopted child entered the United States every 48 minutes (Raymond 1994: 145) and, at the beginning of the 1990s, from South Korea alone, 5,700 children were being exported yearly to the United States (Chira 1988). Today, what feminists have described as the international "traffic of children" has spread also in the former socialist countries, above all in Poland and Russia, where the discovery of agencies that sell children (in 1994 more than 1,500 were exported just to the United States) has fueled a national scandal (Stanley 1994, 1995). We have also seen the development of *baby farms*, where children are produced specifically for export (Raymond 1994:141-142), and the increasing employment of third world women as surrogate mothers (Raymond 1989a: 51-52). Surrogacy, as well as adoption, allow women from the 'advanced' capitalist countries to avoid the risk of interrupting their career, or jeopardizing their health, to have a child. In turn, third world governments benefit from the fact that the sale of every child brings foreign currency to their coffers; and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund tacitly approve this practice, because the sale of children serves to correct "demographic excesses," and is in harmony with the principle that debtor nations must export all the resources they have (Raymond 1989b, 1995).

(c) the massification, in some countries of Asia (Thailand, South Korea, Philippines), of the *sex-industry* and *sex-tourism*, that serve an international clientele ranging from tourists to the employees of Japanese companies to whom, in recent years, "pleasure trips" have been offered as a bonus, to the U.S. Army which, since the Vietnam War, has used these countries as Rest and Recreation areas (Thorbeck 1987; Enloe 1990, 1993; Truong 1990; Raymond 1989, 1994; Barry 1984, 1995). By the end of the 1980s, it was calculated that, in Thailand alone, out of a population of 52 million people, one million women worked in the sex-industry.

To this we must add the enormous increase in the number of women from the third world, or the former socialist countries, who work as prostitutes in Europe, the United States and Japan, often in conditions of slavery (Sawyer 1988; Barry 1995), as in the case of the Thai women recently found in a New York brothel, where they were kept prisoners by the organization that had paid their trips to this country, and convinced them to come to the United States with the promise of a job (Goldberg 1995) (22).

(d) the "traffic" of "mail-order brides" that, in the 1980s, has developed on an international scale (Villapando 1989; Raymond 1994; Narayan 1995; Barry 1995). In the U.S. alone, about 3,500 men every year marry women chosen by mail-order. In the great majority of cases, the brides are young women coming from the poorest regions of South East Asia, or from South America, although, more recently, also women from Russia and other former socialist countries have chosen this means of emigration. In 1979, 7,759 Filipino women have left their country by this means (Barry 1995: 154). The traffic in 'mail-order brides' exploits, on one side, the desperate poverty of women and, on the other, the sexism and racism of European and American men, who want a wife over whom they can exert a total control, and count on the vulnerability of women who are forced to make this choice.

(e) the massification of the tourist industry that relies primarily on the labor of women as hotel maids, laundry workers, cooks, artisans (80% of the work-force in the great tourist hotels is made of women) (Enloe 1990: 34-35; 1993: 113-115).

Taken as a whole, these phenomena demonstrate that the new international division of labor is the vehicle of a fiercely anti-feminist political project and that, far from being a means of female emancipation, the expansion of capitalist relations intensifies the exploitation of women. First, the new international division of labor brings back, at the center of the organization of work, forms of slavery that we would have imagined extinct with the demise of the colonial empires. Further, it repropose the image of woman as a sexual object and breeder; and it deepens the divi-

sions among women, through a specialization and fixation of tasks that reduce our life possibilities, and introduce among us new hierarchies and stratifications, objectively jeopardizing the possibility of a common struggle.

The new international division of labor means that many third world women must work as domestics or prostitutes, at home or abroad, because no other options are available to them; meanwhile many first world women, particularly among the middle class, are liberated from housework, but at the price of becoming like men, that is, at the price of not having time for a family and children, not to mention time for friendships, community relations and political activity. Thus, the NIDL strengthens the sexual division of labor; it strengthens the separation of production from reproduction, and separates not only women from men, but women from women, instituting among women a relation similar to that which existed between white and black women, under the *apartheid* regime in South Africa.²³

The anti-feminist character of the new international division of labor is so evident that we can ask to what extent it has been the work of the "invisible hand" of the market, or it has been a consciously planned response to the struggles that women have waged, both in the third world and in the metropolises, against discrimination, unpaid labor and "underdevelopment" in all their forms. Be it as it may, it is obvious that in Europe and the United States as well, feminists must organize against the alternatives which the new international division of labor forces upon women, and the recolonization attempt on which it is based, which includes 'structural adjustment,' the politics of military intervention, the global take over by the transnational corporations.

In addition, feminists must reopen their struggle with the state on the terrain of reproduction.

It is not enough, in fact, to condemn any particular practice or form of behavior, if we want to put an end to the divisions that are being created among women internationally. It is not enough, for instance, to criticize the women who employ domestic workers, as it is often done among feminists, as if these women were

especially insensitive to their "sisters" needs. For as long as reproduction remains an individual or family responsibility, many women may not have much of a choice but to hire a domestic, in a context where more than 50% of women, both in Europe and the United States, have an extra-domestic job, and work-conditions that do not allow for much "flexibility." This is one reason why many women who have young children are on welfare; but even this alternative is no longer available, at least in the United States, as welfare is on the way to extinction, the object of a reform that is practically abolishing it (Firestone 1995). There is also the danger that condemning the employment of domestic workers, without proposing and struggling for a real alternative, may reinforce the illusion that housework is reducible at will, and can be easily combined with another job, that is, the illusion that housework is not necessary work. This is an illusion that has plagued feminist politics in the 1970s, and we now know that we have paid a high price for it, since it has meant that at present most women do not even have access to child care. There is no doubt, in fact, that if in Europe and the U.S. the feminist movement had concentrated on making the state recognize the work of reproduction as work and take financial responsibility for it, we would not have witnessed the dismantling of even the few services available in this field and a colonial solution to the "housework problem."²⁴ Today as well, a feminist mobilization forcing the state to pay for the reproduction of labor, would be more effective than any moral condemnation to put an end to the employment of domestics, or to change and improve the conditions of this employment and open the way to a new international solidarity among women.

Similar considerations apply to the efforts that feminists have made to convince governments to criminalize domestic violence, the "traffic" in women, and penalize any form of sexual discrimination. As crucially important as these initiatives have been, they appear limited in their capacity to liberate women, as they do not go to the roots of the abuses being perpetrated against

them, nor do they reckon with the plans of international capital and the agencies by which its globalization is promoted.

Will more severe punishments, for instance, remedy the abject poverty that leads parents, in some countries, to sell their children into prostitution? And how can third world governments commit themselves to upgrade the conditions of women when they are required by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to cut all social spending, and to adopt the strictest austerity programs? How, for instance, can third world governments give women equal access to education, or better health care, when they are required by structural adjustment, to cut all subsidies to public education (CAFA n. 2, 1991; n. 4, 1993; n. 5, 1993), healthcare, and, in many cases, to introduce fees even in elementary schools? (Z.M. Roy-Campbell: 220). And, again, how can parents be convinced to send their daughters to schools when even their sons who obtain a diploma remain unemployed? (Federici 1995). What meaning can the passing of a law, or even a United Nations declaration against all forms of sexual discrimination, have in this context?

If international feminism and "global sisterhood" are to be possible, it is indispensable that women in the first world make their own the struggle that third world women are carrying on against structural adjustment, the payment of the external debt, the introduction of intellectual property laws, which are the means by which the new international division of labor is being organized, and the strongest evidence that capitalism is unsustainable for the majority of the world population (Mies 1986, 1988a; Dalla Costa 1995). It must also be stressed again, as third world feminists have already so often done (Jonson-Odim 1991), that the inequalities that exist between women at the international level also pollute the politics of the feminist movement. For access to greater resources (travel, grants, publications and rapid means of communications) has allowed European and North American feminists to impose their agendas on the occasion of global conferences, and to play a hegemonic role in the definition of what feminism and feminist struggles must be (ibid.: 323-324).

The power relations generated by the new international division of labor are also reflected in the role that women play in the metropolitan Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that finance projects for women in the third world. Beside mobilizing third world women's unpaid labor, to compensate for the loss of social services and collective entitlements produced by structural adjustment, it is obvious that these projects create a patron-client power relation among women, not unlike that existing between "madams and maids." For it is the prerogative of the metropolitan NGO members to decide which projects to finance, how to evaluate them, which women in the community to take as points of reference, all of this with practically no accountability to the women whose labor they organize. It should be noticed that the function that the metropolitan non-governmental organizations play with regard to third world women is in part a neo-liberal response to the weakening of the role of the husband and the state in the third world as supervisors of women's work (through wage cuts and cuts in the budget devoted to social reproduction). As many men have left their homes to emigrate, or do not have the money to support a family, and as the state, in most of the third world, has been advised to defund social reproduction, *a new patriarchal regime is being enforced that aims to place women in the third world under the control of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the numerous organizations that manage "income generating projects" and "aid" programs.* This new patriarchy relies on the collaboration of European and North American women who, like new missionaries, are being recruited to train women in the 'colonies' to develop the attitudes necessary to become integrated in the global economy.²⁵

Conclusion

An analysis of the new international division of labor shows the limits of a feminist political strategy that accepts the worldwide expansion of capitalist relations, and does not place the struggle against gender-based discrimination in an anti-capitalist frame-

work. It shows that not only does capitalist development continue to be the production of poverty, disease, war and death, but it can survive only by creating new divisions within the proletariat internationally—divisions that, to this day, are the main obstacle to the realization of a society free from exploitation.

It is in this sense that feminist politics must subvert the new international division of labor (Mies 1986) and the project of economic globalization from which it originates. These are the politics that inspire the struggles of “grassroots feminists” and the indigenous peoples’ movements across the planet—struggles that demand the return of the expropriated lands, the non-payment of the external debt and the abolition of ‘adjustment’ and privatization. These are also the politics of the third world feminists who, for years, have been reminding us that the discourse on equality cannot be separated from a critique of the role of international capital in the plunder and recolonization of their countries, and that the struggles that women are carrying on, on a daily basis, in order to survive, are political struggles and feminist struggles (Fisher 1933; Koppers 1992; Caipora Women’s Group 1993).

Notes

1. We speak of the “new” global economy because, as “world system theorists” (I. Wallerstein 1974) and feminists theorists (M. Mies 1986) have often underlined, capitalism was born and in each phase has consolidated as a “world economic system.”
2. Consider what Diane Elson writes in *Unequal Burden* (Elson is a British economist who has worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and is the editor of *Male Bias in the Development Process* (1990):

Restructuring opens up new opportunities as well as closing old opportunities. Oppressed and disadvantaged groups

find that change creates the conditions for new forms of struggle. Trying to resist the tide of change... rarely works. A more creative approach that tries to influence the terms of the restructuring... may have more chance of success.

It would be overoptimistic to expect such an approach to fully protect oppressed and disadvantaged groups from the adverse effects of a crisis. But out of the crisis may come some progressive transformation of the conditions of struggle of oppressed and disadvantaged groups and the forging of new links between them... The very poorest people, on the barest margins of survival, may be unable to do more than desperately seek to adapt to the adverse conditions through existing strategies; and even in this they may fail... But for those able to survive there may be the possibility of strategies going beyond survival to transformation of existing social relations of oppression and disadvantage. (pp. 29-30)

In order to mitigate the effects of structural adjustment on the conditions of women, Elson recommends that male privileges be reduced and suggests that new taxes be introduced on cigarettes and alcohol, because this type of consumption drains the family's resources available to women (pp. 41-42).

3. Exemplary are the recommendations made by Pamela Sparr at the end of *Mortgaging Women's Lives, Feminist Critiques of Structural Adjustment* (1994), one of the first books to document the impact of structural adjustment on the conditions of women. Sparr proposes that the World Bank and the IMF:

(a) "Include gender and distribution by household as criteria in social impact assessment for project and policy lending."

(b) "En-gage in broad consultations about proposed policy and project loans" and "[m]ake the consultations politically and culturally safe for women" (p.196).

(c) "Develop an ongoing monitoring and feed-back loop concerning the impact of loans. Include women and households as factors to be monitored."

(d) "Make gender sensitivity and encouragement of local participation in the lending process (especially among women) features of all staff's jobs and major criteria for staff career enhancement and upward mobility".

(e) "Ensure that, at all times, at least one of the three members of the World Bank's independent inspection panel is a woman."

(f) "Inform women's groups that they have the right to bring a complaint to the inspection panel. Educate panel members and NGOs about how changes in women's conditions are ground to bring a complaint."

(g) Engage in gender training among all staff, including the I.M.F. and World Bank.

(h) "Raise gender concerns to the level of a vice president at the World Bank." (197) Five other similar recommendations follow. In order to reform structural adjustment, Sparr proposes that a "more creative" (but not better specified) solution" be adopted with regard to the unpaid work done by women in the home, in the community, in the fields; and in addition that public spending be geared to eliminating "gender" differences; that taxes be used to create day-care centers, so as to alleviate women's double burden—all measures, Sparr assures us, that are compatible with a neo-classic model of economics. Similar recommendations are offered in an appendix to J. Kerr ed., *Ours By Right* (1993).

4. A significant document with respect to this strategy is the collection of essays contained in *Ours By Right. Women's Rights are Human Rights* (Kerr ed. 1993), where programmatically all the problems that women face—including poverty and economic exploitation—are treated as "human rights violations" and attributed to the unequal treatment to which women are subject (pp. 4-5). The proposed remedy, then, is a better implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and the ratification by every country of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that the United Nations have adopted in 1979 (*ibid.*).

According to Kerr, this last Convention "provides a comprehensive framework for challenging the various forces that have cre-

ated and maintained discrimination based on sex" (p.5). As the essays contained in the book demonstrate, on a practical level, adopting the methodology of human rights means to document the abuses against women, to publicize them with the international agencies, to monitor the activities of the United Nations and the agencies presiding over "aid" and cooperation with the third world.

5. See the essay by Dorothy Q. Thomas "Holding Governments Accountable by Public Pressure". In J. Kerr ed., (1993): p.82-88.
6. See *The Global Assembly Line* (1986), a documentary that examines the internationalization of commodity production and the condition of work in the Free Trade Zones, with particular reference to Mexico and the Philippines.
7. For a recent version of this theory see the report prepared by the participants in the World Economic Forum, on the occasion of their annual meeting held in Davos (Switzerland) in the summer of 1994. In this report, however, the prevailing attitude is one of alarm, in front of the alleged industrialization of the third world, which is seen as the cause of the economic decline of the 'advanced' industrialized countries. According to the report, the spread of modern technologies to the "developing countries" is de-industrializing high-income, high wage nations; capital is being transferred to the third world where low-cost producers are flooding the world markets with manufactured goods. The report concludes that, in the future, this tendency will accelerate, producing more unemployment and wage losses in high-income countries (Paul Krugman, "Fantasy Economics." *New York Times* 9.26.94). In criticizing this thesis, which he considers dangerous for the expansion of the "free market," Krugman (who is professor of economics at Stanford University) points out that exports from the third world absorb only 1% of the first world income, and in 1993 the total capital transferred from the first to the third world amounted only to \$60 billions, "pocket change," in his view, "in a world economy that invests more than \$4 trillion a year" (ibid.). Krugman too, however, believes in the growing prosperity of the third world, claiming that the growth of exports, in recent years has allowed "hundreds of millions of people in the Third World to get their first taste of prosperity" (ibid.).

8. A different type of criticism of the conventional theory is presented by Manuel Castells (1993) who argues that what distinguishes the new international division of labor is not only the restructuring of world production, but the use of information. Castells repropose the stereotype theory according to which industrial competitiveness does not depend on cheap labor, but on access to technology and information. From this viewpoint, the third world no longer exists, having been replaced by the countries of East Asia that have industrially developed and by the emergence of a "fourth world" distinguished by its inability to access the "information economy" and its consequent marginalization (pp. 22-39). It turns out, from Castells' analysis, that almost all of Africa and South America, as well as a good part of Asia, fall into this "fourth world" (pp. 35-39). However, this does not prevent him from maintaining that the work done by the populations of these regions is irrelevant for the objectives of the world economy and for capitalist accumulation.
9. This does not mean that workers in the Free Trade Zones have been passive victims of the penetration of capitalist relations in their communities (Wolf 1990, pp. 27). For many young women, factory work can be a choice, when the alternative is work in the fields under the tutelage of their parents. It is also true that, from Mexico to the Philippines and the Caribbean Islands, women workers in the Free Trade Zones have built support networks and organized struggles that have often put company managers, and the governments who had given the green light to the Free Trade Zones on the defensive side. (Enloe 1990: p.168-174; Walton and Seddon 1994: p.75-80; *The Global Assembly Line*). But these mobilizations have occurred precisely in response to the abject conditions in which the women were forced to work.
10. In Indonesia, factories in the Free Trade Zones pay so little that the families of the workers must supplement their incomes (Wolf 1990: p.26).
11. We refer to the female workers who died in the earthquake of Mexico City in September 1985. The earthquake demolished about 800 industrial plants where women were locked up (Enloe 1990, p. 169). The greed of the employers can be measured by the fact that they

- rushed to extract the machinery from the debris (Enloe 1990, p. 170), and only because of the protests of the workers, who at the, moment of the earthquake were outside the plants waiting for a new shift, finally helped the wounded.
12. Among the most significant works on this topic is the volume edited by Kathryn Ward, *Women Workers and Global Restructuring* (1990). It includes the essay by D. L. Wolf on the families of female factory workers in the rural areas of Giava, and that by Susan Tiano on women employed in the *maquilas* at the border between Mexico and the United States. See also *Households and the World Economy* edited by Smith, Wallerstein and Evers (1984).
 13. The concept of a "New Economic Order" is used here with a different, in some respects opposite meaning from the one the term had when it was coined, in the second half of the 1970s, by the third world elites. In its original meaning, the idea of a "New Economic Order" expressed the demand by the third world bourgeoisie for a different relation with the industrialized countries, a different distribution of wealth at the international level, and the possibility of a national road to development. Therefore, the concept of a "New World Economic Order" prospected the end of the disparities between the first and the third world (Guelfi 1985). In this text, instead, the term is used to refer to the political and economic set up that has emerged with the imposition, at the world level, of economic neo-liberalism. It is in this sense that the term is now generally used.
 14. For an analysis of the responsibility of the World Bank in this respect see *Mortgaging the Earth* (1994) where Bruce Rich documents the social and ecological catastrophes caused by the projects financed by this organization in the third world.
 15. As in the former socialist countries, the programs of the World Bank and the I.M.F. have led to the closing down of the national industries: the tin mines in Bolivia, the copper mines in Zambia, the jute industry in Bangladesh, the textile industry in Tanzania, and the state-supported industries in Mexico.
 16. As Saskia Sassen has observed (1990, p. 99), the countries receiving the highest quota of foreign investment destined to export-oriented

production are those that send the highest number of emigrants abroad. They are also those where emigration is on the rise.

17. According to estimates of the International Labor Organization (ILO), by the mid 1980s, there were about 30 million people who had left their countries to seek work abroad. If, as Lydia Potts suggests, to these figures we add the families of the immigrants, non-documented immigrants, and refugees, we reach a figure beyond sixty millions (Potts 1990: p.159). Among these, in the United States., more than two thirds come from third world countries; in the oil producing countries of the Middle East the figures reaches nine tenths. In the European Economic Area there are today 15 million documented immigrants, including political refugees, and approximately 8 million undocumented immigrants (*World of Work* n. 3, April 1993). However, their numbers are destined to increase because, with mathematical precision, the politics of adjustment and liberalization continue to create new poverty and, with as much persistence, the World Bank and the other international agencies continue to repropose them, so that everything leads us to believe that the Diaspora from the third world will continue into the next century. This fact demonstrates that we are not facing a contingent situation, but rather a macroscopic, worldwide restructuring of work relations. On this issue see also the path breaking work of Steven Colatrella, "Structural Adjustment and the African Diaspora in Italy."(1999)

18.A. Makhijani (1993) writes on this topic:

"The global reality of capitalism, as opposed to its mythology, is that, as an economic system, it is approximately like South Africa in its dynamic and divisions, and in its violence and inequalities (p. 108)... The South African system of pass laws is reproduced on an international scale by the system of passports and visas by which mobility is easy for a minority and difficult for a majority (p. 108)... Even the statistics match—the same divisions of White and non-White; similar differences of income; similar differences in infant mortality, similar expropriation of land and resources; similar rules giving mobility to the minority and denying it to the majority (p.109)."

19. Even when one of the two partners does not emigrate, rarely do families remain united in front of male unemployment and the need to

- find some form of sustenance. The politics of structural adjustment, thus, has put into crisis the attempt to impose the nuclear family in the third world (Dalla Costa G. F., 1989; 1995).
20. Two pioneering essays by Mariarosa Dalla Costa (1974, 1981) have analyzed the relation between emigration and reproduction. The first (1974) studies the dynamics of emigration in relation to the countries of departure and arrival, and its role in the formation of a multinational working class in Europe; the second (1981) looks at the role of emigration from the third world in the stratification of work, in particular reproduction work, in Italy.
 21. Contrary to what Diane Elson claims (p. 41), emigration is not only a "male survival strategy." According to statistics provided by the ILO, more than 50% of the emigrants from the third world are women (Heyzer et al 1994; Stalker 1994). Among them, the majority find work as domestics (maids, nannies, aids for the elderly), or in the service sectors specializing in reproductive labor: tourism, health care, entertainment, prostitution.
 22. The "traffick" in women, that feeds the sex industry and sex-tourism, has been over the years the target of many feminist protests, both in Thailand and the Philippines (Barry 1984). Moreover, by the initiative of Kathleen Barry, an American feminist, a Coalition Against the Trafficking in Women has been formed. This is an NGO that opposes the commercial exploitation of women in prostitution and whose aim is to make the United Nations ban it as a violation of human rights.
 23. See, for a comparison, the article by Jacklyn Cock (1988) "Trapped Workers: The Case of Domestic Servants in South Africa." In Stichter and Parpart (eds.), *Patriarchy and Class. African Women in the Home and in the Workforce* (1988).
 24. As Romero has observed (1992), the feminist movement in the United States has not succeeded in imposing a collective solution to the problem of domestic work; it has not even managed to obtain provisions that, in other countries, have for a long time been taken for granted, such as paid maternity leave.
 25. These projects usually consist of either credit unions—that is cooperatives that make loans to their members, who then take on collec-

tively the responsibility for the payment, on the model of the Grameen Bank—or programs that teach women to develop “income generating activities.” As Jutta Berninghausen and Birgit Kerstan (1992) have written, in their study of the activities of the Javanese NGOs, they have a stabilizing/defensive function rather than an emancipatory one (p. 253) and, in the best of cases, they try to recuperate at the micro-level of individual or community relations what has been destroyed at the macro-level of economic politics.

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VENEZUELA IN THE 1990s:
**SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF STRUCTURAL
ADJUSTMENT AND CALDERA'S NEW
ECONOMIC POLICIES**

Giovanna Franca Dalla Costa

General Uncertainty

The political and institutional situation in Venezuela is so unstable that any predictions based upon statistical data and forecasts is bound to fail. Indeed, all hypotheses concerning the country's future social and economic development are problematic. Not surprisingly, when the 1994 edition of Venezuela's Annual Forum on the state of the nation was held, after Rafael Caldera's election, the researchers of the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administracion (IESA) refrained from making their traditional

forecast, because of the instability of the nation (Fuentes 1994a:10).

More than ten years have passed since the time in 1986 when, in inaugurating a seminar on Venezuela's future, *Venezuela hacia el 2000*, the late economist J. A. Michelena commented that the political situation in the country raised serious doubts about the utility of planning, since few dared to think six months ahead, knowing that a solution to the economic crisis could only come in the long run (Michelena, 1987: 23-24). Despite the continuing political uncertainty, however, some observations can be made about the recent political developments and this is the objective of this essay.

First some facts. On June 27, 1994, the newly elected president Rafael Caldera took the following steps to spur the country's economic recovery.

He banned the trade in foreign currencies and introduced a fixed, government backed exchange rate. In response to the banking crisis he placed stronger controls over the banking system, in addition to those adopted to deal with the Latin American crash. He set price controls over a broad number of goods and services, threatening tough punishments for those violating the new rules.

He suspended six constitutional guarantees. Three were of a political nature: the right not to be arrested and detained without a warrant; the right to the inviolability of one's home and the prohibition of searches without a warrant; the right to free circulation in the country, entering it as well as leaving it. The other three were of an economic nature: the right to pursue legal commercial activities; the abolition of restrictions upon property holding and acquisition; and the right not to be expropriated without due process. Caldera also agreed to the payment of a special bonus of about 6,300 Bolivares (or about \$35 at the time) to public and private sector workers earning less than 45.000 Bs.

These measures were taken after months of clashes among the different political factions, in the context of a banking crisis that was causing an unprecedented chain of bank failures (Perry 1994:4; Brooke 1995). Businessmen were on the war path be-

cause of the bank crisis' impact on industrial and commercial activities, and so were the political observers and the public. Re-elected president after 25 years, Caldera inherited a conflictual political and social situation that placed strict limits on the country's economic and financial possibilities and institutional manoeuvring.

The Legacy of Carlos Andres Perez

When Caldera was proclaimed president in December 1993, during President Perez' second mandate (1989-1993), the latter had already opted for a very different economic policy from that which he had adopted during his first term in office (1974-79). The new policy was strongly oriented towards the privatization of all economic sectors, including the most strategic ones (Velasquez 1993). In the 1970s, to promote the industrial take off, the leading industrial sectors had been nationalized. But with *El Gran Viraje* ("the great turn-around") in the Perez VIII Plan for 1989-1993, the place of the state in the economy was radically changed, its function as the regulator of 'import substitution' was undermined by the hegemonic role assigned to the market, that was to be the main regulatory mechanism (Iranzo 1994). The change was promoted by the *Comision Presidencial Para la Reforma del Estado* (COPRE), a body set up in 1990 to "reform the state," and working from the start under the auspices of the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) (Velasquez 1992).

The context in which this reform took place was Venezuela's agreement to implement a tough structural adjustment program that (like in other Latin American countries) called for privatization, economic deregulation, the reduction of public spending for social services, and the opening of markets to foreign goods and services (Iranzo 1994: 66).

Although adopted later than in other countries of the region, the *ajuste* (officially started in 1989) was applied, under Perez, with such intransigence that it tore apart the social fabric. A new industrial policy was introduced to make companies more pro-

ductive and efficient enough to compete under free market conditions. An attempt was made to redefine business management and administration, again, to boost productivity and flexibility (Iranzo 1994:67-68; Lucena 1994:117). In key situations (for instance, the Guayana industrial area) and, more extensively, in the country's central and southern regions and the ports, policies were applied that weakened collective bargaining, radically undermining workers' benefits and worsening their living conditions.

A cornerstone of the reconversion demanded by the "adjustment" was a policy of blanket firing. In the ports, all the workers were fired, with the consent of the unions that accepted as compensation an inequitable severance pay applied with a blatant cronyism (Iranzo 1994: 75). In the Guayana steel zone and at the Sidor complex, the reconversion caused the closure of 13 plants and an enormous loss of jobs (Lucena 1994: 123). Unemployment rose to such levels that each month 70,000 new jobless people were showing up at the offices of the *Seguro de paro forzoso* (Iranzo 1994: 71). The situation was all the more worrisome because it occurred in the presence of a collapse in the real wage that, after two years of steady depreciation, was worth less in 1990 than in 1950.

Among workers, the conditions created by the economic reconversion led to the creation of new forms of collective representation, more deeply rooted in the rank and file, and ready to challenge the traditional trade unions for their weak bargaining posture in the '80s, and their subordination to political parties no longer trusted by workers and the rest of the population (Lucena 1994).

In political terms, Caldera's presidency began at an advanced stage of an institutional reform designed to carry further the "modernization" of the state, in conformity with the programs of international organizations like UNDP, and under the supervision of COPRE. The reform included a change in the electoral process for the election of governors, mayors and councillors, and a bill promoting decentralization. Both measures had matured under

the previous government (Colomine 1994:8), but their impact on national politics was felt during Caldera's presidency, generating new social, political and territorial contradictions. Decentralization, in fact, turned out to be an obstacle to the application of the new economic course, even though it had been urged on Venezuela by the international organizations precisely to accelerate it. UNDP, for instance, in its fifth planning cycle (1992-1996) for Venezuela, had made the "modernization" of the state, including its decentralization, one of the top conditions for technical and financial assistance. UNDP had also set up a world fund to support the development of the state's managerial capacity, a project of which COPRE had been part since 1990 (Blanco coord. 1993).

Against the intention of international organizations, decentralization strengthened the resistance of local governments against free-market reforms, provoking deep political splits that made Venezuela unique in Latin America. Indeed, as Bailey wrote in 1994, the "eyes of the hemisphere" are all on Venezuela as the main Latin America country that has managed to slow down the course of free-market reform (Bailey 1994:14).

In political and social terms, Caldera faced widespread opposition and lack of confidence. This is not surprising. During his second term, his predecessor had experienced a year (1989) of violent popular uprisings known as the "bread riots," and repeated coup attempts, before being impeached in 1992 on corruption charges and forced to resign before the end of his mandate (he was replaced by Velasquez as interim president). The country's instability in that period led the Moody's credit rating agency, to classify Venezuela as a BA-1 risk in 1991, and in April 1993 Standard & Poor's classified it as a BB risk (M.L.C. 1994). At the end of November 1993, direct foreign investment had dropped by 56.3%, compared with the same month the year before (Guanipa 1993: 8). Even the entrenched two-party system, whereby *Accion Democratica* and *Copei* had alternated in power for decades, broke down under the strain. Amidst the fragmentation of traditional alliances, Caldera had to seek a new coalition, where the basis of his support ranged from the left to the center-

right. The outcome was the formation of *Convergencia Nacional*, an *ad hoc* political formation that could only have restored political stability if the president had taken some concrete initiatives. Effective measures were needed also to consolidate people's confidence in the president. It is symptomatic, in this respect, that the first initiative that Caldera took, after his election, was the liberation of 22 coup plotters, which signalled a policy of social reconciliation with the groups that had taken part in the coup attempts of 1992 (*El Nacional* 1994).

Rafael Caldera's Economic Choices

Caldera did not continue the policy of complete economic liberalization that had characterized Perez' second term in office. He did not abolish all controls over prices and exchange rates, and did not insist on a free-market development strategy, achieved at the cost of further destabilization and de-industrialization (Iranzo 1994; Tovar 1994). Responding to the strong opposition to "adjustment," he proposed to revise the program.

Political Industrial, the document drawn by *Convergencia*' experts, was openly critical of the policy pursued during the previous five years. The document saw industrialization as the pole for a reconversion of production and suggested urgent measures for economic areas capable of medium term revitalization (Tovar 1994). The objective of the *IX Plan* was sustained economic growth, with a projected increase ranging from 2% for 1995, up to 6% for 1998 (Cordiplan 1995: 88).

The plan followed three guidelines. (a) The adoption of a more dynamic export policy coupled with import controls, so that imports would grow only as fast as industry and agriculture (Cordiplan 1995: 87). (b) An increase in productivity, but a "sustained and sustainable" increase (Cordiplan 1995:60). (c) An increase in the number of small, medium size and large firms, aimed at expanding the country's productive apparatus (*ibid*: 159). More specifically, the plan had the following objectives .

Reversing the de-industrialization process, through (i) the creation of a new industrial framework, and (ii) a quick reconversion of the existing industries, redefining domestic production and market shares, generating new economic initiatives and establishing new cooperative links between productive units.

Relaunching small and medium size firms that, in Venezuela, account for 53% of the total (Garcia 1994b: 24). A plan to implement this strategy was drafted by *Pequeña y Mediana Industria* (PYMI), the sectorial business association (Fica and Tova 1994). It made provisions for the salvaging of firms, by making space for them in major projects, including the Orinoco Park (Garcia 1994b: 24); for the renegotiation of the sectorial debt with the banks, and for the activation of an already allotted international credit of \$100 million (Fica & Tovar 1994; Garcia 1994b). Through this program, 15,000 new firms were to be added to the existing 10, 000 (Fica and Tovar 1994:12).

Being labor intensive, small and medium size firms were given a key role in the revitalization of employment in areas like tourism and construction, especially of housing. They were also to interact with the *economía solidaria*, by creating associative style micro-firms capable of generating "stable employment" and "alternative income sources." The plan was supposed to develop 500 associative firms linked to the *equipamiento* (plant) *de los barrios*, *abastecimiento solidario*, and other activities related to the popular economy creating, directly or indirectly, 50, 000 jobs (Cordiplan 1995:86). Training and qualification programs were also to be developed in the context of the *economía solidaria*, (ibid. 41: 85).

Giving preferential treatment to productive areas identified as leading sectors—such as petrochemical, aluminum, steel, tropical wood cultivation—that could revitalize industry and the tertiary sector.

Promoting commerce and creating a system for channeling resources into industrial investment. For this policy to succeed a reform of the agencies funding the sector was needed, and a return to traditional protectionist measures was considered. This

move was opposed by businessmen and political organizations, that favored the free-market approach of the previous period (Tovar 1994); but it was strengthened by the measures Caldera adopted in June 1994—a government backed exchange rate, limits on the buying of foreign currency, price controls on many goods and services, import controls.

Reducing the cost of electricity for business, shifting some of the benefits of the public monopoly over electricity to the advantage of industry (Tovar 1994).

Setting up a special program to boost the demand for domestic industrial production, above all by revitalizing the construction industry and, through it, manufacturing, and directing public procurement towards domestic products. Thus, a “preference decree” was proposed as a short-term measure, being criticized as a return to the old *compre venezolano* campaign (Tovar 1994).

Caldera also decided that the wage increases for state employees (public administrators, technicians, white collars workers), and the increase of the minimum wage for public sector blue collar workers, decreed by Velasquez’s interim government in 1993, would have to be subordinated to the approval of new tax revenues. Thus, wage increases for a total of 60,000 million Bs were frozen until new taxes would be approved (Fuentes 1994: 10).

The decision to create a visible link between wages in the public sector and taxation was meant to build support among all social sectors in the increasingly difficult search for more tax revenues. It was also to make more transparent the taxation process, which is the main mechanism in the *ajuste* program, and the barometer for the relationship between wages and the servicing of the external debt. In an oil producing country like Venezuela, the fiscal mechanism makes the impact of both the fall in the oil price and debt servicing on wages immediately visible.

For years, the objective of the “new fiscal logic” (Cordiplan 1995: 64) had been to make the budget less dependent on oil revenues and more closely linked to domestic taxation. Even

though the Venezuelan economy continued to be based on oil, the role of oil in tax revenues, already significantly lower than in the past, was expected to fall even lower. The contribution made by oil was 18.3% of the GDP in 1991; 11.7% in 1992 and 9.7% in 1993 (Hernandez 1994). According to estimates from IESA, (Fuentes 1994a:10), *Petroleos de Venezuela* produced revenues of \$17,000 million in 1981, but was producing no more than \$4,300 million by 1994. The price of oil was expected to rise again in the future, as it happened at the time of the Gulf War (Garcia 1994a), but the international price of \$11.50 a barrel that it fetched in 1994 meant a reduction of national revenues of over \$3,000 million in one single year.

Among the many fiscal estimates that have been made about the Venezuelan economy, that of *Convergencia's* top economic expert Asdrubal Baptista, who was a strong candidate for the direction of Cordiplan, has to be mentioned. According to Baptista, Venezuela needed a titanic effort if it was to reconcile its different business interests. Baptista also warned that shelving the IVA tax (*Impuesto valor agregado*), originally approved but later suspended by Caldera, and postponing the increase in the price of gasoline (that Caldera was supposed to have introduced) could push the fiscal deficit as high as 8% of the GDP, since inflation was running at 55% a year.

Introduced during the Velasquez interim government, the IVA generated so much conflict that it became the fiscal emblem of the Venezuelan opposition to the International Monetary Fund's fiscal dictates. Caldera first revised it; he suspended it for retailers, shifted it on to various kinds of luxury products, then eliminated it altogether.¹ Meanwhile, the IVA question not only filled the pages of the business press and catalysed public debate; it also became a test of political stability. The taxpayer's refusal to pay it escalated into a *civil disobedience movement* led by two state governors (Fuentes 1994a: 10), elected by direct suffrage under the recent electoral reform. Decentralization, in fact, has had an immediate impact on tax collection and resource management at the local level (Cordiplan 1995: 65).

Conflicts immediately broke out, around the IVA question, between the central government and the local authorities. These conflicts were all the more intense as the local governments do not reflect the same political equilibriums on which the power of the national government is based, but answer instead to regional constituencies. The conflict between center and periphery, moreover, was compounded by splits within the central government itself (some parts of Pérez's government, for instance, disowned his political choices), and was of crucial importance since it was rooted in the country's most productive regions, starting with Ciudad Guyana, the main center for the production and processing of iron.

The main concern for the ordinary Venezuelan, after IVA, was a possible increase in the price of gasoline, which many economists were urging to boost tax revenues and reduce the deficit. But for workers who depend on mass transit, this measure was unacceptable, since it inevitably would have led to an increase in transport prices.

The debate surrounding the increase in the price of gasoline demonstrated the crucial place that taxation has in governmental policy, given its ability to directly affect living conditions, from wages to subsidies and benefits of various kinds, to the cost of social services health, education, transport. Kept under close watch by "adjustment experts," it can shift the main areas of support, or opposition, in favor or against both government policy and the President itself.

More than once Caldera was warned that if his government insisted on eliminating the IVA and did not raise the price of gasoline, the revenue crisis caused by the fall of the oil price would become unmanageable, and the country would experience a "fiscal storm" (*tormenta fiscal*) (Fuentes 1994a:10), whereas, if correctives were introduced by the end of 1995, Venezuela would be on the path of recovery.

Social Policy in the Five Years of Drastic Adjustment

Caldera inherited a difficult situation also with respect to social assistance. The period between 1989 and 1993, the years of Perez's "adjustment" program, have shown the inadequacy of the country's social security and welfare systems in front of the dramatically worsening economic conditions. To provide a buffer against the "shock" of adjustment, a new assistance policy was adopted with a shift from indirect to direct subsidies, that supposedly were more accessible to the recipients, more easily applied and controlled, more innovative, efficient and focussed in their goals. The plan was to disburse 200,000 million Bolivares over a period of five years (Dagher 1994:10) and the initiative was publicized as a social megaproject (*megaproyecto social*). But its implementation did not reduce the exasperation of the poorest Venezuelan and was criticized even by the IMF.

The plan was to be innovative in three ways. It was to *target the most vulnerable groups* (children under five, pregnant and breast-feeding women); it was to promote social integration and *greater participation by grassroots communities and non-governmental organizations* (NGOs); it was to define the appropriate conditions for obtaining loans from the World Bank and the *Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo*, the two bodies providing the technical and financial assistance to operate the transition from indirect to direct subsidies. One wonders, however, how truly innovative these measures actually were in their objectives, compared with the system of direct subsidies (subsidies given directly to the citizens), that had characterized the country's traditional welfare policy.

One novelty with respect to the past was the new positive attitude that was adopted towards international financial organizations, now seen as sources of economic resources and management techniques. This was in sharp contrast to previous development phases, like the 1970s, when the goal was to achieve economic and managerial independence from the international organisms. In those years, for instance, family planning ceased to

depend from the Ford Foundation and became a ministerial service.

A quick comparison with the social policies adopted during Pérez's first term in office shows a great homogeneity, as far as content and style, between what was disbursed in the early 1990s to compensate for the damages caused by structural adjustment and what was disbursed during Pérez's first presidency, which was a period of economic prosperity and industrial take off, when employment was growing and incomes were rising (Conasseps 1994). However, it is obvious that initiatives that had been considered adequate to check a phenomenon of "persistent marginalization," in a context of economic recovery, could not apply, at the dawn of the 1990s, to a situation that over a decade had dramatically deteriorated, and in a context of increasing de-industrialization. An altogether different type of social policy was needed, based on immediate and effective interventions, and conceived as the country's development's pole. It is enough here to remember that the real value of wages had fallen to that of forty years before—wages in 1990 being the equivalent, as far as purchasing power, to wages in the 1950s; and, moreover, that the same dramatic collapse was visible in all the crucial factors of reproduction, beginning with nutrition, health and education (Cordiplan 1995).

Nevertheless, while on the economic level drastic measures were taken—measures that were to have deep consequences for the population and by official admission, called for immediate subsidies catering to social needs—no effective social policy was introduced. As far as subsidies were concerned, the initiatives adopted were "business as usual," and they were again applied with all the usual delays and disfunctionalities typical of public administration. Even the positive sides of the welfare policies of the previous period, were lost in the new approach. The population was deprived of its means of subsistence and, even in the official circles, it was recognized that the "megaproject" had not succeeded in putting an end to the deterioration of economic conditions.

The direct subsidy programs were in large part implemented by the traditional organs of the state, above all the ministries of family, education and healthcare. The ministry of education took care of the implementation of food and school subsidies (*Bono lacteo, utiles y uniformes escolares*). The minister of health and social welfare was put in charge of the food programs for both mothers and children (*Programa alimentar materno-infantil*), of the food program for school students (*Merienda escolar*), and of the center of nutritional recovery (*Centro de recuperacion nutricional*). To the minister of the family was assigned the Fund for the Cooperation and Financing of Associative Enterprises (*Fondo de Cooperacion y Financiamiento de Empresas Asociativas*), the Socio-pedagogical and Cultural Subsidy Program (*Programa compensatorio socio-pedagogico y cultural*) and the expansion of the *Hogares de cuidado diario* (day-care families).

Almost all these programs were already in place, and were implemented in an almost identical manner, in the 1970s (G. F. Dalla Costa 1980), when the objective was to speed up the development of *La gran Venezuela*. At that time too, during Pérez's first presidency, social participation in the management of welfare programs—for example in the planning of the *modulos* (centralized neighborhood services)—was encouraged under Decree 332.

The untimely application of the direct subsidies created further problems (Pujol 1993). The food subsidy (*beca alimentaria*), announced in April 1989, became effective only in November of the same year; the *bono lacteo* and the *utiles y uniformes escolares* got started almost a year later, in September 1990. They became effective with a delay of about eighteen months, when the drastic adjustment measures had already done their harm. The plan also failed to address the most needy groups. Some sources reckon that the food programs for mothers and children reached only 60% of the targeted recipients, and mistakes were also made in favor of better off families. As in the 1970s, part of the problem was the use of the school system as the distribution network (G.F.

Dalla Costa 1980). This excluded the poorest sections of the population whose children do not go to school or drop out (Cordiplan 1995: 14-15). As a result, the subsidy program failed to attack people's nutritional and health problems at their roots, and the most vulnerable groups received only one fifth of the subsidies allocated (Cordiplan: 15).

Social Conditions in Venezuela After Drastic Adjustment

While there is little agreement between official and non-official sources, all the studies conducted immediately after the 1989-1993 period, on which the *IX Plan de la Nacion* (published in 1995) relied for its analysis of the social situation in the country, give a dramatic picture of the deterioration provoked by the 'adjustment' program (Cordiplan 1995).

According to official sources, critical poverty levels extended to include 42% of the population, and in 1993 the real wage dropped to 60% of what it was in 1988 (ibid: 11). Thus, while in 1987, 37% of the Venezuelan families had an income below the subsistence level, five years later this figure had reached 66% (ibid.: 13). The degree to which health and nutrition have deteriorated can be seen from the drastic slowdown in the fall of infant and maternal mortality rates and the increase in the number of undernourished children and children born underweight (ibid.: 14). There has also been a significant increase in the number of people dying of diarrhea, parasitic and respiratory diseases and, in the case of children under five, malnutrition (Cordiplan: 14; *Republica de Venezuela, Consejo de economia nacional 1994:35*). In epidemiological terms, the situation became very serious, as pathologies typical of poor countries coexisted with others (like cancer and cardio-vascular diseases) that affected both the poor and the better-off, and with others again, like AIDS, that have started to spread more recently but are propagating very quickly (Cordiplan 1995: 14).

A crucial factor in the deterioration of health conditions has been the reduction of public spending for healthcare. Especially

severe cuts have been made over the last ten years, in the funds for the control of endemic diseases, for vaccination, immunization, maternal and infant health programs (*ibid.*: 16). The ministry of health and social welfare has also reversed its budget priorities with 71% of its resources being earmarked for hospitals, 12.6% for first aid and out-patient services, 5.6% for environmental services, 10% for epidemiological programs and 0.3% for social policy promotion (*ibid.*: 16). The lack of coordination between public and private measures has also taken its toll (*ibid.*: 15). The result has been a total lack of confidence in the health ministry's planning and management capacity, making it the target of severe social and political attacks (*ibid.*: 15).

There has also been a reversal with respect to the quality and quantity of education provided. Aside from the continuing existence of high illiteracy rates that affect 10% of the adult population, compulsory preschool education has deteriorated to such an extent that it covers only 50% of the children in the relevant age group. Primary education is now of a very low quality, with many children leaving school before the age of nine, so that many people are not able to read or write, although they have received a certain amount of elementary education (Cordiplan: 16-17). As for secondary education, the services provided are totally inadequate to the new needs of the labor market. Through the ups and downs of the recent decades, it has virtually shown no expansion, covering 33% of the relevant age group in 1970 and 35% today, while in other Latin American countries access to secondary education has substantially increased over the same period. Mexico, for instance, has moved from 22% to 53%, and Chile from 39% to 74% (*ibid.*: 17).

'Adjustment' has also worsened housing conditions. The problem is certainly not new in Venezuela (Martinez Olavarria 1991), but it has been exacerbated by the new economic course. Shortages are concentrated primarily in the poorer sectors of the population, those with incomes lower than three minimum wages, that account for three quarters of the total need for new homes, estimated at over a million houses in 1994 (Cordiplan 1995: 20).

The new endemic lack of houses can be assessed by a glance at the spread of the metropolitan *barriadas*.

Interesting enough, against this background of intense social crisis, the chapter in the *IX Plan de la Nacion*, that deals with the factors contributing to social exclusion and the deterioration of living conditions, recognizes that the transformation of the Venezuelan family, from an extended to a nuclear one, has probably made survival under "adjustment" more difficult. Where the change has taken place, no social services have been developed to compensate for what the extended family used to provide through its cooperation and solidarity networks. One consequence is that the Venezuelan proletarians are no longer being pressured heavily, as they used to be, to enter formal nuclear marriages, once advertized as more functional to "development." (G.F. Dalla Costa 1980, 1994). Nuclear families, in fact, are confronted now with especially hard living conditions and responsibilities, either because they generally have only a single parent, most often the mother (30% of nuclear families are single parent families) or because stable couples cannot guarantee the family's reproduction, as both parents must work and receive no help from their social environment (Cordiplan 1995: 19).

It is now openly recognised that the nuclear family cannot function without a system of social services replacing those which the extended family provided (*ibid.*); and that the shortcomings of the social security system leave workers' families without healthcare, unemployment benefits or pension. This is an especially serious problem given that in Venezuela, over half of the workers are employed in the informal sector and are not even formally covered by the social welfare system; and, in addition, this is the very sector in which future jobs creation is planned (*ibid.*20).

One of the most pernicious consequences of "adjustment" has been the disintegration of family life and the increase of violence in and out of the home, which has affected particularly women. Venezuela is among the countries that have the highest number of women in poverty. Among single mothers, 39% are

illiterate, three times the national average, and only 48% have a paid job, although they are responsible for supporting their families. According to the studies prepared for the Beijing UN World Conference on Women of 1995 *Venezuela Informe Preliminar Nacional* 1994: 47,106,107,125), women are being “superexploited” because of the adjustment program, and are not benefitting from the *Ley organica de trabajo*.

To correct this situation a *Defensoria Nacional de Los Derechos de la Mujer* has been planned, under the Law of Equal Opportunity (*Ley de igualdad de oportunidades*) approved by Congress in 1993. But the figures drawn from the studies mentioned above, show the degree to which women are suffering.

Maternal mortality rates continue to fluctuate between 60 and 70 deaths for every 100,000 child-births, indicating that their remarkable pre-adjustment improvement has come to a halt. Women’s wages are on an average 25% lower than men’s. In 1992, among “unskilled” workers, covered by the social security system, 15% of the women and 6% of the men earned less than the minimum wage. Among unskilled workers outside the social security system, 60% of women failed to reach the minimum wage, compared with 40% of the men. Again the average female wage was \$202 a month compared with \$259 for men, as women work primarily in the informal sector—domestic service, self-employment and other among the worst paid occupations.

It is obvious that women are heavily discriminated in the application of the adjustment program, despite the fact that Perez, in his *VIII Plan*, had urged the development of *Centros de atencion integral a la mujer*, and had shown his support for the national women’s movement through the creation of the Women’s National Council (*Consejo Nacional de la Mujer*) (*VIII Plan* 1990 :21). Indeed, so dramatic has been the deterioration of living conditions in Venezuela that the plight of women cannot be addressed by means of any compensatory legislation. At best, this can only improve the conditions of a female elite and build consensus in certain circles.

As for the *IX Plan*, it gives little attention to the worsening conditions of women, as it is focussed mainly on the family.

The New Social Policy Mechanisms and the Promotion of Integration. Solidarity programs, *economía solidaria*, family policy (atención integral à la familia).

Given the dramatic impoverishment of the population, the failure of the social "safety nets" and the lack of credible prospects, social conflict in Venezuela has been among the most intense in Latin America, becoming almost uncontrollable in recent years.

It is in the context of this strong opposition to structural adjustment that Caldera proposed a broad social policy program—the *Programas de solidaridad social* (Cordiplan 1995:86), supposedly transcending the limits of the traditional approach to welfare policy.²

The *Programas de Solidaridad* include subsidies to food and other basic necessities, the construction of houses and other infrastructures, incentives to job creation, training programs. The subsidies allocated to the poorest part of the population were decided in agreement with the World Bank, which confirmed its intention to disburse to Caldera, for the fight against poverty, for basic education, for housing for the poor and other infrastructures, the one billion U.S. dollars it had already promised to Pérez (Colomine 1994 a).

More specifically, the *programas de solidaridad social* provide for the following (Cordiplan 1995: 86):

- The promotion and strengthening of the *puntos de abastecimiento* (supply) *solidario*.
- The restructuring and expansion of work training programs.
- The extension of health and food programs managed through the educational and out-patient healthcare networks.
- Employment and wage agreements with business.
- Increase of the minimum wage.
- The reactivation of the health and education centers in the *barrios* and housing construction.

As one can see, these programs range from typical trade union objectives (the increase in the minimum wage, agreements with business about wages and employment) to broader social objectives as work training, the provision of popular housing, education, food and health programs.

This relatively new way of conceiving social politics--within a broader vision of governmental intervention³--has been realized through the *Economia Solidaria*, the center-piece of Caldera's policy, which was supposed to affect above all the popular sectors and have a positive impact on employment.

The *economia solidaria* is to be created gradually to generate a large contingent of jobs, and it is to function as a complement to the subsidy policy. Its essential condition is the participation of organized communities in the management of the program against poverty, and the direct participation of the people involved. (Cordiplan 1995: 86)

The *economia solidaria* represented the third element in the program for the quick development of employment. The first was represented by housing construction, while the second was the revitalization of small and middle size firms.

The housing construction program was to provide 180,000 dwelling units in 1995, giving a stable employment to 89,000 workers. The *economia solidaria* also promised to realize by 1995 work training programs directed to youth, and to promote the development of 500 associative type firms linked to the programs of *equipamiento de barrios* and *abastecimiento solidario* and other "popular economy" activities overall providing 50,000 jobs (Cordiplan 1995:85-86).

The *programas de solidaridad social*, conceived as areas of mobilization from below, and in the context of a post-adjustment economic recovery program, are the key to understanding Venezuela's development politics. Imagined as a social network,

they are supposed to ensure social participation in the development process, especially through the work-place.

In the case of welfare policies specifically addressed to the "war against poverty," the declared objective was to go beyond the traditional subsidies, and implement a more comprehensive program realized through the mobilization and self-organization of the communities themselves, in conformity with the World Bank recommendations [there are many examples in South America of services managed by communities, autonomously or with the support of international organizations, starting from the popular kitchens (*comedores populares*), where very often it is women who do the work].

The trend was towards a welfare policy where the users, in order to obtain some improvement in their standard of living, even just a daily meal, were forced to do some work and respect organizational guidelines, outside the traditional work channels. Even on the business front, there was a tendency to favor companies that, in addition to providing jobs, take on more social responsibility.

This approach supports the formation of associative firms that promote solidarity as well as economic activities. In particular, it will support activities contributing to the satisfaction of basic needs, such as the commercialization of food and basic consumer goods, and the realization of infrastructural projects in the *barrios*. To strengthen social organization and marketing capacity a network of firms will be promoted combining production, distribution and consumption. Micro-enterprises are encouraged to organize, to generate a prosperous popular economy. (Cordiplan 1995: 159-160)

And again:

The state will support with funds and technical assistance the opening of associative firms...similarly the state

will support the creation of a financial coordination system linked to saving and credit cooperatives and other institutions typical of the popular economy, as a means of channelling surpluses towards activities that are considered as priorities by these organizations. A communication network will be set up to tie together all the organisms and programs of the *economia solidaria*...(ibid:160)

The State was supposed to give priority to associative type firms, in the acquisition of goods and services, both in the contracting out of public services and in the construction of public works in the neighborhoods.⁴

On the family front, the objective was to strengthen the function of the family, through a network of community based family organizations, from which would emanate various interventions in the sphere of social reproduction, from the home to healthcare. The coordination of this policy, defined as "integral intervention on the family," was assigned to the specially created ministry for social development. This is what the IX Plan wrote about it:

The strategy for the family is to strengthen the decision making nucleus, to develop community organizations and promote social networks. We will try to satisfy the family members' social needs with respect to health, education and safety nets....Our intervention strategy will initially try to contain the consequences of extreme poverty by strengthening and expanding the institutional network of public and non-governmental organizations; then we will proceed to the formation of family community based organizations that, in the long run, will have to take over the national and local direction of social programs, as part of the social promotion network. (Cordiplan 1995 : 145)

The goal was the formation of a community-based network of families functioning as a link between the welfare programs and the firms—especially small and middle size associative type

firms—in the realization of the initiatives of the *economía solidaria*, in the context of a social development politics coordinated by the minister of social development.

It was certainly not the first time in Venezuela that vast projects aiming at social and productive integration were designed on paper. For years, in the *barrios* a more coherent social policy had been called for. Thus, not too much significance could be given to policies that could have easily collapsed or be emptied out of any substance. This was all the more true in a political situation that was characterized by continual changes and reversals and by an extraordinarily strong opposition to government policies. There is no doubt, however, that the government guidelines placed a special emphasis on the formation of social networks linking production, distribution, the building of infrastructures and the provision of services, work, welfare and employment. The government clearly hoped to integrate these new forms of organization with existing neighborhood organizations, in order to strengthen their role as negotiating partners and, in the process, control the most radical opposition to the new forms of development.

Confronted by powerful anti-adjustment struggles, against which Caldera's appeals for a truce in the *barrios* remained ineffective, the government obviously felt the need to give recognition to initiatives that had already an autonomous existence in the popular economy, while extending the production and distribution centers for food and other basic necessities. As entire metropolitan neighborhoods became no-go areas, ways had to be found to ensure that grassroots organizations did not create even more uncontrollable areas of social life, providing the population new means of subsistence, as well as new sources of antagonism and resistance to the hunger-developing programs imposed by the IMF and the World Bank.

Summing up, therefore, what has been said so far, we can observe that, on the one hand, Venezuela has imported a development model congenial with the requirements of the global economy and the recommendations of international capital and

international financial organizations. At the same time, new forms of social integration have been promoted, and there has been an attempt to stimulate new forms of grassroots mobilization and grassroots responsabilization, that go beyond the traditional patterns. The aim has been to stabilize the social base, so as to contain social conflict which has exploded in the face of the new productive models introduced through the politics of adjustment.

In this context, through the new solidarity networks, not only has the housework been confirmed in its role as an "adjustment variable," (ILO 1984; G.F. Dalla Costa 1993, 1994), but there has been an attempt to strengthen the family organizationally as a community control and decision making center. In other words, despite the collapse of the main subsistence sources, once again the hoped for 'human development' has been anchored to a strengthening of the family, within a broader process of integration to the new development models. However, the link between adjustment, development and the family is extremely problematic, particularly in Venezuela, where the burden of adjustment is added to a family that never was consolidated, not at least according to the canons of advanced capitalism.

Women's demands concerning the quality of development and the project of 'integral intervention' on the family.

As a mirror of the state relationship with women, the project of "integral intervention" on the family can be examined both from a formal/organizational viewpoint and from the viewpoint of its substance. In formal and organizational terms, the state seems to have moved closer to women's demands, especially with the provision of decentralized structures to be consulted, through their organizations, when new projects, the allocation of resources and local government decisions are to be approved (*Coordinadora de organizaciones non gubernamentales de mujeres* 1993). The initiative, however, has frustrated women's aspiration to have a presence at the decision making level, instead of being confined to a mobilization from below, which is the level at which they have

always been encouraged to intervene, because of their recognized effectiveness in this area.

That the state is coming closer to women's demands is certainly due to the new strength of women's organizations (Coordinadora de ONG de mujeres 1988). Today, in Venezuela there are many active women's groups, collectives, coordinating committees, operating with or without autonomy, as feminist, party activists, in a broad range of initiatives and struggles, from those around subsistence and basic necessities to those against violence and for healthcare and legislative reforms.

Yet, the state has shown no support for the *substance* of women's demands, since it is evident that women have a very different perspective on the development question, one more strategically interested in people's reproductive needs and antagonistic to the impoverishment caused by the international economic policies.

Women's organizations and coordinations start from the following premises which, however, cover only partially the issues women are concerned with.

- The right of citizens to have their subsistence guaranteed, regardless of the changes produced in the labor market by structural adjustment and the external debt. From this follows the need to support the struggles of those who have been impoverished by these changes. A striking example here would be the 1989 "bread riots," against the second Pérez government, of which women were the protagonists, as they have been in thousands of struggles against hunger that have taken place all over South America (*Coordinadora de ONG de mujeres* 1993).
- The need to create and safeguard alternative forms of subsistence for the production and distribution of necessary goods, which contrast with the current promotion of the export market, especially in the agro-business sector. We refer here to initiatives, mostly led by women, designed to defend the land and to lead to the restoration of traditional crops and their independent sale. Such

initiatives have acquired a special visibility in the years of "adjustment," and their importance for people's lives is now being recognized in many quarters. One example among many is found in the state of Aracuy. Ecofeminists have discussed it most extensively (see Claudia von Werlhoof 1994).

•The recognition of the central role of the process of reproduction and, therefore, of women who are those primarily engaged in reproductive work. Women, then, should be given special consideration, not as participants in development programs dominated by outside interests, but as social subjects whose needs should shape social options and values. In fact, women's struggles and organizations have tried to be the carriers of demands concerning the reproduction of the whole community. Significantly enough, over the last few years, groups of indigenous women which previously were not involved in most of the country's political and social organizations and were not even included in the national census, have asked to join the women's coordination groups.

Under these conditions, even when the goal is social integration, social intervention essentially produces dichotomies, between those who are and those who are not in the institutions, starting with the family. This is particularly true in Venezuela, since much of the population lives with a high degree of autonomy not only from the family but also from the institutions. Today, however, there are major overlaps between women's organizing and the institutional responses as far as areas of intervention and organizational spaces are concerned. Faced with an explosive social opposition and with the growth of women's organizations, the government is striving to penetrate the formal and informal groups created by women organizationally, with stronger and more internal controls. At the productive and reproductive level, the tendency is to make the family part of the network that filters through job opportunities, the payment of subsidies and the rehabilitation of the *barrios*, through new formal and informal, institutional

and non-institutional connections. The families' network thus becomes the prerequisite for the setting up of a system of welfare services and small scale production. This redefinition of the family's function presupposes, however, the stability of the family's nucleus, and the continuous presence of the woman, or if possible the couple, in view of the broad range of tasks the network is supposed to support.

Venezuelan women, however, are not easily "integrated" into such governmental policies. For a start, the traditional formal marriage has always been the choice of a minority among the poorer classes and most women continue to live in informal unions. Moreover, with the growth of the women's movement, new contradictions have emerged with respect to family relations. A broad debate has developed on the character of the family as a place of work, social subordination and loss of rights for women. The critique of housework as unpaid labor has taken hold and become an object of struggle in various South American countries. In Argentina, for instance, "wages for housework" has already become a women's demand (Fisher 1993).

Women's struggles for a complete democracy, capable of safeguarding the rights of all social sectors against the free-market based democracy (*Coordinadora de ONG de mujeres*, 1993) signals a determination to overturn patriarchal rules and related forms of violence that feed the first forms of discrimination within the family, against women above all. Significant here is the growth of a broad mobilization in the country against the violence perpetrated against women inside and outside the family. As in other South American countries, and as in Europe, North America, Africa, this has led to the creation of shelters for battered women, and *ad hoc* committees in the police stations, to take care for the victims of domestic and sexual violence, as well as legal aid centers. Many *child-birth houses* have also been set up to protect expectant mothers against the violent treatment to which they are all too often subjected in the hospitals (*Coordinadora de ONG de mujeres*, 1993).

Contrary to the trend visible in women's struggle, the tendency of the "integral intervention" policy to strengthen the family as a solidarity and tutelage institution, submerges the case of women within that of the other "vulnerable subjects" (above all children) (Cordiplan 1995: 154), thus maintaining the forms of discrimination present in the family set-up and expanding their functions. Women's role as unwaged workers in the family is ignored, a role which makes it impossible for the woman to be assimilated to the other members of the family except at the cost of renouncing her struggles to make visible her subordination as a housewife, wife and mother. If anything, these policies tend to strengthen women's subordination, by asking them to perform reproductive functions at the collective level, and promote new forms of social activism, this time under the guise of "integrated social development."

In this sense, considering the woman as one and the same as the group, is a way to undermine her struggles over reproduction, in all their political and organizational implications—struggles that now are on the agenda in many countries of South America (Kuppers 1994) as well as other countries. In Venezuela, in fact, women's organizations were immediately critical of the exclusive attention paid to the woman as the head of the family and mother in the "integral intervention" policy, a criticism that was also clearly voiced in the document prepared for the Beijing Conference in 1995 (*Venezuela. Informe Preliminar* 1994 : 54).

The determination of women in Venezuela, as everywhere else across the world, to proceed further down the path of autonomy—a path travelled for more than twenty years—is now evident on an incredibly large scale. Their demand to be heard and contribute to a different development makes of this an aspiration that cannot be renounced.

Notes

1. Most recently Caldera replaced VAT with a similar sale tax.
2. "The policies aimed to stabilise and incentivize employment must be coupled with a set of compensatory programs to help the most vulnerable population" (Cordiplan 1995:86)
3. The concepts of a social politics *justa and solidaria*, and of a "popular economy" were already present, however, in Pérez's *VIII Plan (VIII Plan 1990:12)*.
4. "The State will give preference to associative type of firms in the acquisition of goods and services. And the public enterprises will give priority to these firms when will contract out public services. The companies charged with realizing public works in the barrios will be expected to privilege local associative firms, according to communitarian criteria of responsibility and participation" (Cordiplan 1995:160).

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**DOING HOUSEWORK FOR PAY:
POLITICAL STRUGGLES AND LEGAL
RIGHTS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN
BRAZIL**

Alda Britto da Motta

Domestic Service in Contemporary Brazil

Payed domestic service has been traditionally the main occupation for women considered economically active in Brazil. This was historically the case also in the industrialized countries until recently—in the United States, for instance, domestic service was the largest category of female employment until at least 1950 (Berch 1984)—and it is still the case in the countries of the “periphery.” In Latin America, with small national variations, domestic workers averaged about 20% of the female work-force in 1980 (Motta 1985b). Yet, this large female presence in the waged work-force has not resulted in more social recognition for the

women employed, nor, until recently, has it had a significant impact on their legal rights and political participation.

Quantitative and qualitative changes have, however, occurred in the domestic service sector over the past three decades, particularly in recent years. Although domestic work represents a large percentage of female employment, and is even perhaps the main form of employment for women, compared to other occupations—there has been a relative decline in the size of this sector since the 1960s. The same trend is found in other countries of Latin America (Castro 1982; Galvez and Todaro 1983; Gogna 1988).

In the case of Brazil, the number of domestic workers, among the economically active female population, was 27% in 1970, and only 19.9% in 1980. Yet, women's participation in the Brazilian work-force has greatly increased during this decade. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of women in the work-force has expanded by 92%, while the number of domestic workers has increased only by 45.9% (Mello 1984).

In Bahia, the largest state in Northeastern Brazil, despite a significant increase in the number of women present in the waged work-force, the number of domestic workers, as a percentage of the economically active female population, was 34.5% in 1970 and 27.2% in 1980, both relatively higher figures than the percentage for Brazil as a whole. Still, a relative decline was again noticeable. By Castro's calculations (1985), in 1980, domestic work accounted for only 60% of what female employment had been in Bahia in 1950. Castro and Guimaraes note other changes as well, in the Bahia work-force, with respect to the traditional forms of female employment. First, women have a greater access to traditionally male dominated occupations, while the presence of men in forms of employment considered as typically female has also increased. For instance, the number of women employed in consumer services has increased. At the same time, in recent years, in Bahia, the presence of men employed in domestic services, although still small, has substantially increased,

from 5%, according to the census of 1980, to 6.2%, according to the census of 1989.

Castro and Guimarães suggest, however, that these are not radical conquests for women. Women still perform the majority of tasks traditionally considered their responsibility, especially in the areas of healthcare and childcare. Thus, despite the new trends, there has been an increase in the percentage of women employed in areas traditionally considered female.

What census statistics do not reveal, however, because they only report averages and aggregates, is the development of new job categories in the domestic service sector itself. Yet, they are of great importance for our understanding of the trends and changes that are occurring in this sector—both in terms of occupational sub-categories, and the place that domestic workers occupy in the general division of labor.

This is confirmed by studies done by other Latin American researchers: Mello (1984) for Brazil, Castro (1982) for Columbia, Galvez and Todaro (1983) for Chile, Gogna (1988) for Argentina. Beside confirming the reduced share of domestic service indicated by the census figures, all these studies indicate that the sector has become internally diversified, and that there have been important modifications in the composition of the sub-categories of domestic service over recent years.

Along with the occupational sub-categories traditionally used to define tasks and pay rates (e.g. cook, nanny, housecleaning, general service), three other basic classifications for domestic work are now in use, that are based upon the work's time framework and the worker's place of residence. There is the fixed *resident*, who sleeps in the employer's home, then the *permanent external* worker, who sleeps in her own home, working less hours on the job than the resident, then the *daily rate* worker, whose work-hours and tasks are more defined and limited. In this classification, the "external workers" are those who do not reside in the employer's home, whereas the "externals" include both the permanent workers, who work 5 or 6 days a week in the same home, and the daily rate workers (or "temporaries," as referred

to in this article), who are contracted for their services from day to day.

In this new situation, the traditional figure of the resident permanent worker, the universal type domestic worker until a short while ago—has slowly, but steadily, declined. While still the prevalent category, this model is giving way to one or the other of the two new types of payed domestic work. For instance, the idea that a permanent worker might not sleep “at work” was, until not long ago, something unthinkable and undesirable. Today, however, this seems to be the preferred type of arrangement both for employers and for workers. This is due to the diminishing size of apartments, the intensification of class conflict, and the growing political awareness of the domestics. There is also a significant increase in the number of both individuals who seek temporary positions and families who prefer to have a temporary domestic, who either complements the work of a resident worker (for example, cleaning or washing clothes), or is the domestic employee, often hired for two or three days a week for a variety of jobs, cooking included.

The spread of these new work models implies that domestic workers have adapted to diverse new lifestyles. There is still a demand for personal services, above all, from the traditional and the new bourgeoisie. Even though statistically small in numbers, their luxurious houses and condominiums represent an important market, demanding a great variety of domestic services, and employing a large number of workers. Even so, the greatest source of employment for domestic workers is the traditional middle class, which has been proletarianized, because of the current economic crisis, and has neither the extra money nor can hope to climb the social ladder. These employers and their families are forced to make constant cuts in their household budgets, and to reduce their consumption of goods and services, including domestic service.

Families that have always hired help in the home, but are now confronting the reality of financial austerity, are now having

to cut the number of their employees' hours, have to let workers go, or at least reduce the number of days they work. This is reinforced by the current political situation, in which the working class is struggling to retain its rights (while the same proletarianized middle class is struggling to preserve its standard of living). In this context, domestic workers are increasingly becoming aware of their rights, and are no longer satisfied with starvation wages, sweetened by the illusion of being treated as "one of the family," or by "gifts" of clothes and other used objects. However, most employers, among the newly pauperized middle class, still refuse to pay higher salaries to their domestic servants, both because of their diminishing household budgets and also for ideological reasons. Many simply cannot imagine that a domestic worker should receive an *actual* salary. This creates new conflicts, but also facilitates new forms of awareness on both sides.

Thus the contradictions grow. The contractual nature of the services of the external domestic, mainly the temporary worker, has generated a new respect for her basic worker's rights, like the eight-hour workday, a fixed lunch break, well defined tasks and pay rates, and wages adjusted to inflation. This by no means precludes the common attempts by the employers to cut, or stretch the working day, according to their immediate needs, nor does it eliminate traditional client-patron relations. For instance, non stipulated extra meals continue to be offered by the employers, and to be expected by employees, and small services, outside the contractual agreement, often more personal in nature, continue to be demanded of external domestic workers. One temporary domestic worker puts it this way: "The majority of temporary workers eat lunch at work. Many (patrons) even offer breakfast. Mid-day snacks are what is rare. Many times I can finish the work before (the agreed upon hour), but the patron always finds something else for me to do. Some keep pans from the entire week, even underwear, for me to wash. If it were up to them, I would be there till 7 or 8 at night."

A small segment of the middle class, the one more intellectually aware, stimulated perhaps by its recent pauperization,

tries to display a different attitude towards its employees. At any rate, the increasing political awareness of domestic workers leads them to insist upon certain rights, and this behavior tends to have a demonstrative effect on other situations as well, the ones where the families either cannot, or do not want to give in to more egalitarian demands.

The fact that on the part of both the families and the state, domestic work in Brazil has not been socialized, along with the lack of more employment opportunities in this sector, has created a persistent impasse. Relations between employing families and domestic workers limp along, in a manner that, on another occasion, I have described as "an impossible relation" (da Motta 1986). Throughout all this, the awareness among domestic workers that they are part of the working class has grown, stimulated by their professional associations and unions, and by other groups active in the community, such as religious workers, feminist and ethnic groups.

The continuing decline in the pace of employment in paid domestic service, due to the financial austerity experienced by many of the sector's traditional employers, does not imply the extinction of the sector, certainly not in the short term. In fact, given the current social and sexual division of labor in Brazil, it is improbable that this work can be extensively replaced. For this to happen the state should take on the task of socializing the access to housework equipment, and industry would have to invest more in the reproduction of its work-force, which is an unlikely prospect. Moreover, there is still a large pool of domestic workers, many of them being young migrants from the countryside, or from the neighborhoods in the peripheries of the large cities, poorly educated and without prospects for other types of employment.

For all these reasons, despite the increasing availability of industrially prepared products, allowing for the preservation and quick preparations of foodstuffs (from packaged pre-cooked meals to freezers and microwave ovens), only that sector of the population that has been less affected by the crisis makes use of these type of goods. In this latter case, the hiring of domestic workers

is more a question of cultural preference than of economic need. What we are witnessing, however, is an internal reorganization of domestic work, that is both reshaping work relations and creating a new type of domestic worker: the external and/or temporary worker.

New Contexts, New Actors

It would be unrealistic to argue that there is a well defined class identity among Brazilian domestic workers. There have been, however, remarkable changes in their reciprocal relations, and in their relations with others, that point to a new direction. These novelties, significant whenever they are present, give us the measure of the change that has taken place.

The economic and political conjuncture that has caused the relative decline of domestic work in the economically active population, the transfer of part of this work-force to other sectors of the economy, the internal restructuring of the subcategories of domestic work, and the growing male presence in this occupation, have all produced a slow and gradual change in the mentality and attitude of domestic workers. The "external worker" best embodies this change; thus it his/her existential and political trajectory that must be further analysed.

The step from resident to external, to temporary worker is a difficult but significant one, in human, social and political terms. It is not only a political victory in the economic sphere, but also an emotional one. It means to overcome hesitations and fears concerning one's capacity to pay the rent, as well as the fear of loneliness and of the unknowns in the situation. Says one woman: "I used to be afraid. People would say I had to rent a room and I have always thought that it would be very difficult. I was afraid that it would not work out. But now I am quite happy. Now I know one can get by."

It is also a personal conquest that often seems to produce a growing sense of freedom and victory, necessary for the formation of a worker's identity. This is the case of an activist, belong-

ing to a domestic workers association, who says : “ If one day I don’t feel like going to work, or have other things to do, I can always call or change the day. Daily workers have more freedom. “Again, speaking about shopping for food: “It is wonderful to be able to buy your own food. It makes me feel more like other workers.”

The idea of becoming an external worker is spreading slowly, but steadily, among domestic workers affiliated with the associations and unions of their category. It is becoming something of a symbol of domestic workers’ struggles. We should not assume, however, that becoming an external worker is necessarily associated with the development of a political consciousness. In many cases, it is the result of a combination of different individual trajectories; it is perhaps the only option in the case of married women with small children.

It is true, however, that this occupational model is extremely representative of the activists of the movement for domestic workers’ rights. Lenira, a nationally recognized leader from the Union in Recife (the capital of the Northeastern state of Pernambuco), made the following revealing declaration at the Northeastern Regional Encounter in July 1988. “No other worker lives where he works...Why it’s only us...? This is a question we must discuss.” This is also what one hears in the words of international leaders of the domestic workers movement, as in the case of Elvira Duran Majon (Ministerio de Cultura, Instituto de la Mujer, 1986).

Our main struggle is to make people aware that they have the right to have their own life, the right to work eight hours a day, like everyone else, and then go home and be able to sit without having to ask for permission from anyone.

The idea of preserving one’s space, separate from that of the employers’ family, seems to represent, in the activists’ thinking, a decisive step. It helps break the workers’ dependence on their employers; and strengthens the consciousness of oneself as part of the working class. This is a development that seems initially to

affect only the more politically aware groups of domestic workers, especially those organized in professional associations and unions. However, empirical observation of domestic workers suggests that this trend towards working class identification is destined to become stronger in the future and more generalized, going beyond the circle of activists.

The symbolism of an autonomous space expresses not only the changes in the domestic workers' relationship with their employers, but also the possibility of their identifying with the experiences and practices of other workers. Once again, the words of Lenira are illustrative:

If you live in the houses of the patrons, you don't think of the problem of housing. But those who go to live in the proletarian neighborhoods,in the *invasões**, struggle for the improvement of public transports, like the other workers. Our world is that of the other workers. Our employer, no matter how good she may be, is not part of our family... We are part of the working class (*squatters' settlement).

We have here a new political dimension: the external worker has the possibility of gaining an experience and a political formation alternative to or, at times, complementary to that which might come from her membership in an association or union. For there are many movements in contemporary Brazil, that are flourishing in neighborhoods, and engaged in struggles theoretically linked to the reproductive sphere, or in ethnic struggles (for instance, the Black Consciousness Movement in Bahia, a state whose a population is largely of African descent). The non-resident domestic worker, above all the daily worker, has a greater opportunity to become part of this social space, to be better informed, and to gradually become more politically aware. This process is nourished by conversations with neighbors and, most important, the daily meetings with other workers at bus stops and during the trip back and forth from work. Everything is discussed while waiting long hours and travelling together: the irregular service

and high cost of public transportation, the often violent popular reaction to the lack of basic services, the "garbage in front of my door that they haven't collected for six days," strikes, the low value of the minimum wage, who does or does not have the right to receive it, and other workers' rights. This discourse guarantees a continuous comparison and sharing of experiences.

Thanks to these contacts, domestic workers have often participated in neighborhood movements and struggles. External or daily workers, already belonging to their occupational associations, have been able to take unity building initiatives, mobilizing their own organizations and other urban movements.¹

A peculiar trait of domestic workers' associations, though one rarely promoted by their members, is that they are made up almost exclusively by women. However, the strong, if not exclusive, emphasis they have placed upon their mobilizing along occupational lines, and the growth of class consciousness, has precluded their recognition of demands and issues specifically related to their members' gender. This, at times, manifests itself in curious ways, such as the use of the masculine form of the word "workers" (*empregados*) to describe those belonging to these associations, although empirical research has shown that there are no men among their members (Motta 1984). This inability to recognize themselves *also* as women's groups, confronted, therefore, with specific problems that cannot be resolved in a purely occupational or class context, is surprising, above all if one considers that domestic workers are such precisely because they are women (Motta 1987). It seems, however, that this gender dimension of the class is too hidden, to this day, to be recognized. Offers of support have come to domestic workers' associations from some feminist groups, or study groups doing research on women. But they have not been well received, for the promoters of these initiatives were frequently seen from a class viewpoint, as people belonging to the same class as the employers, and having interests different from those of the workers.

For domestic workers, then, organizing is a complex process that immediately raises a set of questions. What has been

achieved so far, beside a long and slow mobilization and consciousness-raising process on the side of a limited number of domestic workers? What is the probability that these groups of activists, with their relatively small number of members, succeed in exercising some political power? Can domestic workers hope, in a short time, to achieve the status of political subjects, capable of influencing the events that affect them?

It is certainly premature to answer these questions, given that most domestic worker unions and associations are relatively new, have a limited number of members, and are at different stages with respect to their development, degree of mobilization, experience and access to resources, depending on the geographical region to which they belong. At the same time, they have amongst their ranks some very active militants, and have the support of other groups, some with ample resources and a wide experience of political struggle, like the CNDM (National Council of Women's Rights), before it became practically extinct at the end of Sarney's government in 1989.

On balance, there can be no doubt about the contribution the domestic workers' unions and associations have given to the political formation of domestic workers, to the legitimation of their rights, and the integration of their struggles in the wider context of the current political struggle in Brazil. I would argue that their political future depends on whether or not they will succeed in integrating their initiative and action with that of the organized movements that have emerged in Brazil since the 1980s, whose purpose is to democratize the country's political structure and make it more responsive to people's needs.

This potential is well illustrated by the mobilization that took place to ensure that the rights of domestic workers would be included in the new Constitution. After an initial debate on the proposals presented by each association, these were gathered in a common document prepared in the course of regional and national encounters. The document thus prepared was given to the President of the Constitutional Commission, with a popular proposal for an amendment to the new Constitution that would in-

clude the rights of domestic workers. With the support of the National Council For Women's Rights (CNDM) and other progressive groups, domestic workers organized to ensure a continuous presence in Brasilia during the discussion and vote on these proposals. It was on this occasion that Benedita da Silva, the federal deputy (MP) responsible for the negotiations with the Congress, concerning the proposed amendment, rose to a position of prominence. A black woman and a spokesperson for the black people's rights movement, Benedita was a former domestic worker, with a long history of poverty as a *favelas* dweller. Thus, her role in the campaign surrounding the amendment should not be surprising. All the new developments that have intervened in the conditions of domestic workers have reflect a long history of struggle and learning that cannot be underestimated.

The Current Situation

During the preparations for the Constitution of 1988, women conducted well managed political battles. The groups that participated in them enjoyed the assistance and support of the CNDM, that, at the time, was an important organ of the Ministry of Justice. In fact, the CNDM proved so effective in the discussions about women's rights, that once the constituent period was concluded, it was stripped of its resources, representation and initiative by the very Ministry of which it was part.

Women's demands, including those of domestic workers, were as a whole accepted, however, in the constitutional text. Domestic workers were able to gain many of the rights recognized to other workers, such as the minimum wage, annual (paid) vacations, 120 days of maternity leave, and the right to a pension.

Thus, there has been a qualitative change and a political one in the area of domestic work. Most crucially, the domestic workers' presence in the unions and associations has grown. In Bahia, for instance, between 1986 and 1991, the members of these associations, still to this day quite modest, increased, from an initially

small group of about fifteen activists to 150 members. In the same period, the association turned into a union.

On the social-judicial front, two controversies that were generated by the endless wrangles over the meaning of the articles concerning workers' rights in the new Constitution must be mentioned. The first was about maternity and paternity leave—an issue touching upon the socially sensitive question of gender relations and roles within the family. The other issue, that also received national attention, was that of the new and broader rights gained by domestic workers, which involved not only material gains, but also the social recognition of domestic work as a professional category.

Domestic workers were also able to have, for the first time, quick access to a large body of information concerning their rights, broadcasted daily by the mass media, especially the television. In this way, by the simple act of providing information, the media contributed to raise consciousness about workers' rights, even among domestic workers not affiliated with any organization.

With the enacting of the new Constitution, a tense and relentless dialogue was inaugurated between employers and domestic workers, that deepened the latter's awareness of their "otherness," an essential condition for the growth of self-awareness. With the new preoccupation with one's rights, previously limited to a small number of workers' associations' and union members, there has been an increase in the number of complaints and law suits against employers. Moreover, the tendency to set up domestic workers' unions, already established in some countries of South America,* and accelerated after the International Encounter of Domestic Workers' Associations and Unions, held in Colombia in 1988, has begun to take hold also in Brazil. When the fourth National Encounter of Domestic Workers Associations and Unions took place in January 1989, five associations had already made the transition to unions, while many others had expressed similar intentions. The final document of the Encounter reflected the class character which the groups intended to give to the

movement, jointly affirming, on this occasion, what they had already discussed and declared separately, at previous times:

“In this society divided in classes, *we belong to the working class.*”

Simultaneously, during the same month, the first employers associations were formed, first in Sao Paulo and, shortly after, in Rio, as a self-defense reaction on the part of those who hire domestic workers.

Meanwhile, while waiting for the definition of the complementary laws to the the Constitution, and while the State Constitutions were being debated, the new workers' rights activists prepared themselves. The goal was to create a new a framework for presenting and negotiating new forms of conflict based upon on collective interests and practices. This framework has now largely, though not completely, replaced the daily disputes and tensions, of a purely individual character, that, in another context, I have referred to, somewhat jokingly, as “body to body...class struggle” (Motta 1985a).

* The growth of political consciousness that has accompanied the formation of domestic workers unions is also reflected in the following statement and demands by Alesda, the Domestic Service Union in Uruguay that was formed in 1984. “We are women workers without a factory....Our union, which embraces one of the biggest, and certainly most exploited labour sectors in Uruguay is rooted in shared deprivation....We are a union of women workers with a class consciousness and the will to struggle for our dignity, like that of any other worker....We are fighting for our rights as workers and as people. Women have always been taught and brought up to to do domestic jobs, relegated to the social role of being servants in our own homes. However,

we are no longer isolated....we're growing stronger all the time. Things are definitely changing." From Miranda Davis, *Third World.Second Sex*. Vol. 2, 1987, p.174. [Note of the editors]

Notes

1. This is what has happened, one day in 1988, in Salvador, Bahia, when in the same meeting the Domestic Workers Association was approached by a representative of the Popular Movement Against Bus Fare Increases—an organization in which the Association still has representation—and two members of a black cultural group seeking its participation in a debate on the theme: "A hundred years without abolition." The relationship with this latter group continued, even taking an electoral form, when, sometime later, in the course of another visit, a member of the same black group announced his candidacy as councilman in the upcoming municipal elections.
2. What has really produced these advances? The work? The activists? Of which groups? Would the new domestic workers' rights have been fully approved, had "Bené" not been a federal deputy? Perhaps not. Were these victories a product of circumstantial and individual action? Yes and no. The existence of a person like Benedita testifies to the importance of an individual ready to embody the struggle. But it also points to the existence of a social context and a class that produced and supported that individual, capable even of mobilizing the political force necessary to elect her.
3. The first months were rather stormy, as the employers would question the new rights gained by domestic workers; and the latter in turn would protest against the salary deductions and the various contractual arrangements imposed on them by the law. What followed was a tacit agreement. A good number of domestic workers, less informed or less experienced, made individual deals with their employers, giving up some of their rights, especially the right to a minimum wage. On the other hand, a growing number of employers, those more aware, more prosperous, or more prudent, began to recognize their legal responsibilities, easing the shock and tension of the initial reactions.

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MALDEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS: THE CASE OF ALGERIA

Andrée Michel

Algeria is a classic example of “maldevelopment.” For its economy, being based almost exclusively on gas and oil, the country’s only significant exports, requires enormous investments, and has no adequate diversification of production. It is this type of development that has increasingly enabled the ruling elites to appropriate the oil revenues—a process that has brought the country on the verge of bankruptcy—and plunged it into the violence fomented by Islamic fundamentalism.

Algeria, a Model For Third World Countries

Today Algeria is devastated by terror; yet, until 1980, it seemed a model for Third World countries seeking emancipation. A leader

in the non-aligned world, it denounced colonialism and imperialism and supported the Third World people's liberation struggle. Algeria launched the idea of a "New World Order" (NWO), a term that was appropriated in 1974 by the Group of 77 which, at the time, Algeria was chairing (Erb 1978). (A caricature of the idea of the New World Order was later forged by George Bush at the time of the Gulf War). It was President Boumedienne who, before the United Nations, "demanded a better distribution of the world's wealth, as a victory for humankind, rather than as a revenge of the poor against the rich" (Corm 1991). In this way, however, "he ignored that the economic development of a nation must be gained through a struggle, and is not achieved by sitting at a negotiating table where the rich would presumably renounce some of their privileges in favor of the oppressed" (Corm 1991).

It was again Algeria that launched the idea of a North-South dialogue, at a meeting of the non-aligned countries in 1975. International opinion was impressed by the country's rapid industrialization and strong economic growth. Its economic take-off set an example for the Third World. The Algerian leaders, who considered themselves socialists, believed that natural resources belong to the country in which they are located and proceeded to nationalize the oil industry, first taking over the small companies and later the natural gas fields. In the end, Algeria had 51% of the stocks of the French oil companies operating in its territory (Boumedienne 1994).

In 1973, when OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Companies) quadrupled the price of oil, which rose from \$3 to \$11.60 a barrel (Gallois 1993), Algeria acquired the means to undertake a new development program. The Algerian economy remained in a state of euphoria until 1982 when the price of oil reached \$17 a barrel. This was a victory for Third World oil producers. The industrialization process fueled by it was accompanied by the recognition of significant workers' rights. The only problem was the lack of political democracy. The National Liberation Front (NLF), still enjoying the immense prestige it had gained during the anti-colonial struggle, remained the only party

and it denied its opponents the right to express their views, except at the price of going into exile.

This caused an exodus that proved very costly for the Algerian people.

From Model Country to Crisis

Everything changed after 1983 when the oil prices began to fall to a record low. In 1985, at the lowest point in the price cycle, a Paribas Bank's report observed that:

In real terms, oil prices have remained close to what their historic average has been since the early part of the century. In other words, oil does not cost today more than it did in 1908 when the discovery of petroleum, in Persia, by an English engineer set off the extraction of crude oil in the Middle East. (Tuquoi 1993)

By 1992, the real oil prices were still falling—the price per barrel was down to \$4.2 in 1973 figures—and oil had lost half of its 1973 purchasing power (Tuquoi 1993). As a consequence, in the mid-1980s, Algeria was hit by an economic and social crisis that later only kept worsening. An important role in this crisis was played not only by North-South relations—in a few years the North was able to take back what it had been forced to concede to the oil producing countries—but also by domestic maldevelopment.

The fall of the oil price revealed the many pitfalls of the Algerian development program. It showed the failure of an industrialization model that had given priority to the production of intermediate goods over consumer goods, and imposed it on a society not ready to accept it. According to Daniel Junqua, development in Algeria also ran into problems because of its ambitious objectives, its systematic reliance on advanced technologies, the inexperience of the Algerians technicians, and the bureaucratic mentality of both executives and workers, who had little interest for profitability.

All of this was aggravated by the unscrupulousness of the foreign companies with which Algeria had contracts (Junqua 1976).

Too much had been sacrificed to the myth of a certain industrialization model. Agriculture had been neglected in favor of industry, despite the efforts made by the government in 1972 to contain the exodus from the rural areas through the introduction of an agrarian reform. As a consequence, Algeria, which had fed France during the French Revolution, had to depend on the world market and in 1979 had to import 70% of its food, compared with 27% in 1969, 45% in 1973 and 59% in 1977 (Karsenty 1979). In 1994, a quarter of Algerian imports consisted of foodstuff (*El Watan* 1995. 23. 03).

Throughout these years, an unprecedented rural exodus emptied the countryside and swelled the cities beyond all measure.

Farmers, drawing their livelihood from the cultivation of small parcels of land in hilly and mountainous areas, could not get ploughs, while "scythes and shovels were wanted and were objects of speculation," because the Algerian industry did not produce them. (Judet 1979). Fishing too was neglected, its development being hindered by the lack of trained personnel and funding, so that Algeria, with a coastline of 1, 200 km, "is the country with the lowest consumption of fish per person." (Tiemçani 1995). Algerian industry was not even able to produce enough jobs to match population growth, as it relied on imported, highly automatized "key-in hand" plants that used little labor. In 1979, moreover, it was found that "the increase in the number of jobs in the non-agricultural sectors has been accompanied by stagnation and the prospect of decline in agricultural employment, while the rural population continues to grow in absolute terms" (Judet 1979). Lastly, inadequate professional training prevented the production of quality goods and placed limits on plant capacity, which fluctuated between 40% and 60% in the late 1980s, and between 25% and 30% by the early 1990s (Yahiaoui 1995).

Services (housing, education, healthcare), catering to people's basic need, were sacrificed to megaprojects. Imposing steel or engineering works were built, for instance, at the expense of low-cost housing, despite a serious housing crisis that dated back to the time of independence. As Judet writes:

In 1966, the Algerian planners entered a blind alley with regard to low-cost housing, as with other sectors of the economy considered 'non-productive.' The state believed that the existing housing stock and the other infrastructures available in 1967 were sufficient, and that it was, therefore, possible to wait...However, numerous investigations have shown that the housing shortage is one of the main causes of absenteeism and instability in the factories and other work-places. (Judet 1979)

Algeria devoted a substantial amount of financial resources to education and healthcare, but in both these sectors there has also been an enormous waste. Thus, despite the efforts made by the state to help the Algerians overcome the state of illiteracy in which French colonialism had left them, a recent study has shown the presence of a 32% illiteracy rate in the country, 54% in the case of women (Iqra Association, 1994). Nevertheless, in 1980, the literacy centers were closed, while a substantial amount of funds was earmarked for the construction of mosques and universities. Similarly, hospitals were built, but in some regions there was a shortage of medical and para-medical staff, and the available staff lacked training. In the name of population growth, the provision of family planning units was neglected and so was the training of personnel catering to the needs of women and their families. The Algerian healthcare system is a classic example of waste. In the 1970s, the main concern was prevention and a network of healthcare centers were set up. But, starting with the 1980s, hospital building took precedence over the provision of light infrastructures, like polyclinics or day hospitals, and preventive care ceased to be given priority even on paper (*El Watan* 1994.23.03.)

In this as in other cases, the desire to copy the countries (capitalist or socialist) with a long history of industrialization played a role. Thus, preference was given to megaplants, key-in hand factories and cutting-edge technologies, while the professional training, the funding and structural diversification necessary to provide consumer goods and basic services were ignored. This mimetic type of development has also led Algeria to purchase goods that have become emblems of modernity, power and technological prestige in the Third World. Two nuclear reactors, for instance, were acquired from Argentina and China.

Debt, Social Inequalities and the Growth of Fundamentalism

The process described above well illustrates the pitfalls of the mimetic development programs that many Third World countries adopted after independence, under political and economic pressure by the officers, banks and multinational companies of the industrialized countries. As long as the price of oil was high, the serious problems inherent to these programs were masked; but they became visible when the crisis started. It then became evident that favoritism, kickbacks, waste and corruption had created an economic muddle, and were responsible for the excessive public debt, the embezzlement of the oil revenues by the ruling élite, and the growth of religious fundamentalism.

The enormous efforts which the government had made to invest in heavy industry and the energy sector (gas and oil) had required a significant recourse to foreign borrowing, guaranteed against future oil revenues (Adda 1993), in order to pay for massive imports of technology and consumer goods. Thus, as Corm writes, starting from 1975,

only one year after the quadrupling of the price of oil, Algeria (like Iran) registered a heavy balance of payment deficit, and was forced to take considerable loans

on the international capital market to face her debts.
(Corm 1991)

By January 1995, Algeria's foreign debt was a crushing burden of \$27 billion, amounting to 59% of the Gross National Product, and involving servicing charges equal to 82% of the country's exports (Yahiaoui 1995).

The oil revenues and the possibility to import key-in hand plants and luxury products also contributed to the creation of a national élite, further stimulating luxury spending by the privileged at the expense of the provision of basic necessities for the lower income groups. Thus, social inequalities deepened, as "what was left from the oil and gas revenues [was] confiscated by the minority that controlled the main companies and the state." (Yahiaoui 1995). As in other Third World countries, a privileged class was created in this process, that has formed a bulwark in support of capitalism, as it depends on it for its survival, its lifestyle and its luxury consumption.

This situation has been the cause of an immense frustration among the popular classes who have become aware of the huge gap between the luxury in which their leaders live and their own poverty, which is worsening every year. The popular uprisings that took place in the streets of Algiers in 1988 revealed the anger that many Algerians felt, in seeing themselves excluded from all the fruits of development. The very growth of religious fundamentalism was a direct response to this injustice, a protest against the Algerian leaders' inability to address the unemployment problem and the economic and social crisis afflicting the country.

We cannot, in fact, blame the growth of fundamentalism on the speeches that President Boumedienne delivered before international organizations. For on such occasions he always maintained that

The Koran's verses are not enough to feed hungry people.
A devout Muslim must be above all a fanatic supporter
of liberation and emancipation, and these can be achieved

only through the conquest of modern science. (Corm 1991).

Boumedienne also argued that "these days, whether you like it or not, power, in the world, is founded on the economy and oil." (Corm 1991).

However, already during his presidency, democrats were denied the right of expression, while the fundamentalists were allowed to indoctrinate the youth in the mosques, and their followers had the certainty of impunity when they went on the attack, for example, by killing women not conforming to Sharia Law. Later, under the presidency of Chadli Benjedid (1990-1991), the Algerian leaders promoted a politicized Islam in order to contain popular malcontent, exploiting the widespread misogyny which, in many societies, makes of women the scapegoats for popular frustration. By convincing some sectors of the population that their misfortunes stemmed from women's behavior, in violation of Koranic law and teaching, rather than from social inequalities and corruption, the Algerian ruling class managed to delay a settling of accounts for a few years. As Hayane writes,

The Chadli regime could only thwart the democratic forces by promoting the rise of an anti-democratic fundamentalist trend, in this case an Islamic fundamentalist movement functioning as a political ideology. (Hayane 1994)

Chadly preferred to use the Islamic fundamentalists to prevent the birth of a socially rooted movement, that might have challenged the corruption and the shameless enrichment of his 'court,' his family and his entourage's salons. He reckoned that it was preferable to come to an agreement with an opportunistic and thus more ideologically 'manageable' fundamentalism, by giving it moral control over society (S.G. 1994).

To this end, the Algerian state allowed the fundamentalists' politicized version of Islam to invade the schools, the universi-

ties, the mosques (*El Watan* 1994. 9. 03) and the television, all of which became instruments of ideological manipulation and propaganda.

The press has revealed that the mosques were used as deposits for secret arms caches and bases for terrorists (S.G. 1994), while the schools became nurseries for a new breed of "killer-children" (Berkani 1994). People have also denounced both the content of the school books, that are "manifestly steeped in fundamentalist ideology," and "the fundamentalist cloud that hovers over the schools, traumatizing the pupils' imagination." (Ghazi 1994). Ghazi, in making these charges, added that "the danger is deep and does not allow any longer for the complicity of silence" (Ghazi 1994).

Showing greater foresight, women were the first to expose the complicity of the government with the fundamentalists, when the Algerian state refused to stop the violence perpetrated against them. This is what Mme. Meraoun, president of the Women's Association for Personal Development and the Exercise of Citizens' Rights (AFEPEC), told the press, after recalling the various phases of the violence unleashed against women from 1970 on :

In 1980, the Islamic fundamentalists moved to a new level of social infiltration, when they started organizing, in full daylight and without being disturbed, training camps on some of the country's beaches. The schools and the mosques have become platforms for courses that foment hatred against women and places for the indoctrination of the youth. In 1984, the most serious attack against women was the adoption of a family code that has legalized the worse forms of violence against them. (Meraoun 1994)*

None of this would have been possible without the complicity of a state that claimed to be secular but, according to the Egyptian ambassador to Algeria, had made a deal with the leader of the

Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) Abassi Madani, in Saudi Arabia, through the office of President Chadli (S.G. 1994).

In the same vein, under pressure by the fundamentalists, the government made Arabic the official language. This linguistic reform was considered legitimate by many, but was introduced in haste and, given the lack of competent teachers, it deepened the gap between French-speaking and Arab-speaking Algerians, lowering the latter's educational level, exacerbating their frustrations and making it more difficult for them to find work and a place in society.

In order to preserve class privileges, freedom of expression, in vain demanded by democratic citizens, was denied. Corruption was institutionalized, and when President Boudiaf came to power to fight it, in 1988, he was assassinated. A brief liberalization followed in the wake of the tragic events of 1988, but soon there was a return to authoritarian practices. The power struggle between different factions has now reached a frantic level and is accompanied by an infernal spiral of repression and assassinations, as the Islamic fundamentalists have unleashed a campaign of terror in the attempt to build an Islamic state.

As any hope for a better political and economic future has vanished, the Islamic fundamentalists preach a return to the original purity of Islam, of which they offer, however, a caricature version. In their propaganda the source of all evil is "modernity," whose main symbol, vilified in the eyes of a largely illiterate population, is the emancipated woman, who exercises a profession and goes out of the home without the veil.

By making women the scapegoats, the fundamentalists have both spared the ruling class, whose political and economic power they want to share, and precluded any questioning of class inequalities. This is, arguably, an incontrovertible proof that their goal is the struggle for power not for social equality. The failure of the western model of development in Algeria has generated a terrorism that uses the political perspective of Islam and assassination for the conquest of power.

What is at Stake for the Algerian People and Algerian Women in the Struggle for Democracy

In the current debates on Algeria, both the western media and the politicians portray the country's situation as if only two political subjects were present on the scene. On one side they place the state, which responds to and represses the fundamentalists' terror campaign; on the other, the FIS and the fundamentalist armed groups, which are supposed to have the support of the majority of the population. In reality, in the parliamentary elections of 1992, which the government cancelled, about half of the electorate did not vote.

What is not being acknowledged by the press is the presence of a third social-political force: the Algerian democrats, who are committed to the formation of a society built upon tolerance, freedom and a different development model. Unfortunately, due to factional quarrelling, the opposition parties have not been able to give expression to this popular demand. Many have avoided taking a position; or have been slow to condemn the assassinations carried out by the armed groups supported by the fundamentalists, while some have refused to take part in the street demonstrations organized against the terrorists's brutal violence.

By contrast, Algerian women have been the first to go to the streets to demonstrate against religious fundamentalism, demanding that the government take a firm stand against the assassins and stop dialoguing with those refusing to condemn them. Showing a greater awareness than the politicians, many Algerian journalists have paid homage to the women's courage and struggles. One reason for women's resistance is certainly the fact that they are the favorite target of the fundamentalists, whose main objective is to force them not only to wear the veil but to go back to the home. One tactic they have used has been to blame the unemployment crisis on women's presence in the labor market, despite the fact that out of 14 million Algerian women, only 317,000, less than 5% of the female population of working age, have a job outside the home (Bendouba-Touati 1995).

Women, meanwhile, have continued to pressure the Algerian leaders to convince them that they must support the democratic forces in the country, if fundamentalist terror is to be stopped. They have also appealed to the opposition parties whose leaders have refused to take a position or make a common front against terrorism, because of their divisions and lack of courage.

What is at stake for the Algerian people in the outcome of this mobilization is the very future of democracy. Even before the 1992 elections were cancelled, the FSI had declared that, if it should gain power, there would be no more voting, because it did not need representatives and only a theocracy, based upon the divine word, as interpreted by the Ayatollahs, could legitimately hold power. The Algerian women's resistance to this horrendous attempt to set the clock backward has been exemplary. Will they and the other democratic forces, that are organizing in the cities and neighborhoods, or through professional associations, prove strong and united enough to prevent the fundamentalists from taking over? This is the crucial question today.

It is to be hoped that the opposition parties will overcome their divisions and unite in the struggle against their common enemy. Women's struggles have scored a first victory in that, under pressure, the government has reasserted its commitment to the elimination of terrorism, declaring that "Algeria will not retreat," and has asked "all citizens to equally assume their responsibilities" (*La Liberté* 1994.12.07). Moreover, despite the restrictions placed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank on the state's management of the economy, the government has tried to move beyond a social policy exclusively based upon security considerations and has set up projects that should make jobs available for the unemployed youth.

What is at Stake in the Algerian Conflict from the Viewpoint of the North: Capitalism and Democracy

For international capital, what is at stake in the Algerian conflict are obviously profit, business expansion, access to a market of

28 million people and complete control over gas and petroleum prospecting as well as speculation in oil revenues. It is calculated that

between 1986 and 1990, on the basis of 1985 oil prices (that fell on an average from \$28 to \$15 in 1986, and subsequently failed to top \$20) the OPEC countries lost \$263 billion, the main beneficiaries of this loss being the rich countries. (*Solidariété Internationale*, January 1991)

Strangled by debt the Algerian state has been forced to request a rescheduling of its payments with the IMF and the World Bank, while the state companies have been forced to open their doors to foreign capital. Shortly before their talks with the IMF, the Gozhali government offered foreign oil companies the possibility of investing in the existing national oil companies in exchange for an entry fee. This was the first step taken by multinational capital in the recolonization of Algeria's oil's wealth. However, before proceeding further and starting to make investments, international capital is demanding the guarantee of social and political *stability*, which is synonymous with security for foreign companies. The great powers are not interested in who rules the state in Algeria. A lesson here should be learned from the behavior of the multinationals towards China and Iran. In the face of intense competition to expand their international market shares, their pledges that they would stop dealing with China because of the Tien-An-Men Square massacre, and they would place a ban on Iran, because of its human rights violations, have fallen by the wayside. Thus, it is not surprising that, at the end of 1994, the United States was encouraging the Algerian government to negotiate with the fundamentalists. Convinced that the FIS would gain power and

burned by the Iranian experience, Washington want[ed] to avoid attracting thunderbolts from another set of fundamentalists, this time Algerian, should they gain power. (*Le Monde* 1994.21.05)

Business is business: Thus, it is no coincidence that an Algerian developer should ask "is Clinton playing the PIS card?" (Le Monde 11/15/97). More recently, the U.S. position has changed. Faced with the general obligation imposed by the fundamental and inalienable rights of citizens in Algeria, the Group of Seven meeting in Naples in 1996 condemned terrorism and rejected all negotiations with the assassins. Time will tell if this was a conscientious world opinion or a commitment in the advent of a democratic society in Algeria. It would not be the first time, however, that a condemnation of human rights violations by the great powers is accompanied by tolerance and behind the scenes dealings that puts it at stake.

For western democrats the stakes in the Algerian conflict are very different from those of business, as they will have to take a stand against the export of a development model that has failed in the Third World, showing its devastating consequences for people's lives, and has exacerbated rivalries and social inequalities. Far from altering the state and the multinational companies to impose such development programs, western democrats should help block the propagation of this recipe for disaster. Asking for the cancellation of the external debts is not enough. It is important to ensure that the debt is not reproduced, as it will happen if a development model is reintroduced that is based upon the looting of raw materials, through the fixing of low prices for exports (all in this case) and high prices for imports. For this model favors the enrichment of the Northern banks and multinationals and gives support to corrupt élites in the Third World.

Obviously, it is the people of the Third World who must decide what development model they want to pursue, if their sovereignty is to be respected. But no effort should be spared to convince the Algerian policy makers that the economic model imposed by the IMF and the World Bank will not succeed in rescuing the Algerian economy from its crisis. As for us in France, we must mobilize to prevent the French nuclear lobby from selling nuclear reactors to Algeria (as it has offered to do according to the French radio), when the Algerian manufacturing industry

operates at 25% or 30% of its capacity, and the Algerian people's need for food and other basic commodities is not being met.

Coordinated, cross-border action by Algerian and western democrats must be organized in support of alternative models of development and to block the megalomania of some Third World states. For such joint action to be possible, however, solidarity networks must be developed among social groups on both shores of the Mediterranean. The citizens of the industrialized countries should also question their ostentatious and wasteful consumption models and object to nuclear as well as conventional arms expenditure. In this way, the industrialized countries would cease to provide a spurious model of consumption for the Third World. It is important here to stress that the people of the industrialized countries contribute to the exploitation of Algeria when they allow the importation of petroleum that is "practically free," even though they pay dearly for it at the pump. For the low price fetched for petroleum, equivalent, in constant values, to its price in 1908, prevents the Algerians from buying the food, the machinery and the spare parts they need.

This practically free petroleum has been the result of the political and economic strategy pursued by the states of the North, which bear the main responsibility for the situation in Algeria. For without the active support of the United States and other western powers (including France and, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Russia), Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would not have been able to exceed their OPEC quotas and cause the price of oil to fall so low. The economic and political annihilation of Iraq, by the coalition put together by George Bush, was a direct consequence of the fact that Iraq was the only country of the region that resisted the attempt by western powers to establish a total control over petroleum.

For western democrats, then, the crucial question is devising a development model that will not ruin the other regions of the planet. To this end we must look at the earth as a whole, and recognize that the damage inflicted on any one of its parts affects every other part as well. In other words, we must steer away

from the vague, but often cherished notion of "citizenship," towards a more planetary perspective, a planetary citizenship requiring respect for everybody's rights, regardless of what part of the globe they inhabit. These rights must include, in addition to the traditional political rights, the right to adequate social and economic resources. People must receive a "fair price" for the resources that they sell on the international market, and an adequate pay in exchange for their labor, or, in the absence of a wage, adequate means of survival. The first concrete application of this concept must be the reduction of the enormous inequalities that characterize not only North-South relations, but also class and gender relations within each country, whether industrialized or "developing."

The concept of a planetary citizenship challenges the model of conspicuous and wasteful consumption that prevails in the industrialized countries, since its counterpart is the economic and social misery of the Third World. A classic example of policies that produce social misery is the way in which petroleum is managed, in planetary terms, by western powers and the oil producing countries acting on their behalf.

The call for a planetary citizenship, then, is an invitation for the industrialized countries to make structural changes that some people will undoubtedly find disturbing: changes in the way of living, in the concept of daily comfort and in the model of consumption, at least until alternative sources of energy are developed. These changes must take place now, otherwise they will be realized in the context of an intensifying violence, from which no one will emerge unharmed. There can be no doubt, in fact, that the present world leaders, who plan underdevelopment and the death of millions in other parts of the world, are equally capable of imposing the same underdevelopment and death on their own compatriots, as demonstrated by the existence of millions of unemployed in France, the six million victims of Chernobyl and the 37 million Americans who are deprived of even the right to health insurance. Sickness and death can easily become the lot of the French and other European populations, who are already des-

tinued to live subject to the senseless risk of accidents at nuclear plants, whose closure is prevented only by the quest for profit and corporate megalomania.

Notes

* The "Family Code" is the term commonly used for the "Law on Personal Status." It was drafted in great secrecy and then passed, under the Chadli regime in 1983, amidst intense protest and mobilization by Algerian women. It stipulates, in the name of the Koranic law, that women have no right to marry and must be *given* in marriage, that the purpose of marriage is reproduction and sterility can be a cause for divorce, that only the husbands can divorce; that after a divorce a woman must live in the vicinity of her husband so that he can check on her; that as far as legal evidence the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man.

For a discussion of the "Family Code," of the process by which it was passed, and of women's mobilization against it, see Marie-Aimée Helie Lucas "Bound and Gagged by the Family Code." In Miranda Davis ed., *Third World, Second Sex*. Vol. 2. London : Zed Books, 1987, pp. 3-15. Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas is an Algerian feminist and a founding member of the organization "Women Living Under Muslim Law." [Note of the editors]

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ON THE NOTION OF A CRISIS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

C. George Caffentzis

What is the role of extra-market relations in the process of social reproduction, when market relations become the paradigm of social exchange? Are “extra-market” relations and activities (e.g. having a friendly conversation, parenting a child) just a shadow of the central, radiating presence of the market, or are they the bulk of social matter? Is paying exclusive attention to market phenomena—the tip of the social iceberg—justified, or is this a prescription for conceptual and practical disaster? These questions have long been essential to the self-definition of sociology, as opposed (until recently) to economics.

To get a concrete idea of the issues evoked by these questions imagine the telephone calls made in a day, in any city of the United States. We may label them as market exchanges, as most calls are bought from the telephone company, and many are made in the context of market activities. But what about the non-mar-

ketable exchanges made possible by them? What about the calls that people make, not to buy or sell, but in the context of family relations, love affairs, struggles, including those against the telephone company? These calls certainly have a "use value." Can we say that it is irrelevant to social wealth?

As Marx writes, "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities' (Marx 1967, Vol. 1 : 35)." In the case of the telephone company, wealth presents itself in the form of the company's revenues. But revenues do not reveal the web of information and social coordination that moves through the wires. What is the relation between this informing, imaginative wealth and the commodity form? We know that a telephone workers' strike, or an increase in the interest rate will affect how many calls are made and their price. But what about the social wealth produced in these exchanges? Can all be measured by market means?

If we extend the example of the telephone calls to include all material exchanges (e.g., conversations, amorous encounters), we begin to discover the great "Other" of the market. This realm, subsisting outside the circulation of commodities and money, has been, since the late 1960s, a pole of attraction for the social sciences. For there has been a growing realization that non-market exchanges can challenge and disrupt the formal economy, and yet are essential to its existence (Swedberg 1987; Swedberg 1990; Smelser and Swedberg 1994). Thus, measuring their quantity, and assessing their potential have become crucial problems in social theory. This is especially true in the study of societies in many areas of Africa, Asia and the Americas, where the commodity form is not dominant, and in the study of housework and the other activities involved in the reproduction of labor-power, which are mostly performed outside the space of formal market exchanges in most of the planet.

To describe the sphere of non-market relations new terms have been developed by the last generation of political theorists: the "unwaged work" sector (Dalla Costa and James 1972), the

“social factory” (Tronti 1973), the “shadow economy” (Illich 1981), the “general economy” (Bataille 1988), the “moral economy” (Thompson 1991), the “informal economy” (Latouche 1993). With them, a new set of social-economic polarities has emerged: formal/informal, production/reproduction, market/moral, rational/customary, modern/post-modern, and a deconstruction of social forms has begun. For no sooner were apparent dichotomies identified, than their presumed positive and negative poles were displaced, or inverted, to reveal new fields of relations. Once, for instance, reproductive work, including subsistence farming, was made visible, it could no longer be ignored that the quantity of unwaged labor dwarfs the mass of wage labor, which was previously given pride of place in economic analysis, Marxist and non-Marxist alike.

The first question this theoretical revolution poses for us concerns the status of the older concepts in light of these developments. How has the reappraisal of the importance of non-market relations in social life transformed the concept of social reproduction, previously analyzed by political economy on the basis of the market alone? More specifically, how does the notion of a “crisis of social reproduction,” intended as a break in “normal” market exchanges, and associated (by Marx and the classical economics tradition) with depressions, panics, and bubbles, relate to this realm? Can we develop a more general notion of such crises, by analogy to those rooted in commodity exchanges? Can famines, genocides, and other breaks in social reproduction be explained through a generalization of the classical notion of crisis?

These questions are the focus of this essay, as they have been for social theory since the 1980s, when it was recognized that famines, and many other catastrophes are by no means natural disasters, but are socially imposed consequences of the negation of entitlements—to food, land and other factors of subsistence—as the work of A. K. Sen and others has demonstrated [cf., (Sen 1981); (Macrae and Zwi 1994); (De Waal 1989)].

My discussion starts with an analysis of Marx's theory of social reproduction, still the most sophisticated classical economic theory on the matter. I then identify three alternative approaches that acknowledge the importance of non-market relations, but differ in the way they account for them. The first approach explains non-market exchanges by generalizing the commodity form, the second generalizes the social-exchange relation, the third stresses the value-producing aspects of non-market phenomena. Each also provides a different perspective on the concept of a crisis of social reproduction, which, in my view, is a test of their explanatory power. I conclude that the third approach has the greatest potential for explaining crises of social reproduction like famines.

Social Reproduction: Genealogy and Crisis, A Marxian View

"Social reproduction" is an odd term. "Reproduction" evokes naturally reoccurring biological cycles, while "social" connotes a set of intentional and voluntary interactions. Nevertheless, the belief that modern capitalist societies have natural reproductive cycles has been central to the development of economics and sociology. The tension present in the concept is evident in the continuing tension between these disciplines. The reasons for it can be illustrated etymologically. "Sociology" is rooted in the Latin *socius*, that stands for a freely chosen companion with whom there are no blood ties. "Economics" derives, instead, from the ancient Greek word *oikos* ("hearth and home"), that describes the bonds of blood and slavery. One could talk about the reproduction of the *oikos*, because the household was not seen as a terrain of choice and freedom, but as the threshold between nature and convention, *physis* and *nomos*, thus sharing the automaticity and repetitiveness of the physical world. From this viewpoint, economic relations were in the realm of necessity. They occurred between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and slaves, and their reproduction was rooted in seemingly "natural" rhythms. Social relations, instead, were in the realm of

freedom, being established by mutual agreement among equals, free from "natural" bonds. It was inconceivable that these unique relations, built on desired coincidences, could be reproduced. At best (as in Aristotle's *Ethics*), rules could be set for their preservation.

The Greco-Roman distinction between *socius* and *oikos* eroded, however, with the development of capitalism, as familial, subsistence production was replaced by dependence on monetary exchanges (which is the foundation of the bourgeois concept of "freedom"). From this development, that affected both the proletariat (after the enclosures) and the rentiers (who had been accustomed to consume goods produced on their estates),—originated the very concept of "society," as a term describing human togetherness, and later the concept of "political economy," where the Greek *politikos* was made synonymous with the Latin *socius*. Locke's "social contract" theory formalized the perception, widespread among the 17th century bourgeoisie, that the "natural" relations of the *oikos* (husband-wife, father-children, master-servant) were becoming "social," that is, a matter of individual decision and contract among equals. But a converse recognition was also taking shape, revolving around the idea that society too has a biological metabolism and reproductive cycle. This recognition led to the concept of "social reproduction," the main object of study for political economy in the period of the Enlightenment.

The first theory of social reproduction was presented by Quesnay in the *Tableau économique*, in the mid-18th century. Quesnay asked how a collection of associated individuals, members of specific classes (rentier, capitalist, worker) and connected only by contract, could reproduce itself in such a way that, after a cycle of production and circulation of commodities, the same individuals and classes would reappear. As Marx was to point out, the analytic power of Quesnay's approach derived from the fact that he rooted his analysis in the old locus of the *oikos*: land and agricultural production. Yet, this was also the limit of the *Tableau*, as manufacturing appears in it only as an embarrassing

“miscellaneous,” though, by the late 18th century, industrial production, in Western Europe, was beginning to overshadow agriculture.

In the trajectory from Quesnay to Marx, the most important development in the analysis of social reproduction, was Adam Smith’s theory that value production must include industrial labor.¹ But it was Marx, the theorist of the capitalist crisis and proletarian revolution, who was to elaborate the most definitive analysis of the conditions for the reproduction of capitalist society.

This subject is treated in Volume II of *Capital*, where Marx shifted from the class struggle (the focus of Volume I) to the analysis of those social phenomena of capitalist society that return to themselves: circulation, rotation, turnover, circuit, reproduction. Instead of changes in linear variables (e.g., rises in wages, falls in profit), in Volume II, Marx examined those changes that return a system to its starting point, showing how the transformations it undergoes in the process are crucial for both the reproduction of the system as well as its subversion.

The model Marx used to analyze the reproduction of capital, in Vol. 2, was the mechanical theory of heat, developed by mid-19th century physics, that explains macroscopic phenomena as the products of millions of microscopic events and entities.² In conformity with this method, Marx described the macroscopic aspects of capitalism as the product of millions of micro-events, and accounted for the reproduction of social capital on the basis of the circuits of individual capitals, with their microphysical orbits, different velocities and periods. Marx gave a graphic account of the movement from the micro-to the macro-level in the Introduction to Part III, that deals with “The Reproduction and Circulation of Social Capital”:

...the circuits of individual capitals intertwine, presuppose and necessitate one another, and form, precisely in this interlacing, the movement of the total social capital. Just as in the simple circulation of commodities the total metamorphosis of a commodity appeared as a link in the

series of metamorphoses of the world of commodities, so now the metamorphosis of the individual capital appears as a link in the metamorphoses of the social capital. (Marx 1967b: 357-358)

Marx's vision of capitalist economy is that of an immense collection of exchanges, with individually coherent circuits, where value is conserved, increased or decreased, and where commodities and money leap back and forth to other circuits in the course of each exchange, transmitting impulses in every direction.³ It is an image reminiscent of the play of the atoms in the organic chemistry diagrams so popular in Marx's time. For we can imagine capitalist A (i) selling the produced commodity to another capitalist B who uses it as means of production, (ii) taking part of the money so realized and buying some luxury goods from capitalist C, (iii) buying labor power from worker D and new means of production from capitalist E who, in turn energizes, new circuits of other individual capitals.

However, exchange must be profitable for the system to reproduce itself, on the micro-and macro level. Thus, "[a]ll three circuits have the following in common: the self-expansion of value as the determining purpose." (Marx 1967b:103). But no exchange is necessary or guaranteed; each connection can be broken, or its purpose may not be realized; hence the permanent possibility of micro-crises and even the dissolution of the system as a whole.⁴ Marx attributes a tremendous importance to the possible breaking of the exchange symmetry. The breaking of the micro-bonds of capital's circuit, intimates for him the possibility of the crisis and the end of capitalism, as we can see from the following passages published (respectively) in 1859 and 1867. "The division of exchange into purchase and sale...contains the general possibility of commercial crises...because the antithesis of commodity and money is the abstract and general form of all contradictions inherent in the bourgeois mode of labor (Marx 1970: 96)." And again:

If the interval in time between the two complementary phases of the... metamorphosis of a commodity become too great, if the split between the sale and the purchase become too pronounced, the intimate connexion between them, their oneness, asserts itself by producing a crisis. The antithesis, use-value and exchange value; the contradictions that private labor is bound to manifest itself as direct social labor, that a particularized concrete kind of labor has to pass for abstract human labor; the contradiction between the personification of objects and the representation of persons by things; all these antitheses and contradictions, which are immanent in commodities, assert themselves.... in the antithetical phases of the metamorphosis of a commodity. (Marx 1967a: 113-114)

For Marx the crisis brings to the surface the truth of the capitalist system of social reproduction. For the metamorphosis of the commodity into money and profits, requires a continuous suppression of needs and glaring contradictions. But once the bond between the commodity and money temporally loosens, a gap grows that can explode all the contradictions of capitalist life. As we know, the main contradiction for Marx is in “the bourgeois mode of labor.” This may appear irrelevant in the sphere of circulation, since people generally buy goods to satisfy their needs, not because of who made them. But the primary objective of market-exchanges is the expansion of value, and here the labor that goes into the commodity becomes the key factor. For its “contradictions,” beginning with workers’ struggles, can cut into the capitalists’ profits, and put the circulation process into crisis.

As Marx pointed out, the process of social reproduction brings everything back—Money, Commodity, Production—to the starting point. But this return is not guaranteed, since in reproducing itself, capitalism also reproduces its contradictions. “Capitalist production, therefore,.....produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-laborer” (Marx 1967a: 578). Far from being natural, the

reproduction of the contradictory, conflictual capitalist relation, is permanently vulnerable to the possibility of crises and catastrophe.

The Crisis of Marx's Theory of Social Reproduction

Not surprisingly, then, from the publication of *Capital*, Vol. I, in 1867, to the late 1960s, "crisis theory" has been a key component in the development of Marxist thinking, while the attempt to exorcise the danger of the crisis, in theory and practice, has been the driving force of bourgeois economics. Marxists largely accepted and often revisited Marx's account of social reproduction (Palloix 1973; De Brunhoff 1976). But their main concern was to establish the possible causes of capitalist crisis, and here Marx's explanation was of little help. Did crises arise from a disproportion in the production of consumer-goods versus producer-goods? Were they caused by a chronic insufficiency of aggregate demand, or were they a response to the falling rate of profit during periods of expansion and investment (Foley 1986)? Though many times reinterpreted, the text of *Capital* could not resolve the matter.

Still, "crisis theory" generated provocative hypotheses. From Luxemburg's, Hilferding's, Lenin's and Bukharin's underconsumptionist explanations of imperialism, to Kalecki's "political business cycle" theory, during World War II, to Baran and Sweezy's "realization" hypothesis, and Paul Mattick's "rate of profit" retort in the 1960s, the field of crisis theory was contentious (Luxemburg 1968; Bukharin 1966; Kalecki 1971; Baran and Sweezy 1966; Mattick 1969).⁵

Soon after the publication of Volume I of *Capital*, bourgeois political economy itself underwent a major change. Under the newly adopted name of "economics," it ceased all attempts to explain the totality of social exchanges, and turned its attention to the way in which fields of desire and modes of rational calculation lead to the maximization of utility in individual subjects (whether consumers or firms) at any particular time. Older ques-

tions of social reproduction were either refracted in the categories of the new discourse, or became meaningless for economists. For late 19th century economists—such as Walras, Pareto, Jevons and Menger—there could not be such a thing as a crisis. The market was supposed to tend toward an equilibrium, assuring the full employment of all factors of production, and maximizing every one's desires (although under budget constraints). Thus, any movement away from equilibrium had to take the form of a "shock," i.e. it had to be a phenomenon exogenous to the sphere of economic relations, as, e.g., a change of customs and tastes, an earthquake, or a government decree. The result, for the most part, was that a century of oblivion enwrapped the Marxian problematic of reproduction and crisis in economics. This state of affairs came to an end, however, in the 1960s, when the growth, worldwide, of new social movements, threatening the foundations of capitalist society, forced a reappraisal of both the Marxist analysis of the reproduction/crisis nexus, and its evasion in bourgeois economics.

The problem with Marxist theory was that it could only explain the reproduction of the capitalist-waged-worker relation. But the revolutionary subjects of the '60s were mostly unwaged. They were subsistence farmers in the Third World, housewives, students, and all the "minorities" that make up the bulk of the world's population. Marx's theory was practically silent about these figures, leading many Marxists to underestimate the political potential of the anti-colonial movement, the welfare mothers and black power movements, the student movement, the women's movement, and, today, the indigenous peoples' movements.

A similar problem confronted bourgeois economics, as the "unemployed," the "underemployed," the "non-productive" of the neoclassical economic synthesis were making history and were becoming the subjects of government policies and corporate investment. New paradigms were needed; governments and corporations demanded new reports; and obligingly, the economists came to the rescue with new theories reappraising the economic significance of non-market spheres, from the family, to sexuality,

racial discrimination, education, and health. In both the Marxist and bourgeois research programs, the analysis of what had been left to the rest of the social sciences, especially sociology, now became a priority. The core of this new activity was the re-examination of the concept of social reproduction.

Three new theories of social reproduction emerged in this period, in response to the shortcoming of bourgeois and Marxist political economy. Each can be understood as a generalization of one, or another, moment of the commodity-money-production circuit, as presented in Marx. As we know, this process begins with the commodity, C, that is exchanged for money, M, with which the means for producing the commodity are bought and put into action in the production process, P, leading to a new commodity, C', that incorporates more value than the money invested in the production process. Each moment of this process, that moves from the commodity (C), through a series of exchanges (M and P), to the commodity C', as increased by the surplus value, allows for a generalization of the economic into the social. The new theories of reproduction and crisis differ from each other with regard to what part of the social reproduction circuit they generalize.

The Totalization of the Commodity Form: the market is all

The first approach explains social reproduction through a generalization of the commodity form. Classical political economy defines a commodity as something that is owned and can legally be exchanged. But even in "advanced" money economies, where the commodity form seems to dominate all aspects of life, there is much that escapes its grip. Much housework is unpaid, and so are many instances of sexual intercourse, most babies are not produced in exchange for money, most votes are not directly bought. Moreover, a large part of the U.S. population is not made up of wage earners nor of private capitalists, and most of the average person's day is not directly involved in wage or profit-earning activities. The vast terrain of love, friendship, sleep and

dreams, sickness and death, as well as much religious, scientific, or artistic activity are crucial aspects of social reproduction, though they escape the hold of the commodity form. Or so it seems. For there are economists, who are ready to dispute that we can ever exit from the world of commodities.

As Blaise Pascal showed in the 17th century, a market logic can be applied even to the question of the salvation of the soul, as he argued that a reasonable person should believe in God and wager his/her energies in living a Christian life, even if there is only an infinitesimally small probability that Christian beliefs may be true. For the infinite pain of going to Hell multiplied by the small probability that Christian beliefs may be true is still much greater than the discomfort of leading a moral life multiplied by the large probability that Christian beliefs may be false.

Pascal's famous wager provides a model for what some have called "the economic approach to human behavior," or "rational choice theory," and still others have described as a form of "economic imperialism" [(McKenzie and Tullock 1978), (Tullock 1972), (Boulding 1969)]. For if the soul can be treated as if it were a commodity to be invested in, then our leisure time, our children, sexual desires, even our taste for revolution are open to the same treatment under the dominance of capitalism. This, at least, has been the contention of Nobel Prize winner Gary S. Becker, who claims that his economic approach stems from: "The combined assumptions of maximizing behavior, market equilibrium, and stable preferences, used unrelentlessly and unflinchingly, form the heart of the economic approach as I see it" (Becker 1976: 5).

The ideal object of Becker's analysis is the "behavior" of a set of "agents" (e.g., a married couple who behaves like an ideal firm), who treat every decision they make (whether or not to have a child, sleep or stay up, brush their teeth) as if they were rational consumers choosing to buy a car. Becker's model, in effect, applies the logic of commodities to things and activities that are legally or morally inalienable, e.g., children, votes, life, sexuality, or are not given an explicit economic value (rarely, e.g.,

anyone is paid to dream). Becker and other “rational choice” theorists, explain how people make choices about their personal lives, by taking the market as the model. A “rational agent” would treat all the alternatives “as if” they were commodities with a price attached, calculated by how much time and money it would take (for instance) to bring up a child, or spend an evening with one’s lover, where the value of one’s time is measured by the amount of money one could earn in the formal labor market in the same time period. The “rational agent” would likely have a budget constraint, that would be calculated as a quantity of time, valued at its market value; and s/he would have, then, to choose the combination of “as if” commodities that would maximize his/her utility. Becker does not claim that actual human beings behave according to these “economic assumptions,” but he believes that every actual “behavior” can be compared to what an ideally rational being, embodying the “economic” assumptions of the market, would do, and that the distance between the actual and ideal results can be computed.

The “rational choice” approach has allowed economists to apply their analyses to regions of social life that economics had largely ignored (because it considered them economically irrelevant or because of legal restrictions on their commodification). The growing hegemony, in the 1980s, of a neoliberal perspective that makes of the market the arbiter of all social decision-making has given this theory a new use. Surrogate mothering, the adoption market, the legal traffic in organs—all have drawn upon it, in their attempt to acquire a legal status.⁶ Pure Neoliberals want these new “trades” to be fully legalized, they want polices devised so that bottlenecks in these areas (e.g. the resistance of a surrogate mothers to relinquishing “her” commissioned child) are eliminated, and the social utility of these exchanges maximized. They also want to erase the stigma still attached to the commercialization of these spheres of life, and this is where “rational choice theory” becomes important. The logical conclusion and aspiration of neoliberal politics is to apply Becker’s “economic approach” to every aspect of social and individual life, so that

commodity logic can prevail even in fields where moral or psychological prejudices have so far barred its application (Posner 1992: 3-4).

Once "rational choice" theory is applied to such fields as demography, then it can claim to provide a general theory of social reproduction, taking into account non-formal as well as formal exchanges. Thus, it is no coincidence that this generalization of commodity logic has led to a "new institutional economics" that tries to provide a "rational explanation" (and justification) for the very existence of commodities, money, firms and capitalism itself (in this way, it gives capitalism the same boost that medieval philosophy gave to the Church, when it devised proofs for the existence of God).

One of the key questions for "institutional economics" is how to account for the existence and reproduction of super-individual structures, given the dramatic changes in the preferences of the individuals who create them (Williamson 1994). If every aspect of social life is determined by a commodity logic, based on atomized human desires, and if human preferences are continually changing, why (it is asked) do some institutions, for example, the monetary system, survive over long historical periods? The answer given rests on the concept of "transaction costs," these being the additional costs involved in the carrying out of exchanges, production and consumption. A classic example of "transaction costs" are transport costs, but there are other costs as well, e.g., the cost of acquiring information about market prices. A now classic account argues that the "transaction costs" of monetary exchange are lower than those of the alternative, the barter system, because the transportation and information costs of finding someone who has what we want, and wants what we have, in a barter system are very high (Clower 1967). A monetary system, enabling us to exchange commodities for money, short-circuits these costs, and this (we are told) is what makes the institution of a money system reasonable for all market participants. According to this "institutionalist" approach, once a monetary system comes into being its positive features become

evident to all, and this is why it survives and is reproduced through time.

It is easy to see why this "economic approach" is a perfect expression of neoliberal ideology. By explaining super-individual structures as the result of rational choices among individuals, it generalizes the commodity form to all aspects of life, and presents the basic components of capitalism as the embodiment of Reason in the social world. However, this approach ignores the beliefs and desires of the very subjects whose behavior it supposedly explains. Many women e.g. have demanded wages for housework, but not to become little entrepreneurs, but to refuse more work and economic dependence (Federici 1982). Similarly, subsistence farmers have struggled, throughout this century, under the slogan "Tierra and Libertad". But this did not mean "Real Estate and Cash Crops." The demand for land, as in the Mexican revolution of 1910-1917 and the Zapatista movement of 1994 expressed the desire to decommodify the earth, and disentangle it from real estate and the grip of agribusiness (Collier and Quaratiello 1994).

A further problem with "rational choice" theory is that it cannot conceptualize the crises of social reproduction except as shocks exogenous to the commodity system. The shocks must come from "outside," because every process "inside" the system is driven by the decision of rational agents facing budget constraints, and by a predetermined commodity distribution that is supposed to lead to an equilibrium. This explanation is similar to the way in which crises are explained in neoclassical economics. According to the latter, changes in tastes and in the natural or social environment (from a craze for chocolates to the discovery of new oil fields) transmit, through the price mechanism, information concerning new desires, new commodity stocks, or new restrictions. As the explanation goes, rational economic agents interpret the new price structures with their budgets in mind, and then shift their pattern of exchanges. As it filters through the market, this shift, at first, can cause catastrophic results, e.g., sudden pockets of unemployment, or large stocks of unsold com-

modities. But, in time, the equilibrium is presumably restored : the unemployed move to areas of high employment, or accept a lower wage at their present jobs; and the unsold commodities are reduced in price or destroyed, if storage costs are greater than any likely future return on their sale. A new equilibrium is reached, with all the market participants (or, at least, those who managed to survive) maximally satisfied, at the end of the adjustment, as they were prior to it.

However, once this neoclassical model is generalized to encompass *all* areas of social life previously excluded from the study of formal market relations, a logical problem appears. Once the commodity logic is generalized, e.g. to the realms of psychology and politics, then changes in these realms cannot be treated as exogenous, nor can they function as the source of shocks to account for the origin of crises. If a new set of desires, or a new governmental policy, are the product of rational choice, then they cannot be an extra-systemic source of crisis. They become part of the formal market. Consequently, one has to either invent a new extra-systemic sphere, or accept the possibility that the system of rational choice is not equilibrium tending, but creates within itself perturbational forces. In other words, *the generalization of commodity logic to the realm of social reproduction puts the logical framework of neoclassical theory itself into crisis.*

Exchange Generalized

The second approach to social reproduction sees commodity exchange as a special case of a more general social exchange relation. The main spokesmen for this theory are Granovetter and Foucault, who argue that market relations are "embedded" in a wider network of social relations. Granovetter, echoing the work of Karl Polanyi, emphasizes the importance of trust and obligations as essential conditions for the existence of market relations and the formation of markets. He argues that without some protection against generalized malfeasance and opportunism, and some guarantees of mutual confidence, even the simplest market

transactions would not be possible. How could we go to a market—the argument runs—if we could not obtain any trust-worthy information, or ever turn our eyes from our possessions without fear of losing them?

The claim is that protection and guarantees are provided by the “embeddedness” of market relations in “networks” of concrete personal relations (Granovetter 1992: 60). In other words, social reproduction rests on relations of reciprocity and redistribution, as well as market exchanges (Polanyi 1992). According to Granovetter, only in the context of non-utilitarian personal relations of loyalty and mutual recognition, can we understand the “altruistic” behavior required for the operation of a commodity market driven by egoistic buyers and sellers. Paradoxically, the existence of an economic agent capable of “standing true” to a contract depends on non-economic forms of social behaviors that can be learned only in an environment pre-existing outside the market. In effect, Granovetter “humanizes the market” by claiming that trust, community solidarity, and reciprocity are preconditions, not consequences, of a market society. This position, however, faces a major contradiction: inherent to the advance of market relations is the tendency to destroy the very relations of trust, solidarity and reciprocity the market presumably depends upon.

For both Granovetter and Polanyi it is this tendency that is responsible for crises of social reproduction. Polanyi, for example, has described how the rise of capitalism in the 16th and 18th centuries—the “Great Transformation” of Land, Labor and Money into commodities (Polanyi 1944/57)—destroyed the sociality that was at the root of market relations in medieval Europe. But how could the “Great Transformation” occur, and why, would the market destroy what is vital to its survival? If we accept Granovetter’s and Polanyi’s assumptions, such phenomena are bound to remain incomprehensible.

This impasse is evident in the politics of “communitarianism,” the movement in which the theories of Granovetter and Polanyi have found their political expression. With its revaluation of volunteerism, its praise of “non-governmental organizations,” and

its foregrounding of the “non-profit sector” (Etzioni 1988, 1995; Rifkin 1995), communitarianism takes a stand in favor of a market economy, but with a “human face.” Like Granovetter, the communitarians believe that a triumph of commodity logic—as in the aspirations of the neoliberals—undermines the very market society it wants to consolidate. Thus, their organizations have rushed into the various catastrophes caused by neoliberal structural adjustment policies around the planet (from Detroit to Somalia) to save “humanity.” But, in this process, they have also helped save “the market” and, by the same token, the very policies which allowed for the development of such catastrophes.

These contradictions may in part explain why, in the intellectual tides of the post-1968 period, Granovetter’s (and Polanyi’s) analyses have been overshadowed by the work of Michel Foucault. Like other theorists of the “sociology of economic life,” Foucault agrees that non-commodifiable relations condition the possibility of capitalist exchange. But, while Granovetter highlights the moral virtues necessary to the life of *homo economicus*, Foucault questions the very concept of “rationality” and the “rational economic agent.” In a series of historical works, written between the early 1960s to the early 1980s, he argues that not only is rationality a social construct, but it is shaped in a field of power relations, forming a “general economy,” that does not function according to the calculations of a pre-existent rational ego (as believed by the theorists of commodity logic), because it is precisely these power relations that define what “rationality” and the “ego” must be in any particular epoch (Foucault 1971a; Foucault 1971b; Foucault, 1973; Foucault 1977; Smart 1983: 123-137).

Power relations are as essential to Foucault’s account of social reproduction as they are to Marx’s. In place of the optimistic picture presented by Granovetter and Polanyi, of a network of reciprocity relations surrounding any economic agent, his work confronts us with a somber scenario, where economic rationality is genetically the offspring of regimes organized to produce pain, confinement, control, and of technologies by which power is ex-

exercised over its Others (the mad, the ill, the criminal, the sexually deviant).

Foucault rejected, however, the traditional view of power. First, he criticizes the "juridical/monarchical" model of power which poses a central stabilizing axis (the Rule of Law, or the Divinely Sanctified King) at the peak of the social hierarchy legislating, and repressing any deviations from the norm. Echoing Nietzsche's slogan "God is Dead," he asserted that there is no Ruling Class, Judge or King imposing the law on all social agents and punishing its transgressions with death. Nor is there an opposing class struggle against its rule and prohibitions. In the place of the "binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled" serving as a "general matrix" for all power relations, he identified a manifold of omnipresent "relationships of force" that "come into play in the machinery of production, in families, groups, institutions, and are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage running through the social body" (Foucault 1981: 94).

Foucault also rejected the assumption that "power" operates only, or primarily, through a structure of prohibitions, and emphasized instead its productive character. Power relations do not only forbid or restrict social or individual possibilities, but produce new strategies, techniques of control (as exemplified by the development of "Reason" and "economic rationality") and, correspondingly, new capacities in the social individual.

As is well-known, much of Foucault's work is concerned with the description of the emergence of new regimes of Power. Particularly influential, in this context, has been his analysis of the development of "bio-power," which he identifies as the distinguishing feature of European societies in the "modern era," beginning with the 18th century. Through this term Foucault describes the forces upon which the social reproduction of capitalist relations has historically depended, and capitalism has in turn developed. Thus, "bio-power" is largely reminiscent of the Marxian "labor-power" and, indeed, Foucault admitted that capitalism would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjust-

ment of the phenomena of population to economic processes (Foucault 1981: 140-141). But he adds that "this was not all it required, it also needed the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility; it had to have methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern" (ibid.).

Thus, while Marx concentrated on power relations in the factory, Foucault looked at the development of the sciences of sexuality (from demographics to psychoanalysis) that arose in the 19th century to control and develop that main component of bio-power: sex. In this way his theory anticipated some of the insights of the feminist and gay movements that equally have stressed sexuality and the family as terrains of power relations. This is, undoubtedly, one of the reasons for the popularity his theory has enjoyed among post-1968 radicals. However, his concern with disentangling power relations from any specific political and economic structure, his insistence on the omnipresence of power relations, and above all his suspicion towards any liberationist project have prevented him from playing for the post-1968 generation the role Marcuse played for the activists of the 1960s.

There is the further problem that in his effort to stress the productive (rather than repressive) character of power relations, Foucault has often seemed oblivious to the fact that (a) the "production of life" in the "modern era" has had a purely instrumental character, being finalized to the development of the capacity of work; (b) the production of death has been a permanent component of the capitalist political economy, in all of its stages, being as essential to its goals as the "production of life," as proven by the history of colonial conquest, the mechanized slaughters of the First and Second World War, the continuing threat of atomic annihilation, and the economic and ecological catastrophes today plaguing, with increasing frequency, people all over the planet.

By contrast, in his account, so firm is the assumption that, starting from the 18th century, the goal of the state became the

“production of life” that his description of the emergence of bio-power on the historical scene, almost recalls a myth of origin, if not the textbook tales still so often rehearsed to establish the progressive character of capitalism:

...the pressure exerted by the biological on the historical had remained very strong for thousands of years; epidemics and famine were the two great dramatic forms of this relationship that was always dominated by the menace of death. But through a circular process, the economic—and primarily agricultural—development of the eighteenth century, and an increase in productivity and resources even more rapid than the demographic growth it encouraged, allowed a measure of relief from these profound threats: despite some renewed outbreaks, the period of great ravages from starvation and plague had come to a close before the French Revolution; death was ceasing to torment life so directly. (Foucault 1981: 142)

No trace is to be found here of the famines, massacres, executions that have been the stigmata of capitalism from its beginning to the present. Of the slave trade, of imperial conquest in the ancient and new world, which transferred to Europe tremendous amounts of vital resources nothing is said, instead, “productivity” has the lion share in the alleged displacement of death from history; again no mention is made of the Irish famine of 1846. Unacknowledged is also the fact that concern with population growth and the techniques to stimulate it was already rife under the Ancient Regime, as the mercantilists well realized (Heckscher 1955).

Foucault’s theory also fails to explain crises of social reproduction, because for him crisis and discontinuity are permanent conditions of social reproduction. As mentioned, Foucault rules out both the neo-classic assumption that social reproduction is governed by a centripetal, equilibrium-tending market, and the Marxian view of crisis as a product of class conflict. Rather, he pictures it as the result of “unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable,

and tense force relations.” This means that crisis is literally everywhere; it is another name for Power itself, it is the norm in a society where, *à la* Hobbes, war is omnipresent, so that war itself needs no special explanation.

However, this nominalist view leads to logical difficulties. How are the great breaks, “the radical ruptures, [and] massive binary cleavages” possible? How, e.g., did the great transformation of the 18th century from “the Right of Death to the Power over Life” take place? How did the regime of bio-power begin to reproduce itself?

Foucault does not say. Instead, he resorts to Heideggerian statements that project the whole problematic into the realm of metaphysics. Such are the claims that the emergence of bio-power represents “The entry of life into history...” (Foucault 1981:141-142), and that “modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question” (Foucault 1981: 143). We are here reminded of the Heracliteans of old, who forced to explain the large-scale features of the universe, reverted to “harmonies in tension” and the Logos.

The Production Process Generalized

The third approach, that I describe as resulting from a generalization of the Marxian idea of production, is the one developed by the feminist theorists and activists politically associated, in the 1970s, with the “wages for housework” campaign and the “housework debate” (Malos 1982).⁷

Fundamental to this approach is the argument that value is created not only by the work needed for the production of commodities, but also by the work needed to produce and reproduce labor-power (Dalla Costa and James 1972). This contrasts with Marx’s view that value is only created in the process of commodity production.

For Marx the value of labor-power was measured by the value of the commodities consumed in its production, i.e., by a bundle of “wage goods.” Marx refused to give an ontological

determination to the value of labor and rejected any supply-and-demand theory of wages. The value of labor-power is for him the product of a "historical and moral" struggle, like that over the length of the working day. Marx, however, did not recognize the unwaged labor that is consumed in the production of labor-power and did not include it in the realm of "productive labor." Aside from a few exceptional passages, he barely took note of the labor involved in child birth, child rearing, housework, the care of the sick and elderly. This aversion to recognizing the productivity of housework has persisted for almost a century in the Marxist tradition, although the "Woman's Question," was crucial in the development of socialist and communist ideology and state planning.

While not the first to challenge this Marxist omission, feminists like Dalla Costa and James, in the early 1970s, forcefully argued that housework is a value producing activity (Dalla Costa and James 1972). For labor-power is not a natural given, but has to be produced and reproduced as an essential condition for social reproduction. This early work was subsequently developed by James, Dalla Costa and others within the same political and theoretical framework (Dalla Costa M. 1974, 1981, 1983; James 1975b; Fortunati 1995; Federici and Fortunati 1984; Dalla Costa G.F. 1978, 1989, 1995). This perspective was hotly debated within feminist circles throughout the 1970s, and many of its insights have become the starting point for feminist economics and social theory (Picchio 1992; Berch 1982). But though this approach was developed at the same time as Becker's and Foucault's theories of social reproduction, there was very little direct confrontation between them (with the exception of [Federici and Fortunati 1984]).

Dalla Costa and James argue that the primary subjects of the reproduction process—commonly referred to as "housework"—are women, who do not receive any direct payment for their work, although this work is directly productive of value. These facts explain the invisibility of housework, the dependent status of women in capitalist society, the persistent concern by

both employers and the state with the stability of "the family." Since housework has largely been unwaged and the value of workers' activities is measured by their wage, then, women, of necessity, have been seen as marginal to the process of social production.

The invisibility of housework hides the secret of all capitalist life: the source of social surplus—unwaged labor—must be degraded, naturalized, made into a marginal aspect of the system, so that its producers can be more easily controlled and exploited. Marx recognized this phenomenon in the case of the 19th-century European proletariat. But the post-1968 generation of feminists, who identified the work of reproducing labor-power as an unpaid source of value, generalized his analysis to encompass the work of housewives. In time students, subsistence farmers, child laborers, the increasing number of workers, especially sex workers, in near slave conditions were included in the same category [Cf. (James 1975a), (Mies 1986), (Caffentzis 1992: 265-268), (Federici 1992), (Dalla Costa M. 1995)]. All the unwaged reproductive activities that orthodox economic theory had either ignored, included in the "wage bundle," or put in the realm of "indirect costs," were introduced by feminist theorists as hidden variables essential to explaining the process of social reproduction.

This is not to say that social reproduction is reducible to the reproduction of labor-power. The reproduction of commodities, C, of money, M, and of the production processes themselves, P, require labor power, but are not defined by it. The complex circuits of exchanges that Marx described in *Capital II* remain crucial for an explanation of social reproduction. However, adding the production and reproduction of labor power to Marx' theory of social reproduction, changes the whole Marxist paradigm on a practical and theoretical level. Practically, it changes the concept of "workers' struggles." In Marx, the site of class conflict is the factory, the exemplary place of value production. But if the unwaged also produce value, then their struggles are a key aspect of the class struggle, and can threaten the production of value.

Consequently, "social movements"—whose negotiations/antagonism with capital (public and private) have comprised much of the overt social struggle of the last twenty years (from welfare women's, to gay rights, indigenous people's, environmental and anti-nuclear movements)—become *class movements* .

Theoretically, the "addition" of housework and the circuit of labor-power reproduction changes our perspective on social reproduction. It is well-known that money (M), commodities (C) and the commodity production process (P) can have dichotomous meanings for waged workers and capitalists (Cleaver 1979). For the capitalist, money is a means for investment, while money for the waged worker is the primary access to the means of subsistence. But the inclusion of the housework circuit, L, brings a new "perspective" on M, C. and P: the perspective of the unwaged, mostly female worker. This perspective reveals the power relations and divisions within the working class. For example, money is a means of control of her behavior by waged workers who do not recognize housework as an object of exchange. The "household money" the houseworker spends does not give her the autonomy that wages—the result of a socially recognized exchange between capitalist and worker—provide. A network of "informal," but determining, often violent power relations among workers themselves is inscribed in this money with "strings attached,"

The exploration of the power relations operating in the generalized process of social reproduction (C, P, M) from the perspective of the unwaged worker transforms Marxist class analysis and makes it possible to analyze racism and sexism (in all their material embodiments) as class phenomena. It also provides a more subtle foundation to the explanation of crises of social reproduction. A classical Marxist can easily explain how a series of successful strikes in the large plants of a capitalist country can lead to an "economic crisis." But the labor-power production approach allows one to see how "the subversion of the community," through, for example, women's mass refusal to conceive children or to train their children to accept certain kinds of work and wages, can also lead to a crisis of social reproduction as well.

For a break in the L circuit brought about by a large-scale (though often silent) struggle of the unwaged houseworkers can have more serious effects on capitalist society than a thousand strikes. The great factory struggles of the late 1960s and 1970s in Italy undoubtedly affected capital, but the decision of Italian women since the late 1960s to struggle for a family size below replacement levels has had probably a much greater impact (Dalla Costa 1974).

The problem of this approach to crises of social reproduction is that the methodology needed to apply it is more subtle and the data it requires are not found in the standard volumes of national economics statistics gathered by governments or international bodies. The UN Development Program is only beginning to record the amount of unwaged housework done in many countries as part of its "human development index." And, there has been little study of the relationship between variables, like the length of the "labor-power reproduction work day," and other more well-known measures of economic and social crisis.

But these practical problems are outweighed by the contribution of this approach to an understanding of crises of social reproduction. First, it does not need to find an exogenous source of crisis. For crisis is endogenous to the capitalist system not only because of the asymmetry between buying and selling (as noted by Marx), caused by the inability of individual capitalists to satisfactorily complete the metamorphoses of their capital at a proper rate of profit, i.e., due to a contradiction between expectations in the orbit of circulation and the realities of conflict in the terrain of production.

There is also another conflict within capitalism that the labor-power approach brings out, but one that Marx ignored, i.e., the conflict between the needs of capitalist production and the demands of those whose work is centered in the arena of the social reproduction of labor-power. This conflict can lead to major crises of reproduction appearing as dramatically falling (or rising) birth-rates, urban riots, or agrarian revolts. These crises are often seen from the point of view of the market as exogenous, but once the activities of social reproduction are introduced into

the cycle of capitalist society they become as relevant as the strikes of unionized workers. The reproduction of labor-power is not a variable that can be determined by Keynesian "manpower planning" or neo-classical theories of the labor market; for just as the regular commodity market has the struggle of their producers inscribed within it, so too the labor market has the struggle of those who produce labor power inscribed within it. And that struggle is not dictated by the commodity status of its results nor by the demands of its purchasers. Certainly there is no pre-established harmony leading to the best of all possible worlds when buyer and seller meet, even if it is over the kitchen table.

The labor-power production approach, then, shares with Foucault's the recognition of the permanent *possibility* of crisis, but it rejects Foucault's claim for the permanent *actuality* of crisis. For capitalism has laws, material preconditions and class divisions that are standard to the system, and therefore it has a historical form which is reproducible over centuries and continents. Indeed, much of the social standardization that is such a marked aspect of contemporary reality (and is mistakenly called "westernization") is simply the repetition of this form throughout the planet on many different scales. Specific forms of capitalism are so reproducible that international agencies like the World Bank and the IMF are applying a prepackaged template of neoliberal capitalism for its realization in locales as widely divergent as Equatorial Guinea and Tajikistan. The apparent reality of infinite micro-variations of the power model that Foucault employs is vacuous, for there is a drive to totalization within the capitalist mode of production that makes these variations extinct even before they can take on a virtual existence. One of capital's laws, of course, is to make the reproduction of labor-power completely dependent upon the wage form and hence to keep the reproducers of labor-power both invisible to and controlled by the system. That is the reason for the relentless attack on any guarantees of subsistence, especially to those who reproduce labor-power, that has been recently termed "the New Enclosures" (Midnight Notes Collective 1992: 317-333). Foucault's theory of polyvalent,

decentered and fragmented force relations cannot account for the crises caused by the ability of workers to successfully struggle against their expropriation from the commons of subsistence.

Thus the labor-power production approach escapes the metaphysical flaws of both Becker's Parmenideanism and Foucault's Heraclitianism and can give endogenous accounts of crisis because it posits the antagonism between circulation/production, accumulation/reproduction as a essential to the existence of capitalism.

Notes

1. See Schumpeter (1967) for further discussion of the relation between the Physiocrats and Smith.
2. Physicists like Maxwell demonstrated that one can mathematically explain why a gas noticeably heats up when its volume is decreased by assuming that the gas is made up of millions of invisible, microscopic molecules in constant motion, colliding with other molecules and the walls of the gas' container.
3. Marx's study of this network of micro-circuits of value led to many important insights concerning capital, e.g., the deduction of the mathematical relation of turnover-time and the rate of profit. But at the heart of the model was a retelling of the story of society and its reproduction. Marx rejected Locke's tale of rational individuals tacitly agreeing to exchange their natural rights for a system that is to protect their property. He substituted a more complex, but realistic story of millions of daily commodity exchanges between capitalists and workers weaving society together.
4. J.B. Say ruled out the possibility of a crisis of social reproduction of the sort later described by Marx. He expressed what was later called "Say's Law" in his *Treatise on Political Economy or The Production, Distribution and Consumption of Wealth* with the following words: "It is worth while to remark, that a product is no sooner create, than it, from that instant, affords a market for other products to the full extend of its own value. When the producer has put the fin-

ishing hand to his product, he is most anxious to sell it immediately, lest its value should diminish in his hands. Nor is he less anxious to dispose of the money he may get for it; for the value of money is also perishable. But the only way of getting rid of money is in the purchase of some product or other. Thus the mere circumstance of the creation of one product immediately opens a vent for other products." (Say 1964: 134-135).

5. A brief description of these crisis theories is in order. Underconsumptionist explanations identified the cause of capitalist crisis in the inability of the working class to purchase consumption goods, and the overproduction of the means of production. Rosa Luxemburg's version of this theory is the most resonant for the late 20th century. She argued that capitalism needs a non-capitalist world to absorb its surplus production (and realize the surplus value embodied in it). In her view, the control of the non-capitalist regions of Africa, Asia, and Oceania was crucial for the survival of various national capitals. Thus, inter-imperialist war was an inevitable outcome of a capitalism that had largely subsumed the land and labor of Europe and the Americas. For Luxemburg capitalist accumulation enters in a final crisis when the last non-capitalist world regions are absorbed into the capitalist mode of production. "Just as soon as reality begins to correspond to Marx's diagram of enlarged reproduction, the end of accumulation is in sight, it has reached its limits, and capitalist production is *in extremis*. For capital, the standstill of accumulation means that the development of the productive forces is arrested, and the collapse of capitalism follows inevitably, as an objective historical necessity." (p. 417) Luxemburg's theory will be decisively tested in the next decade of "globalization." By contrast Kalecki's business cycle theory sees crisis as a political choice of the state used to control wage demands.
6. For a discussion of a neoliberal approach to the "organ shortage" see (Menzel 1990: 182-186) and (Caplan 1988).
7. In the 1960s and early 1970s a number of French Marxist anthropologists applied a "mode of production" analysis to African societies in ways parallel to the work of Dalla Costa and James. Chief among them was Claude Meillassoux who saw two systems of pro-

duction coexisting in colonial Africa. One was a system of domestic production whose result was the production and reproduction of labor-power exploited by the colonial regime and the other was a mode of commodity production (Meillassoux 1981).

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Development Studies, Women's Studies, Politics



This collection of essays represents an international, feminist, and non-capitalist approach to the critical global subject of reproductive politics, and as such is a unique contribution to the discourse. Included are essays by:

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- Giovanna Franca Dalla Costa, on the condition of women and families in Venezuela.
- C. George Caffentzis, summarizing different approaches to the subject of reproduction and post-1970s feminist theory.

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