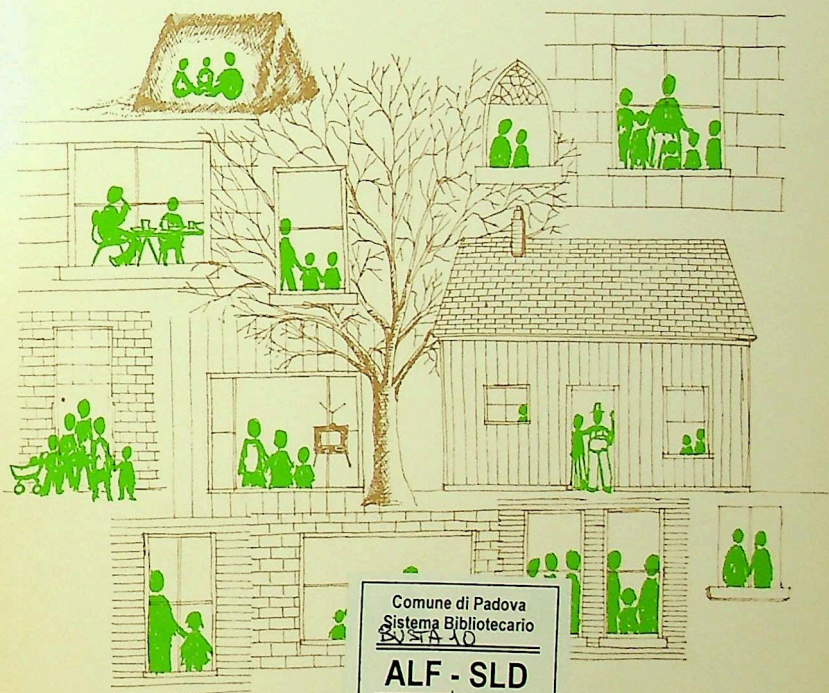


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We would like to make contact with individuals and groups who share our political perspective. We want comments on articles and on the direction of the journal. We would like people when they are in the San Francisco Bay Area to visit us.

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not been able to develop the exploitative relationship to the rural areas that has been historically essential for capitalist development. Fifth, despite the unprecedented amount of aid, the United States has not been able to alleviate the most pressing social problems in Vietnam. The dismal situation in health care is only one example. The *New York Times* reports that there are only 250 certified dentists in South Vietnam, that is, one for every 74,000 people, and only 150 medical doctors in full-time private practice.¹⁶⁶ On the whole, the lesson of Vietnam has been that even in an era of highly technological warfare and with countless billions of dollars at the disposal of United States planners, it has been possible for an insurgent movement to survive with a high morale, a stable level of recruitment, and the patience to await an eventual opportunity for final victory. A nonaligned and reunified Vietnam is not possible with the presence of the United States military apparatus. This condition is not negotiable.

Foreign corporations have already invested in Vietnam. Plans abound to harmonize Vietnam's economy into a regional and global market system. This economic question is the foundation of the political and ideological points of contention. Its resolution will establish a pattern for the remainder of the developing world.

166. *New York Times*, 20 March 1972, p. 20.

We need copies of issues 1, 4, and 11, and will trade for any other issues. Please send them in if you have extras.

CAPITALISM, THE FAMILY, AND PERSONAL LIFE

Eli Zaretsky

I. FEMINISM AND SOCIALISM

THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT, since its emergence in the late 1960s, has posed a series of fundamental challenges to traditional socialist politics. Against the emphasis on the industrial proletariat it raised the needs of women in the home and children, the majority of the population. Against the emphasis on capitalism, women's liberation attacked male supremacy, a form of oppression that certainly antedated capitalism and that has persisted in the socialist countries. Women's

I wish to express my gratitude for special help from John Judis, Gil Weisman, and Linda Zaretsky, and from the article "On the Proletarian Revolution and the End of Political-Economic Society" by Martin J. Sklar (Radical America, May 1969). —E.Z.

liberation promised to go beyond what it regarded as the narrowly economic perspective of socialists in order to revolutionize the deepest and most universal experiences of life—those of “personal” relations, love, egotism, sexuality, our inner emotional lives. Just as socialists in the nineteenth century had challenged bourgeois liberal politics by rejecting its exclusive focus on the state and by raising the importance of economic relations, so feminists brought into the arena of political discussion the hitherto private life of the family.

The early writings of the women’s movement were fragmentary and exploratory, symbolized by the well-worn, mimeographed articles that for several years were the movement’s basic texts. The first attempt at an overall synthesis came in 1970 with the publication of Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics*, which the author described as “something of a pioneering effort . . . tentative and imperfect.”¹ *Sexual Politics*, as its title indicates, was an attempt to broaden the meaning of politics. It began with an analysis of how three modern novelists had dealt with sexual intercourse: “Coitus of itself appears a biological and physical activity,” wrote Millett, but in fact it is a social act, “a charged microcosm of the variety of attitudes and values to which culture subscribes.” Sexual encounters had political meaning since they involved “power-structured relationships . . . whereby one group of persons is controlled by another.” Millett sought to broaden the meaning of politics to include power relationships of “personal contact and interaction between members of well-defined and coherent groups.”²

Millett’s concern was with male supremacy, the most pervasive of these power relationships. She argued that male supremacy, which presented itself as a natural or biological phenomenon, was in fact socially enforced through ideological conditioning, socialization of early childhood, restriction of

1. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York, 1970), p. 24.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24; other recent pioneering works, which predated the emergence of women’s liberation, would include Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (New York, 1952), Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, 1963), and Juliet Mitchell’s “Women: The Longest Revolution,” *New Left Review* 40 (1966).

women to the family, the male monopoly on violence, and other institutions. Through such means women were universally subordinated to men. While Millett did not draw explicit political conclusions, her book encouraged the idea that a feminist movement primarily concerned with the abolition of male supremacy in both its social and “personal” manifestations was needed.

Insisting that male supremacy was a social rather than a biological phenomenon, *Sexual Politics* reflected the early stage of women’s liberation: the first priority was to establish the validity of its concern. But while describing various ways in which male supremacy operated, Millett did not present a unified theory of male supremacy. As Juliet Mitchell later wrote: “We are left with a sense of the random and chaotic and *equal* contribution of each and all to the maintenance of patriarchy.”³ Millett did not explain what gave rise to male supremacy in the first place nor why, if male supremacy was socially established, it was universally reproduced while other social institutions varied throughout history. Without such an explanation it was impossible for Millett to outline a strategy for ending male supremacy.

ABOUT A YEAR LATER an explanation was attempted in Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), the major single statement of radical feminist theory to date. Firestone’s great innovation was in accepting the traditional view that it was “natural” for men to rule women, and turning the implications of this fact on their heads. While Firestone agreed with Millett that male supremacy was socially enforced, she insisted that its origins arose before society in the “biological family”—“the basic reproductive unit of male/female/infant.” According to Firestone, this is a form of life that dates back to our animal beginnings and persists in the most developed society. As a result of their child-rearing function (and infancy last much longer in humans than in other animal species) women have always been at the “mercy of their biology.” The “biological family” has been the cell, the basic social unit,

3. Juliet Mitchell, *Women’s Estate* (New York, 1971), p. 83.

"everywhere, throughout time." As society developed, women remained restricted to the family, while men went forth to organize production, politics, and war. Society was divided into "two distinct biological classes" unequal in their social roles. This class division underlies all subsequent history. Explicitly rejecting the Marxist view that the class struggle originates in the "economic development of society" and "in changes of the modes of production and exchange," Firestone urged us to seek "the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all historic events in the dialectic of sex."

In accord with this theory, Firestone tried to show that radical feminism would subsume the major political grievances of our time: economic inequality, race, ecology, etc. The fundamental social imbalance of power that characterizes the biological family—women dependent on men, children dependent on adults—has given rise to a "power psychology," a "psychological pattern of dominance-submission." This ceaseless striving for power shapes our most intimate personal relations (Firestone analyzes the "unequal power" struggle of romantic love) as well as the major transformations of world history.⁴ Political movements that attack outward forms of oppression such as racism or capitalism without transforming the family merely skim the surface of society.

Having offered an explanation for the origins of male supremacy, Firestone was able to outline a strategic program for ending it. While male supremacy had originated in nature, it was possible to end it through new technology—contraception and the possibility of producing children outside the womb. The opportunity, she wrote, is finally at hand for men and women to "outgrow nature." But the opportunity must be seized and carried through by a feminist movement.

Firestone's book, along with other products of the women's movement, crystallized many people's dissatisfaction with the traditional politics of the left. Socialism, staking all on a reorganization of the economy, appeared inadequate to the needs of modern men and women. Socialism promised to revo-

4. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York, 1970), p. 149.

lutionize society on the basis of narrow programs that did not touch the inner life of people. Firestone's book spoke to the deep distrust of both bourgeois and radical politics that prevails in our society. Politics promises to affect us in what we share with large numbers of people, but in much of our lives we feel unique or alone. Firestone's stress on the importance of the family evoked a new conception of a political movement: one that would make the inner emotional life of its participants part of its practice. Within the women's movement in this period small "consciousness raising" groups spread with incredible vitality and vigor. Elsewhere on the left this was a period in which collectives, communes, men's groups, radical therapy, and other attempts to integrate personal and political life flourished. Many male radicals now saw in women's liberation the possibility of a new kind of revolutionary movement.

Firestone was able to advance the early attack on male supremacy by pointing to a specific institution that caused it—the family. This gave a concrete—or, as Firestone said, "materialist"—basis to a phenomenon whose very omnipresence made it appear psychologically determined. By focusing on the family, Firestone was able to relate two separate questions—the oppression of women and the place of personal experience within society—in new and exciting ways. The family is the primary institution through which women participate in this society. While Firestone ignored the important fact that women also work outside the home, even working women give the family their primary allegiance. Wherever a woman is in this society, it is the family, and the ideology of the family that contributes most to shaping her beliefs and maintaining her oppression. In addition, the family is the institution in which one's personal uniqueness is central. It is the crucible in which our emotional life first takes shape and throughout life is the major institution in our society in which we expect to be recognized and cared for, for ourselves. Men, and, to a lesser degree, women, gain a social identity through school or work. But even as adults our "personal" life is confined to the family or to relationships—friendships, love affairs, communal life—that closely resemble it or are based upon it.

Firestone tied the liberation of women to an attack on the family. In *The Dialectic of Sex* she distinguished radical feminism, which directly attacked the "sexual class system," from other tendencies: "conservative feminists" (who "concentrate on the more superficial symptoms of sexism—legal inequities, employment discrimination, and the like"), "politicos," "ladies' Auxiliaries of the Left," etc.⁵ But in practice the focus on the family and personal relations has proved an insufficient basis for a political movement. During 1971, "consciousness raising" small groups, the most widespread practice of radical feminism, began to decline partly because they could not cohere into an organized movement and partly because of their limitations in helping their members resolve their "personal" problems. Radical lesbianism advanced the attack on the family by urging women to break completely with their "female role"—in love, in living arrangements, and in sexuality. But radical lesbianism also showed how a political focus on the family and personal relations could lead away from building a social movement and toward entirely personal transformations. Firestone's equation of women's oppression with their oppression within the family obscured the special problems of black and brown women, and of industrial working class women. The idea that male supremacy could be ended through an attack on the intimate personal relations of the family alone began to decline. Similarly, small groups and communes began to give way or go back to political action projects which sought public power (over day care, welfare, women's health, etc.) while maintaining a commitment to personal transformation.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT'S next major advance in the critique of the family, Juliet Mitchell's *Women's Estate* (1971), explained many of the limitations in the radical feminist perspective as presented by Firestone. While it was written from English experience, Mitchell's book has an internationalist perspective and raises problems shared by the diverse feminist movements in the developed capitalist countries. Both Millett

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-42.

and Firestone are socialists, but they see the relevance of socialism only in relation to strictly economic questions. Mitchell, on the other hand, urges that we develop a socialist theory of women's oppression and of the family: "We should ask the feminist questions, but try to come up with some Marxist answers."⁶ Mitchell criticized Millett's concept of patriarchy as a universal political system: "a political system is dependent upon (a part of) a specific mode of production: patriarchy, though a perpetual feature of it, is not in *itself* a mode of production, though an essential aspect of every economy, it does not dominantly determine it."⁷ Similarly, Mitchell criticized Firestone's account as ahistorical. While praising Firestone for giving "full weight to the objective physiological sexual differences," she wrote: "To say that sex dualism was the first oppression and that it underlies all oppression may be true, but it is a general, non-specific truth, it is simplistic materialism, no more. After all we can say there has always been a master class and a servant class, but it does matter *how* these function (whether they are feudal landlords and peasants, capitalists and the working class or so on); there have always been classes, as there have always been sexes, how do these operate within any given, specific society?"⁸

Mitchell's contribution to the analysis of women's oppression falls into two parts. The first, largely a reprint of her 1966 article "Women: The Longest Revolution," analyzes the historic failure of the socialist movement to deal with the oppression of women. Mitchell traces this failure to an abstract conception of the family—a "hypostatized entity" she calls it—and she quotes Marx approvingly: "One cannot, in general, speak of the family 'as such.'"⁹ Mitchell urged that we resolve the family into the separate "structures" that compose it: sexuality, reproduction, and socialization of the young. These three structures had been condensed within the apparent

6. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 90.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

monolith of the family, which was then portrayed ideologically as a "natural" institution within which women performed "natural" functions: sex, childbirth, and the rearing of children. Mitchell agreed with Firestone that the root of the oppression of women was their exclusion from production and their restriction to the family. The way out, for Mitchell, was not to attack the "family" but to differentiate the structures that compose it. Hence, Mitchell urged revolutionaries to develop a complex, coordinated program for the separate structures that defined women's condition: sexuality, reproduction, socialization, and production (by which Mitchell meant socialized production, outside the family). She emphasized that these structures interacted so that while birth control, for example, had reduced the weight of reproduction in maintaining the oppression of women, this had been offset by the increased attention paid to socialization. But she did not explain how the unity of the family had been constituted nor how the "tritych" of familial functions ("the woman's world") was, as she put it, "embraced by production (the man's world)—precisely a structure that in the final instance is determined by the economy."¹⁰

The later sections of *Women's Estate* address themselves to this problem. Mitchell describes the unity of the family in three ways. First, it is always formed as an economic unit. In the present, for example, it serves as a means of reproducing the labor force and as an arena of consumption. This economic dimension constantly varies throughout history and is directly dependent upon the mode of production. Second, the family's unity is formed ideologically—for the contemporary family the key idea is private property, a feudal (and early bourgeois) ideal that, like all ideology, "preserves itself across revolutionary changes in the mode of production." The family encapsulates the "most conservative concepts available."¹¹ Finally, Mitchell explains the relative autonomy of the family from history by its "biosocial" form—the basic mother/father/child relationship that Firestone had made central. In this relation-

10. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

ship, within the family, the "human animal" is "socially constructed" and male supremacy first takes shape. In the universal repetition of basic patterns of early childhood—which Freud had described as the oedipus complex—the anatomical differences between men and women are given their social meaning. Mitchell urged the value of psychoanalysis for studying "the borderline between the biological and the social, which finds expression in the family" and concluded: "The bio-social universal, the ideological atemporal, the economic specificity all interlock in a complex manner. . . . Psychoanalysis, the scientific method for investigating the first [the bio-social], can be neglected no more than scientific socialism for understanding the last, the economic, and both are needed for developing a comprehension of the ideological."¹²

Radical feminism, as represented by Firestone, had stressed the role of the family in determining the nature of society. Mitchell advanced this perspective by demonstrating that society simultaneously formed the family. Mitchell also showed us how deep and difficult these problems are. But in one respect her account preserved the dualism that characterized Firestone's account. She described the family as divided between its objective economic functions (formed by capitalism) and its inner psychological life (arising from male supremacy as embodied in the oedipus complex), she then posited an intermediate realm—the "ideological"—in which economic and psychological life interact. But this severely limits the value of what Mitchell called for earlier in her book: "the use of scientific socialism as a method of analyzing the specific nature of [women's] oppression."¹³ It restricts Marxism to the study of economic and ideological activity, and excludes from Marxist analysis areas of life that are critical to an understanding of women's oppression and of social life generally—the emotions, sexuality, infancy and childhood, and the instinctual life of both sexes, as well as such "bio-social" processes as aging, sickness, and death. Instead of expanding Marxism to include these areas of life (and using the discoveries of psychoanalysis

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 172.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

to do this) Mitchell left Marxism in its traditional place and introduced psychoanalysis as a residual category to deal with the problems Marxists have slighted. Mitchell's formulation threatened to reproduce the very dichotomy between socialism (the economy) and feminism (the family) that she criticized so well. It is clear from Mitchell's rich account that a revolutionary movement that takes seriously the task of ending male supremacy and of transforming psychological life must be variegated and must operate on many different levels at once. But if socialist analysis is not adequate, what principles could unify such a movement?

II. THE FAMILY AND THE ECONOMY

ACCORDING TO FIRESTONE, both the oppression of women and the split in society between intimate personal experience and anonymous social relations are consequences of the sexual division of labor within the family. Firestone terms the family the base and the political economy the superstructure, but links the two realms only vaguely through "power psychology." While Mitchell stresses the complexity of their interaction she retains the conception of the family as a separate realm (socially defined as "natural") outside the economy—indeed she explains the oppression of women, as Firestone does, by their exclusion from social production.¹⁴ In this way, Mitchell and Firestone share with recent socialist movements the idea of a split between the family and the economy. Given this idea, one cannot understand the relation between family life and the rest of society.

The understanding of the family and the economy as separate realms is specific to capitalist society. By the "economy," Firestone and Mitchell mean the sphere in which commodity production and exchange takes place, the production of goods and services to be sold, and their sale and purchase. Within this

14. In an exchange over "The Longest Revolution" Mitchell wrote that the roles performed by women within the family—sexuality, reproduction, and socialization—were all "roles man shares with other mammals. This confirms de Beauvoir's contention that women are relegated to the species while men—through work—transcend it." *New Left Review* 41, p. 82.

framework of thought, a housewife cooking a meal is not performing economic activity, whereas if she were hired to cook a similar meal in a restaurant she would be. This conception of "economic" excludes activity within the family and a political struggle waged by "economic classes" would exclude women, except in their role as wage-earners. Socialist and communist movements in the developed capitalist countries have also understood the "economy" in this way. And when they have talked of a political struggle between "economic classes," they have essentially excluded both the family and housewives from revolutionary politics.

The historic socialist understanding is based upon an important truth about capitalist society. The capitalist class has organized much of material production as a system of commodity production and exchange, and has organized most forms of labor as wage labor—i.e., as a commodity. By paying the laborer less than the value that the laborer produces, the capitalist is able to appropriate surplus value, unpaid labor time. Surplus value is the social basis for the existence of the capitalist class. The sphere in which surplus value is produced and realized (the "economy") determines the imperatives of society as a whole. The family has changed in capitalist society as the needs generated within the sphere of surplus value production—the needs of the capitalist class—have changed. And since this sphere is organized through wage labor, the destruction of the wage labor system is a central, defining task of a revolutionary movement in a capitalist country. But this task cannot be accomplished by wage labor alone, nor does it exhaust the purposes of a revolutionary movement.

The organization of production in capitalist society is predicated upon the existence of a certain form of family life. The wage labor system (socialized production under capitalism) is sustained by the socially necessary but private labor of housewives and mothers. Child-rearing, cleaning, laundry, the maintenance of property, the preparation of food, daily health care, reproduction, etc. constitute a perpetual cycle of labor necessary to maintain life in this society. In this sense the family is an integral part of the economy under capitalism. Furthermore, the functions currently performed by housewives and

mothers will be as indispensable to a socialist society as will be many of the forms of material production currently performed by wage labor. A socialist movement that anticipates its own role in organizing society must give weight to all forms of socially necessary labor, rather than only to the form (wage labor) that is dominant under capitalism.

MARX PROBABLY INTENDED the larger conception of the economy when, in the preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, he defined the "economic structure" as the "real foundation" of society. The "economic structure," he wrote, was "the total ensemble of social relations entered into in the social production of existence." That this conception of economic structure must include the family would have been perfectly clear in any analysis of a pre-capitalist society.¹⁵ In pre-capitalist society the family performed such present functions as reproduction, care of the sick and aged, shelter, the maintenance of personal property, and regulation of sexuality, as well as the basic forms of material production necessary to sustain life. There were forms of economic activity that were not based upon family units—such as the building of public works, and labor in state-owned mines or industries. But they do not compare in extent or importance to peasant agriculture, labor based upon some form of the family, or upon the village, an extension of one or several families. In the most "primitive" societies—those in which production is least developed socially—the material necessity of the family, its role in sustaining life, was overwhelming. Even putting aside the dependence of children, adults in "primitive" society had no option but to rely upon the cooperative work of the household and particularly on the sexual division of labor, which by

15. By the "family" I mean any grouping of parents or other relatives with children, embodying a sexual division of labor, and distinguishing itself as a unit by legal, economic, and sexual rights and taboos. While such a unit varies endlessly in form, constitution, and relationship to other social institutions, it is also more or less universal in human societies (though not among all strata of a given society). The best introduction I know to the conception of the family as an anthropological (i.e., universal) entity is Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Family," in Arlene and Jerome Skolnick, *Family in Transition* (Boston, 1971).

restricting tasks to one sex or the other insured their reciprocal dependence. In such societies, widows, orphans, and bachelors are scorned or pitied as if they were witches or cripples: their survival is always in doubt.¹⁶

It is only under capitalism that material production organized as wage labor and the forms of production taking place within the family, have been separated so that the "economic" function of the family is obscured. Both Firestone and Mitchell contrast the "natural" functions of the family to the more "human" world of social production,¹⁷ but sexuality and reproduction, like the production of food and shelter, are basic forms of "economic" or material necessity in any society. Only with the emergence of capitalism has "economic" production come to be understood as a "human" realm outside of "nature." Before capitalism, material production was understood, like sexuality and reproduction, to be "natural"—precisely what human beings shared with animals. From the viewpoint of the dominant culture in previous societies what distinguished humanity was not production but rather culture, religion, politics, or some other "higher" ideal made possible by the surplus appropriated from material production. In ancient Greece, for example, the labor of women and slaves within the household provided the material basis upon which male citizens could participate in the "free" and "democratic" world of the polis. Politics distinguished human life from the animal existence of women and slaves. Similarly, in medieval Europe, the surplus appropriated from peasant families supported the religious and aristocratic orders who together defined the purpose and meaning of the entire society. The serfs toiling in the field were understood as animals; they became human

16. Claude Levi-Strauss described "meeting, among the Bororo of central Brazil, a man about thirty years old: unclean, ill-fed, sad, and lonesome. When asked if the man were seriously ill, the natives' answer came as a shock: what was wrong with him?—nothing at all, he was just a bachelor. [Since] only the married status permits the man to benefit from the fruits of women's work, including delousing, body-painting, and hair-plucking as well as vegetable food and cooked food . . . a bachelor is really only half a human being." "The Family," p. 57.

17. The fullest statement of this viewpoint is probably Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.

because they had "souls"—i.e., they participated in religion. Before capitalism the family was associated with the "natural" processes of eating, sleeping, sexuality, and cleaning oneself, with the agonies of birth, sickness, and death, and with the unremitting necessity of toil. It is this association of the family with the most primary and impelling material processes that has given it its connotation of backwardness as society advanced. Historically, the family has appeared to be in conflict with culture, freedom, and everything that raises humanity above the level of animal life. Certainly it is the association of women with this realm that has been among the earliest and most persistent sources of male supremacy and of the hatred of women.¹⁸

Capitalism, in its early development, distinguished itself from previous societies by the high moral and spiritual value it placed upon labor spent in goods production. This new esteem for production, embodied in the idea of private property and in the Protestant idea of a "calling," led the early bourgeoisie to place a high value upon the family since the family was the basic unit of production. While in feudal society the "personal" relations of the aristocracy were often highly self-conscious and carefully regulated, the domestic life of the masses was private and unexamined, even by the church. Early capitalism developed a high degree of consciousness concerning the internal life of the family and a rather elaborate set of rules and expectations that governed family life. This led to a simultaneous advance and retrogression in the status of women. On one hand, women were fixed more firmly than ever within the family unit; on the other hand, the family had a higher status than ever before. But the feminist idea that women in the family were outside the economy did not yet have any basis. As in pre-capitalist society, throughout most

18. H. R. Hays, in *The Dangerous Sex: The Myth of Feminine Evil* (New York, 1972), gives a historical overview of male supremacy that indicates not only its persistence but the recurrence of identical themes. Almost, but not quite, universally, women are portrayed as dirty, bad-smelling, unhealthy, unspiritual, driven by sensuality and instinctual needs, weak, unreasoning and, in general, under the sway of brute necessity. Early myths such as those of Eve and Pandora also link women with both sexuality and the necessity of labor.

of capitalist history the family has been the basic unit of "economic" production—not the "wage-earning" father but the household as a whole. While there was an intense division of labor *within* the family, based upon age, sex, and family position, there was scarcely a division *between* the family and the world of commodity production, at least not until the nineteenth century. Certainly women were excluded from the few "public" activities that existed—for example, military affairs. But their sense of themselves as "outside" the larger society was fundamentally limited by the fact that "society" was overwhelmingly composed of family units based upon widely dispersed, individually owned productive property. Similarly, women had a respected role within the family since the domestic labor of the household was so clearly integral to the productive activity of the family as a whole.

But the overall tendency of capitalist development has been to socialize the basic processes of commodity production—to remove labor from the private efforts of individual families or villages and to centralize it in large-scale corporate units. Capitalism is the first society in history to socialize production on a large scale. With the rise of industry, capitalism "split" material production between its socialized forms (the sphere of commodity production) and the private labor performed predominantly by women within the home. In this form male supremacy, which long antedated capitalism, became an institutional part of the capitalist system of production.

THIS "SPLIT" BETWEEN the socialized labor of the capitalist enterprise and the private labor of women in the home is closely related to a second "split"—between our "personal" lives and our place within the social division of labor. So long as the family was a productive unit based upon private property, its members understood their domestic life and "personal" relations to be rooted in their mutual labor. Since the rise of industry, however, proletarianization separated most people (or families) from the ownership of productive property. As a result "work" and "life" were separated; proletarianization split off the outer world of alienated labor from an inner world of personal feeling. Just as capitalist development

gave rise to the idea of the family as a separate realm from the economy, so it created a "separate" sphere of personal life, seemingly divorced from the mode of production.

This development was a major social advance. It is the result of the socialization of production achieved by capitalism and the consequent decline in socially necessary labor time and rise in time spent outside production. Personal relations and self-cultivation have always, throughout history, been restricted to the leisure classes and to artists, courtiers, and others who performed the rituals of conversation, sexual encounter, self-examination, and physical and mental development according to well-developed and socially shared codes of behavior. But under capitalism an ethic of personal fulfillment has become the property of the masses of people, though it has very different meanings for men and for women, and for different strata of the proletariat. Much of this search for personal meaning takes place within the family and is one reason for the persistence of the family in spite of the decline of many of its earlier functions.

The distinguishing characteristic of this search is its subjectivity—the sense of an individual, alone, outside society with no firm sense of his or her own place in a rationally ordered scheme. It takes place on a vast new social terrain known as "personal" life, whose connection to the rest of society is as veiled and obscure as is the family's connection. While in the nineteenth century the family was still being studied through such disciplines as political economy and ethics, in the twentieth century it spawned its own "sciences," most notable psychoanalysis and psychology. But psychology and psychoanalysis distort our understanding of personal life by assuming that it is governed by its own internal laws (for example, the psychosexual dynamics of the family, the "laws" of the mind or of "interpersonal relations") rather than by the "laws" that govern society as a whole. And they encourage the idea that emotional life is formed only through the family and that the search for happiness should be limited to our "personal" relations, outside our "job" or "role" within the division of labor.

Thus, the dichotomies that women's liberation first confronted—between the "personal" and the "political," and

between the "family" and the "economy"—are rooted in the structure of capitalist society. All three writers reflect this split, as all three seek to overcome it. The means of overcoming it is through a conception of the family as a historically formed part of the mode of production.

The rise of capitalism isolated the family from socialized production as it created a historically new sphere of personal life among the masses of people. The family now became the major space in society in which the individual self could be valued "for itself." This process, the "private" accompaniment of industrial development, cut women off from men in a drastic way and gave a new meaning to male supremacy. While housewives and mothers continued their traditional tasks of production—housework, reproduction, etc.—this labor was devalued through its isolation from the socialized production of surplus value. In addition, housewives and mothers were given new responsibility for maintaining the emotional and psychological realm of personal relations. For women within the family "work" and "life" were not separated but were collapsed into one another. The combination of these forms of labor has created the specific character of women's labor within the family in modern capitalist society.

THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION is an attempt to understand the recent history of the family as part of the history of the capitalist mode of production. It describes two related historical transformations: the elimination of private productive property as the basis of the family among the masses of people, and the emergence of a sphere of personal life seemingly independent of the "economy" and of "production."

Historians of the family in Europe and the United States have focused on its internal institutions—the laws of marriage, inheritance and divorce, the social relations of age and sex. Their emphasis has been formal and legalistic. Their major theories have stressed the slow, almost imperceptible evolution in the internal constitution of the household from the "extended" to the "nuclear" family. Viewed in this way, the seeming inertia of the family has been in marked contrast to the continuous upheaval of political and economic history, a

contrast that lends plausibility to the view that "history" is the realm of politics and economics while the family is confined to "nature."

In contrast, I have tried to understand the family as an integral part of a society that changes continuously and as a whole. I have focused on the continually changing social basis of the family as part of the organization of production. Under feudalism, kinship ties were of extreme importance, but the basic economic unit was the manor or the village economy. With the beginnings of capitalism, the bourgeoisie, in defending private productive property against feudal ties and restrictions, put forth a new conception of the family as an independent economic unit within a market economy. The bourgeois conception of private productive property underlies the "discovery" of the family in the early bourgeois period, the phenomenon described by Philippe Ariès in *Centuries of Childhood*.¹⁹ Based upon private productive property, the ideology of the family as an "independent" or "private" institution is the counterpart to the idea of the "economy" as a separate realm, one that capitalism over centuries wrested "free" of feudal restrictions, customary law, and state and clerical intervention. Protestantism reinforced this conception of the family by making it a center of religious observance.

In the early stages of industrial capitalism the family remained the productive unit, either through the "putting out" system or by bringing the whole family into the early manufacturing institutions. But by the nineteenth century the factory system has eliminated many of the production functions of the family. The bourgeois family was now reduced to the preservation and transmission of capitalist property, while the productive function of the proletarian family lay in the reproduction of the labor force. Hence, through the family each class reproduced its own class function. How did the proletarian family understand itself once it was stripped of private productive property?

To answer this question I have tried to describe the expansion of personal life among the masses of people in the nine-

19. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. Translated by Robert Baldick. (New York, 1962).

teenth and twentieth centuries. Some of the origins of this process lie in the history of the family. The development of the bourgeois family encouraged individualism, self-consciousness and a new attention to domestic relations. But bourgeois individualism is inseparably linked to private productive property and economic competition. With the rise of industry, individualism begins to turn against capitalism itself in such movements as romanticism and utopian socialism. But these movements remained petty bourgeois insofar as they were based upon an obsolete ideal of private property. They proclaimed the unity of "personal" and productive life in the form of self-contained cooperative economic units closely resembling the early bourgeois family.

By the twentieth century, a sphere of "personal" life emerged among the proletariat itself. In the absence of a political movement that sought to transform both personal life and production, personal life was characterized by subjectivity—the search for personal identity outside the social division of labor. Having no private property to uphold, contemporary individualism upholds the self as an "autonomous" realm outside society. This new emphasis on one's personal feelings and inner needs, one's "head" or "life style," to use contemporary formulations, gives a continued meaning to family life and at the same time threatens to blow it apart.

If we can understand the family as part of the development of capitalism this can help establish the specific historical formation of male supremacy. This, in turn, would help focus the attack upon it. The establishment of private productive property as the basis of the bourgeois household meant that society was organized into separate households each of which was ruled by the father (and grandfather). In the democratic proclamations of the bourgeois revolutions every defense of natural rights or individual freedom assumes that the (male) head of the household represents the women, children, and servants within. Similarly, women are invisible in the bourgeois exaltation of "private property" or the "yeoman"; the real "yeoman" is the collective labor of the household. The emergence of personal life encouraged a sense of self-assertion and individual uniqueness among men while assigning women

to the newly discovered worlds of childhood, emotional sensibility, and compassion, all contained within women's "sphere," the family.

Personal life appears to take place in some private, psychological realm outside society. By its critique of male supremacy and of the family women's liberation has demonstrated its systematic and social character. The family is an important material basis for subjectivity in this society, and for psychological life generally. If we can simultaneously view it as part of the "economy" a step would be taken toward understanding the connection between our inner emotional lives and capitalist development. The social terrain of personal life is the contemporary family within which men and women share so much, and in which their antagonism is so deeply rooted.

III. CAPITALISM AND THE FAMILY

1. Introduction

AN OVERALL TENDENCY toward dissolution has characterized formal kinship relations in Europe and the United States in modern times. In feudal society kinship was integral to the system of vassalage. The ruling aristocracy was organized as a series of "houses" or families, and pre-feudal clan and tribal survivals underlay the village economy of the peasants. Against the aristocratic emphasis on "line" or "blood," the bourgeoisie asserted the right of every son to form his own family. The bourgeois revolution represented the victory "of the family over the family name."²⁰ With the rise of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the male-dominated bourgeois family began to break up; the family began to be reduced to its individual members, including women and children. Each phase of dissolution has been accompanied by a new attempt at synthesis—for the bourgeoisie the "patriarchal" or "nuclear" family, for the proletariat "personal life."

Part III describes the place the family occupied in the bour-

geoisie's world outlook. Each succeeding ruling class has incorporated and transformed the ideology of its predecessors. The rise of capitalism turned "families" into units of commodity production. In the process, the bourgeoisie, through its ideology of individualism based on private property, redefined such feudal and pre-feudal ideals as male supremacy, family loyalty, and romantic love. But the further development of capitalism destroyed the basis of that ideology by turning private property into capital and wage labor. When socialist, feminist, and other movements sought a new basis for family and personal life, they drew heavily on the bourgeois ideological heritage, often promising to realize the bourgeois ideal. For that reason I have focused on that heritage.

2. A Note on the Aristocracy

FAMILY RELATIONS AMONG the aristocracy were viewed and conducted as economic transactions. According to Christopher Hill, in seventeenth-century England "the law of marriage . . . [was] almost the groundwork of the law of property."²¹ Marriage was arranged according to the family's rather than the individual's interest. Love and sexual life were sought outside marriage and mostly by men. Arranged marriages necessitated the double standard, mistresses, and illegitimacy. A major theme of the early bourgeoisie (one which was particularly clear in literature) was an attack on the cynical personal relations of the "money power" and a defense of the family as the realm of *both* economic and personal life.

Aristocratic ideals of romantic love and individuality developed in explicit opposition to the family. In the refined society of the court, beyond the realm of goods production, the aristocracy developed an ideology of spiritualized but non-Christian love which prevailed only as adultery and which, in theory, was never consummated. Man, freed from the necessity of labor, were preoccupied with their personal relations and with an ideal of individual self-improvement.²² Aristocratic

20. Karl Marx, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 15 December 1848, quoted in C. H. George, "The Making of the English Bourgeoisie, 1500-1750," *Science and Society*, Winter 1971, p. 385.

21. Christopher Hill, *Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (New York, 1961), p. 253.

22. Frederick Heer, *The Medieval World* (New York, 1962), pp. 165-88. Courtly love reflected the Catholic Church's distinction between sacred

women were exalted as spiritual creatures, as they later would be again, in the nineteenth century, when the bourgeois home lost its productive functions. In these respects and in its emphasis on the emotions, on sexuality and physical well-being, and on the free choice of a unique beloved, courtly love anticipated ideals of love and individualism that the bourgeoisie located within the family and that were generalized and transformed in the course of capitalist development.

3. *The Early Bourgeois Family in England*

THE PREVALENT FORM of family life in England before the rise of industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was that of an economically independent, commodity-producing unit. Often referred to as the "patriarchal" family, it survives today only among the petit bourgeoisie. It originated between the disintegration of feudalism in the fourteenth century and the rise of capitalism in the sixteenth. During this period peasant families extricated themselves from feudal ties to become tenants or (far less often) landowners. In feudal society separate households were a subordinate part of a larger enterprise, generally the manor. While peasant families often worked as a unit, they had no independent economic initiative. Their holdings were in the form of narrow strips scattered amid those of other peasants "in unfenced or open fields."²³ The peasants shared the fields for cattle grazing; the harvest was gathered collectively. With the decline of feudalism and the commercialization of agriculture some peasants were driven from the land while the holdings of others were consolidated as independent commodity-producing farms. Slowly, the family replaced the

and secular love. Sacred love, like courtly love, existed outside the family and outside the realm of material production. Neither sacred nor courtly love was to be consummated. Similarly, the knightly quest for self-realization mimics the monastic stages of spiritual development, the emphasis on magic parallels the Catholic ritual, the love of the lady parallels Mariolatry, and baptism is secularized in the rebirth of the knight. Heer points out that courtly love anticipates a long tradition of "self-discovery" culminating in psychoanalysis.

23. Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston, 1966), p. 12.

manor as the lowest social unit the head of which was an active citizen," able to buy and sell in the marketplace.²⁴

On the basis of small-scale commodity production a new form of the family developed in the early bourgeois period. The household of a property-owning family in seventeenth-century England was a complicated economic enterprise that included not only children and relatives but servants, apprentices, and journeymen from different social classes. At its head was the *paterfamilias* who worked alongside his wife, children, employees, and wards. He was solely responsible for the economic and spiritual welfare of his family and represented in his person the supposed unity and independence of the family. The domestic relations of the household were an acknowledged part of the production relations of early capitalism.²⁵

This bourgeoisie that emerged in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had many sources, including the landed nobility and the merchant capitalists of the medieval towns. But its most revolutionary sectors came from the class of small producers working their own property. For centuries the bourgeoisie identified itself with this form of production, distinguishing the "industrious sort of people" from both the idle aristocracy and the shiftless poor. While family life differed vastly among different strata and classes, the early bourgeois family—the family as a self-contained productive unit—furnished the basis for a new ideology of the family linked with the newly emerging ideas of private property and individualism. Much of this ideology was expressed through religion, particularly Puritanism, which was an inseparable part of the early bourgeois outlook. Taken together, the changes achieved by the bourgeoisie in seventeenth-century England

24. Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (New York, 1967), p. 449; Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 123–44.

25. Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, pp. 449, 453. Only the *paterfamilias* could wear a hat in his own house. Hill points out that the *paterfamilias's* responsibility for the household foreshadows the paternalism that becomes so nauseating in the impersonal setting of developed capitalism.

established a new form of the family and an ethic of family life integral to the bourgeois system of rule.

The bourgeoisie encouraged a new respect for labor and economic activity. John Locke, writing toward the end of the century, expressed the bourgeois contempt for medieval "otherworldliness": "We are not born in heaven but in this world, where our being is to be preserved with meat, drink, and clothing, and other necessities that are not born with us, but must be got and kept with forecast, care and labour, and therefore we cannot be all devotion, all praises and hallelujahs, and perpetually in the vision of things above."²⁶ Locke expressed the view that through labor the individual expressed his own nature: "Whatsoever [a man] removes out of the state that nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property."²⁷ This new value placed upon private property and productive labor encouraged a new esteem for the family.

The bourgeoisie's acceptance of economic life helped encourage a new acceptance of sexuality, eating, and other non-economic material processes of the family. The family had been scorned in medieval society as the realm of both production and sexuality. The Catholic Church, anti-sexual and savagely anti-female, had sanctioned family life only reluctantly, as the alternative to damnation, and had forbidden it to the clergy. The right of the clergy to marry had been a basic issue during the Reformation. In seventeenth-century England, Puritanism, with its acceptance of the life of material necessity, embraced the married state and exalted the family as part of the natural (i.e., God-given) order of productive and spiritual activity. Sexuality and emotional expression were encouraged, so long as they occurred within marriage. The Puritans condemned only "unnatural" forms of sexuality such as the profligacy practiced at the court, and homosexuality,

26. Quoted in Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, 1960), p. 298.

27. John Locke, *Treatise of Civil Government* (New York, 1937), pp. 18-19.

which they viewed with particular horror.²⁸ They argued that emotional and sexual expression must be "weaned"—held within the bounds of nature and not carried to artificial excess. In *Paradise Lost*, a Puritan paean to the married state, Milton wrote, "In loving thou dost well in passion not."²⁹

In contrast to the pre-capitalist divorce of spiritual and economic life, human meaning and purpose was now to be sought in the mundane world of production and the family. Throughout the Reformation, an ever-increasing proportion of religious instruction and prayer was removed from the church to the home. More important, Protestantism blessed the material labor performed by the family as sacred. Calvin answered the medieval text "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor" by saying "God sets more value on the pious management of a household."³⁰ The family's economic life was now spiritualized. The Protestant idea of a "calling" allows one to do God's work in a secular craft or occupation.³¹

Underlying these changes was a new conception of human nature, that of possessive individualism. The bourgeoisie condemned the fixed stratification of medieval society as "artificial" and viewed competitiveness based upon economic self-interest as the natural basis of society.³² As market relations developed, the identification of the individual with a fixed

28. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (New York, 1967), pp. 298-301.

29. Similarly Puritanism upheld the economically "independent" individual (i.e., family) who held his own in the community, but attacked the "unnatural" spirit of acquisitiveness associated with the rise of commerce.

30. Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, p. 449.

31. In Europe at this time the Catholic Church began to recognize the possibility of awarding sainthood to individuals in pursuits outside the clergy. The church began to encourage the laity in activities such as education previously monopolized by the clergy. Ariès, p. 357.

32. Shakespeare's plays, for example, defend the new early bourgeois ideals of love, marriage, and individual freedom on the basis of their being "natural," i.e., outside convention. In *King Lear*, the established loyalties of the social order are posed against the individualism of the daughters, who wish to break away and live their own lives. The supremely egotistical figure in *Lear* is Edmund, who is a bastard, a child

social position began to give way to a commitment to the "individual" (i.e., the individual family) who would rise or fall on the basis of independent efforts. The family came to be seen as a competitive economic unit apart from, and later even opposed to, the rest of society. In the seventeenth century competitiveness and acquisitiveness were still restricted by the corporate ideals of mercantilism; by the eighteenth century they were generally encouraged.

The bourgeois acceptance of a certain degree of selfishness and aggression as part of human nature gave rise to a search for new principles of social order. While it was the vehicle of private ambition, the family was hierarchically organized and strictly disciplined. It forced the "natural" materialism of its members to take a socially acceptable form. The early bourgeoisie understood the family to be the basic unit of the social order—"a little church, a little state"—and the lowest rung in the ladder of social authority. They conceived of society as composed not of individuals but of families, each an indissoluble cell. If they spoke of "individual rights," it was because of the sovereignty of paternal power.

The new social and religious functions of the family led to a deepening consciousness concerning domestic life and to public debate over its form. Among Puritans and other sects it also led to a deepening *self*-consciousness, an awareness of one's internal psychological life. Christianity has always encouraged a certain degree of self-consciousness in the form of the conscience, the major form of subjective experience in Europe and America until the nineteenth century. But Puritans, and other Protestants, viewed social behavior as a sign of inward grace and argued that no church ritual or other outward act could determine for certain whether an individual was "saved." One indication of the expansion of self-consciousness was the proliferation of diaries in the seventeenth century. More broadly, the same period saw the invention of silvered mirrors, the spread of autobiography, the building of chairs instead of benches, the spread of private lodgings, and the rise of self-

of "nature," not part of society at all. Cf. Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, pp. 462-63.

portraits. In this period sincerity became a dominant social ideal.³³

Taken together, these developments shaped a new ideal of family life. Marriage was coming to be understood as a partnership based upon common love and labor; one's wife was a companion or "helpmeet." The early bourgeois family gave rise to a new set of expectations based upon the couple's common destiny—not only love but mutual affection and respect, trust, fidelity, and premarital chastity. As in medieval society, children were quickly integrated into the adult order, but it was understood that when grown they would marry according to their own desires, although listening to their parents' counsel. In keeping with the high value placed upon both productive labor to expand the family's fortune and the weaning of one's emotions over time, maturity and old age were idealized. The symbol of the wise and self-disciplined grandfather now replaced, for a time, the more traditional image of the dotard.³⁴

THE BOURGEOIS FAMILIAL IDEAL obscured two contradictions that emerged in the course of capitalist development: the oppression of women and the family's subordination to class relations. The rise of the bourgeoisie entailed a simultaneous advance and retrogression in the position of women. In the economic life of medieval England women were closer to equality with men than they later were under capitalism. For example, women participated as equals in many guilds in the fourteenth century.³⁵ With the rise of capitalism they were excluded and, in general, economic opportunities for women not in families—such as spinsters or widows—declined. On the other hand women were given a much higher status within the family. For the Puritans, women's domestic labor was a "calling," a special vocation comparable to the crafts or trades of their husbands. Like their husbands, women did God's work.

33. Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 25; Hill, *Century of Revolution*, p. 253.

34. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age* (New York, 1972), pp. 178-79.

35. Mary Beard, *Woman as Force in History* (New York, 1946, 1971), p. 234.

As the lesser partner in a common enterprise, a woman was to be treated with respect. According to Robert Cleaver's *A Godly Form of Household Government*, a 1598 Puritan marriage manual, "She was like a judge joined in commission to help rule his household. She was not to be made into a drudge or ordered about like a servant, but the husband was to command her 'as the soul doth the body,'" ³⁶ i.e., through their mutual harmony. Wife-beating was now forbidden. And the Protestant conviction that all believers were spiritually equal rescued women from their medieval limbo of carnality. As in medieval peasant society, women were associated with the "natural" realm of labor, but in contrast to medieval society this realm was highly valued.

Hence, women were encouraged to think of themselves almost as independent persons at the same time that they were imprisoned within the family. During the English Revolution the question of female equality was debated politically for the first time. Within many sects women played leading roles as preachers and organizers. (This was particularly true in sects that downgraded the importance of learning for salvation, since women were so little educated.) ³⁷ These stirrings of women's equality reached a level in the seventeenth century sufficient to call forth a counter-movement among preachers and others that stressed female subordination within the family. One argument made was that the family was the economic property of the husband, and that married women owned nothing in their own right. ³⁸

So long as the family was considered the "natural" or God-given basis of society, the issue of women's equality could not emerge on a large scale. The bourgeois view that the family (rather than individuals or classes) was the basic unit of society

36. Quoted in M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago, 1939, 1970), p. 454.

37. Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects," in Trevor Aston, *Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660* (New York, 1967), passim. Episcopal documents of the period describe the sects as "chiefly women," "most silly women," and so forth.

38. George, pp. 407-8. In fact, this did not become a legal reality until the middle of the eighteenth century.

reinforced the deeply rooted traditions of male supremacy. And this view persisted as long as the family was a basic unit of social production. The issue of women's equality was largely muted until the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the rise of industry finally destroyed the bourgeois ideal of the family as an independent productive unit.

That ideal had always been ideological, obscuring the class differences among the supposedly "independent" producers of seventeenth-century England. According to the bourgeoisie, "private property" defined the family as an independent unit, guaranteed its political freedoms, and provided a new justification for the rule of the father. By "private property" the seventeenth-century bourgeoisie meant both one's own labor power (i.e., "property in one's person"), and the land or tools one employed. This obscured the fact that labor alone could never make one an "independent" producer: farmers required land, implements, and stock; weavers required materials and the use of a loom. ³⁹ Hence as capitalism developed, "private property" split—into capital on one hand, and labor power on the other.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this split took the form of "domestic industry"—the family worked as a unit but in direct dependence on the capitalist class. Weavers, for example, were dependent upon merchant clothiers who supplied their wool, monopolized new technical inventions such as the knitting frame, finished the production of cloth by hiring workers, and served as intermediaries between the weaving family and the shopkeepers who sold their cloth. Only the ownership of land bestowed a measure of independence upon the artisan family. ⁴⁰

Domestic industry preserved the "unity" but not the "independence" of the original bourgeois ideal. E. P. Thompson somewhat romantically describes the family of weavers: "The

39. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London, 1967), p. 149.

40. Paul Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century* (New York, 1961), pp. 59-68. Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (New York, 1968), pp. 143-51.

young children winding bobbins, older children watching for faults, picking over the cloth, or helping to throw the shuttle in the broad-loom; adolescents working a second or third loom; the wife taking a turn at weaving, in and among her domestic employments. The family was together, and however poor meals were, at least they could sit down at chosen times. A whole pattern of community life had grown up around the loom-shops; work did not prevent conversation or singing."⁴¹ Even the early forms of factory organization often preserved this unity. In the mills and manufacturing workshops of the early eighteenth century families worked as a unit. Family and community relations were part of the hybrid organization of production in these early enterprises. For this reason, the early working class defended child labor, since it preserved the traditional ties between children and their parents (especially fathers, who transmitted a productive skill).⁴²

4. *Decline of the Bourgeois Family*

THE RISE OF THE FACTORY system made manifest the subjection of the family to the class relations of its members. Until then, the bourgeoisie had accommodated itself to domestic industry, since this was the most expedient and profitable way of organizing production. Once families were brought together in a common workshop, however, they were no longer supervised by the father but by the master. They no longer worked at their own rhythm, but according to the systematic labor discipline required by a coordinated division of labor. The master-manufacturer of the eighteenth century was obsessed with the necessity of instructing the workers in "methodical" habits, punctilious attention to instructions, fulfillment of contracts to time, and in the sinfulness of embezzling materials." In this context Methodism became the dominant religion of both bourgeoisie and working class. Unlike Puritanism, which asserted the unity of economic and spiritual life, Methodists

41. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1963), pp. 306-7.

42. Neil Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago, 1965), passim.

preached the rigid division between the repression, discipline, and social subordination of daily life and the ritualized paroxysms of Sabbath emotionalism.⁴³

The introduction of machinery was the culmination of this process, requiring human beings to "identify themselves with the unvarying regularity of the complex automaton."⁴³ Industrial capitalism required a rationalized, coordinated and synchronized labor process undisturbed by community sentiment, family responsibilities, personal relations or feelings. These changes in the organization of production led to the formation of a new ideology of the family. Earlier the bourgeoisie had portrayed the family as the progressive center of individualism, but as industrial production destroyed the basis of the early bourgeois family, the family came to be either scorned as a backward institution or nostalgically romanticized. In either case it was contrasted to "society," the system of social production and administration.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an early exponent of this contrast, identified the family with "nature." Like the early bourgeoisie, Rousseau idealized the family based upon private property. But unlike them he contrasted the "spontaneously" developed, even "primeval," division of labor within the family, to "society."⁴⁶ "Society," he asserted, creates inequality, but "nature" is inherently egalitarian: "Neither master nor slave belongs to a family, but only to a class."⁴⁶ "Society" constricts human understanding within the narrow confines of rationality, which Rousseau calls "philosophy," but within the family emotional life abounds, particularly compassion. "It is philosophy that isolates a man; it is through philosophy that a man will secretly say, on seeing a man suffer: Die if you will, I am safe." In the

43. Thompson, pp. 359, 368-69.

44. Andrew Ure, *Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835), quoted in Thompson, p. 360.

45. By "society" Rousseau refers to commerce and urban life rather than to the industrialization then occurring in England. Nevertheless, the overall direction of French and English society is similar.

46. *Emile* (London, 1966), p. 401. Eva Figs, *Patriarchal Attitudes* (New York, 1970), points out the importance of Rousseau.

family the "natural" sense of human solidarity still prevails, while in society it has been destroyed by the calculating egoism of the bourgeoisie. The early bourgeois family had been a microcosm of social authority. For Rousseau the family is held together "voluntarily"⁴⁷ or through the "natural" bonds of male supremacy.⁴⁸ In this regard he anticipates the modern belief in the internal freedom of the family and its determination by the emotional needs of its members. In contrast to the emotional life of the family, society was a rationalized programmed mechanism. One of the happiest moments of Rousseau's life came when, upon leaving Paris, he threw away his watch.⁴⁹ The family, attuned to the "natural" rhythms of eating, sleeping, and child care, can never be wholly synchronized with the mechanized tempo of industrial capitalism.⁵⁰

Rousseau's exaltation of domesticity was a late expression of the egalitarianism rooted in the bourgeois ideal of private property, as well as an early prefiguring of the romantic and utopian socialist critique of capitalism. Rousseau's "family" is the petit-bourgeois household, part of a society of "independent producers." But the bourgeois family was losing its earlier productive role. Even the most basic domestic tasks, such as child-rearing, were being performed by servants. And as production became increasingly socialized, the bourgeoisie lost the illusion of individual autonomy within the sphere of goods production. By the nineteenth century the bourgeoisie had formulated a very different ideal of the family—that of an enclave protected from industrial society. Although this ideal was based upon the *bourgeois* family it also pervaded petit-

47. *Social Contract* (New York, 1971), p. 8. Locke shared this idea. Both used it to combat defenses of monarchical right that were based upon paternal authority within the family such as those by Filmer and Jean Bodin. Cf. Locke, *An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government*, part 6, "Of Paternal Power."

48. Though Rousseau already reflects the division of labor between the sexes based upon wage-labor: "Woman, honor your master, he it is who works for you, he it is who gives you bread to eat; this is he!" *Emile*, p. 401.

49. Ernst Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Bloomington, Ind., 1967).

50. E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38.

bourgeois and proletarian family life and shaped the movements to transform the family that arose in the nineteenth century.

IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY, the bourgeoisie saw themselves as alienated from both "society"—the Frankenstein monster they had created—and "nature"—the world they had left behind. Reflecting the brutal, seemingly irresistible, imposition of industrial capitalism, "society" was envisioned as a vast economic machine.

The idea of self-interest now supplanted the idea of conscience and money came to dominate all social relations. According to Jeremy Bentham, "The preparation in the human bosom for antipathy towards other men is, under all circumstances, most unhappily copious and active." The reason? "The boundless range of human desires, and the very limited number of objects. . . . Human beings are the most powerful instruments of production, and therefore everyone becomes anxious to employ the services of his fellows in multiplying his own comforts." According to Bentham it was futile to "dive into the unfathomable regions of motives" since all that was necessary was to know what one wanted. Indeed, man is "by interest diverted from any close examination into the springs by which his own conduct is determined. From such knowledge he has not, in any ordinary shape, anything to gain—he finds not in it any source of enjoyment." In this species of economic determinism men and women would know each other "solely from the outside" and through a busy life of getting and spending would avoid what Bentham called the "painful probe" of introspection.⁵¹

Because of the need to recycle all wealth into the process of capital accumulation, the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie put forth an ethic of self-abnegation and denial.⁵² "Capital," wrote

51. Wolin, pp. 316, 324, 333, 341. The phrase "solely from the outside" is from Wolin, p. 340. The rest are from Bentham.

52. Trilling, pp. 39–41, points out that insofar as the vision of a "good life" existed in the nineteenth century—in Shakespeare's words "quiet days, fair issue, and long life"—it was an ideal associated with the aristocracy. Material abundance and a willingness to accept pleasure were not part of the outlook of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie.

the political economist N. W. Senior, is "abstinence." According to John Stuart Mill "everything that is produced perishes and most things very quickly. . . . Capital is kept in existence from age to age not by preservation, but by perpetual reproduction." "We economize with our health, our capacity for enjoyment, our forces," wrote Sigmund Freud in 1883, "we save up for something, not knowing ourselves for what."⁵³ Nature now appeared cruel and alien. Malthus's theory of population summed up the nineteenth-century belief that nature, in some sort of vicious joke, had instilled men and women with a sexual instinct that led them to produce offspring while simultaneously limiting the potential subsistence it would supply. In this context of scarcity, mutual suspicion, and a deep sense of the inner worthlessness of the world they had created, the Victorian bourgeoisie came to idealize the new, protected family, outside nature and outside production.

THE FAMILY, to the Victorian bourgeoisie, was a "tent pitch'd in a world not right,"⁵⁴ "This is the true nature of home," wrote John Ruskin; "it is the place of peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. . . . So far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it . . . it ceases to be a home; it is then only a part of the outer world which you have roofed over and lighted fire in."⁵⁵ It stood in opposition to the terrible anonymous world of commerce and industry: "a world alien, not your world . . . without father, without child, without brother."⁵⁶ The Victorian family was distinguished by its spiritual aspect: it is remote, ethereal and unreal—"a sacred place, a vestal temple."⁵⁷ As in the middle ages, so now with the bourgeoisie, the domain of the spirit had once again separated off from the realm of production.

53. Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York, 1953), vol. 1, pp. 190-91.

54. Coventry Patmore, "The Angel in the House," quoted in Walter Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (New Haven, 1957), p. 345.

55. John Ruskin, "Of Queens Gardens," quoted in Millett, pp. 98-99.

56. Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, quoted in Houghton, p. 345.

57. Ruskin, quoted in Millett, p. 99.

Reflecting this separation, the belief in separate "spheres" for men and women came to dominate the ideology of the family in the epoch of industrial capitalism. As the family was now idealized, so was the familial role of women. According to one of the domestic manuals that began to flourish in the 1830s and '40s, "that fierce conflict of worldly interests, by which men are so deeply occupied, [compels them] to stifle their best feelings."⁵⁸ Men, according to Ruskin, are "feeble in sympathy."⁵⁹ But women, by contrast, whose "everyday duties are most divine because they are most human," nurture within the family the "human" values crushed by "modern life."⁶⁰ Earlier, the feudal aristocracy had idealized women for their delicate beauty. In the eighteenth century the bourgeoisie had stressed their role as practical and intelligent housewives. Now the dominant image of women was that of the mother who, freed from domestic labor by the abundance of servants could devote herself wholly to her child.⁶¹ "A woman when she becomes a mother should withdraw herself from the world," instructed an 1869 domestic manual.⁶² In the nineteenth century, childhood was first assigned a separate identity and exalted as the time of life untainted by the roughness of material necessity.⁶³ To a large extent sexual interest was removed from the bourgeois family and assigned to prostitutes,

58. S. Ellis, *The Daughters of England* (London, 1845), pp. 22-23. quoted in J. A. and Olive Banks, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England* (New York, 1964, 1972), p. 59; see also p. 22.

59. Quoted in Millett, p. 105.

60. Houghton, p. 347, quoting Charles Kingsley, *Letters and Memories*.

61. Ruth Alexander, "Sex and the Sexes in 18th Century American Magazines," unpublished manuscript. Ruth Alexander made several suggestions of major importance for changing an earlier version of this article.

62. S. A. Sewall, *Women and the Times We Live In*, quoted in Banks, p. 60.

63. Describing a parallel transformation in American life, Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed the paradoxical quality of the nineteenth-century exaltation of childhood through the remark of a friend who recalled the hardships of his own youth: "It was a misfortune to have been born when children were nothing and to live till men were nothing." "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England," in Perry Miller, ed., *The American Transcendentalists* (New York, 1957), p. 5.

an important group among working-class women. Filial relations were intensified and charged with unsuspected emotions by the sexual repression and prudery characteristic of the period of capital accumulation. As Freud soon demonstrated, the Victorian bourgeois family was a cauldron of anger, jealousy, fear and guilt—not to mention sexuality. But its internal, subjective life was masked by the stark contrast between its protective warmth and the “universal thirst for power”⁶⁴ that prevailed in society. Even men could find their “true self” in the family, “no longer stained by contact with the . . . petty spite and brutal tyranny of an office.”⁶⁵ This vision of the family was incorporated and systematized within the realm of moral philosophy. John Stuart Mill, for example, praised its “loving forgetfulness of self”⁶⁶ and Hegel argued that it was the “naturally ethical” antithesis to the brutal competition of civil society.⁶⁷

Victorian idealism represented a decline from the early bourgeois conception of the family. Just as the bourgeoisie was being transformed into a parasitic class within the system of production, so its ideology of the family was becoming abstract and idealized. Within this decline the bourgeois family was called into question by the new social movements of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

BEGINNING IN THE EIGHTEENTH century a series of writers and artists attacked the bourgeois ideal of the family on behalf of free love. Drawing upon the arguments of William Godwin, Percy Shelley wrote, “Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear.” Shelley urged the abolition of marriage, and expected that the result would be unions “of long duration,” marked by generosity and self-devotion, since “choice

64. Bentham again, quoted in Wolin, p. 342.

65. Mark Rutherford's *Deliverance*, ch. 8, pp. 106–7, quoted in Houghton, p. 346.

66. Quoted in Houghton, p. 347.

67. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 90.

and change will be exempted from restraint.”⁶⁸ In its origins, the support for free love was closely related to an attack on the social repression of women.

Feminism in England had two different sources. Among middle-class women it represented a protest against the enforced domesticity brought about by the rise of industry. The withdrawal of commodity production from the home radically separated women from men; the creation of a separate “sphere” for women also laid the basis for a separate women’s movement. Women attacked the genteel idleness of the “doll’s house” and demanded entry into education, the professions, and public life. Simultaneously, working-class women were being drawn into large-scale industry. Demands for female suffrage and related reforms were raised within the proletarian movement generally—for example, among the National Union of the Working Classes and the Chartists. Both groups of women often reconciled their demands with support for the traditional domestic values of the bourgeois household.

The Victorian opposition to female equality was bitter and furious, reflecting the idea that the family had become the last refuge from the demands of capitalist society. The emancipation of women threatened to degrade all society to a common level of cynical manipulation (i.e., economic competition in the marketplace). Within the same bourgeois view, feminists argued that bringing women into society would humanize it. Nineteenth-century feminism was closely involved with movements of moral reform such as temperance and the abolition of prostitution. Their participation in these movements supported the idea that women were the guardians of society’s morals. Similarly, on the basis of their special capacity for service, certain occupations, for example schoolteaching and nursing, were largely restricted to women, and downgraded.

To the feminist attack on the Victorian ideal the socialists’ voice was added. The rise of industrial capitalism had created a new form of the family among the bourgeoisie, but it had

68. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Complete Poetical Works* (London, 1881), p. 223; Kenneth Neill Cameron, *The Young Shelley: Genesis of a Radical* (New York, 1950), p. 270.

eliminated the economic basis of the family—private productive property—among the working class. As Engels wrote in his 1844 description of the English working class, “Family life for the worker is almost impossible under the existing social system. . . . The various members of the family only see each other in the mornings and evenings, because the husband is away at his work all day long. Perhaps his wife and the older children also go out to work and they may be in different factories. In these circumstances how can family life exist?”⁶⁹ Marx and Engels rejected the nineteenth-century idealization of the bourgeois family, which they viewed as the retrograde preserve of private wealth. In contrast to Hegel and Mill they insisted that “civil society” or “political economy”—capitalism—directly infected family life. “On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based?” they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*. “On capital. On private gain. . . . The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production” whereas, among the proletariat, “all family ties . . . are torn asunder.” According to Marx and Engels the early bourgeois ideals of the family—love, equality, and common work—could not be realized so long as society was organized around private property. The family under capitalism, ostensibly private, was in fact continually transformed by the needs of the dominant class. Communism would liberate the family from its subjection to capital and “will make the relations between the sexes a purely private affair, which concerns only the two persons involved.”⁷⁰ Hence in the nineteenth century a series of movements arose directed at “private” or family life. Part IV describes their social basis.

69. *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Stanford, 1968), p. 145.

70. This quote is from the 1847 *Communist Credo* by Engels, which preceded the *Communist Manifesto*. Dirk Struik, ed., *Birth of the Communist Manifesto* (New York, 1971), p. 185.

IV. PROLETARIANIZATION AND PERSONAL LIFE

1. *The Transformation of Bourgeois Individualism and the Rise of Subjectivity*

IN FEUDAL SOCIETY, men and women occupied a fixed position within a stratified division of labor—they owed allegiance to a particular lord and worked on a particular plot of land rather than being “free” to sell their labor or property. Explicit and direct relations of authority defined people’s sense of individual identity. Catholicism provided them with a common purpose outside themselves.

Private property freed the early bourgeoisie from a fixed social role within the feudal order. On the basis of private property the bourgeoisie has defended “individual rights” throughout history—first against feudal prerogative, more recently against labor unions and “state intervention.” The bourgeoisie has consistently defended the right of individuals to rise and fall within the marketplace through their own efforts, rather than on the basis of birth; the bourgeoisie originated the idea of a contradiction between the individual and society.

But bourgeois individualism also serves as a basis for social order within capitalist society. Based upon private property, bourgeois individualism was identified with a particular activity—commodity production—and a predetermined inner life—the Christian conscience and self-interest. Major bourgeois social theories such as liberalism or rationalism posit a society of individuals (i.e., families) who, acting in their own self-interest, advance the social purpose by expanding private wealth: while individuals compete against one another, the marketplace guarantees a coherent social whole. Similarly, bourgeois moral ideals combine an emphasis on being true to oneself—direct, unashamed—with an emphasis on performing one’s social obligations. In this view the property owner and his authoritarian family (“a little commonwealth”) are the center of a well-ordered society.

The development of large-scale industrial production destroyed this unity. In a process that lasted several centuries but that culminated in the nineteenth century in England and

the United States, productive property was virtually monopolized by a small centralized ruling class. The center of social authority shifted from the property-owning family to remote centers of power. The British radical Thomas Cobbett wrote in the early nineteenth century that industry had drawn "the resources of the country unnaturally together into great heaps."⁷¹ Work, in the form of wage-labor, was removed from the center of family life, to become the means by which family life was maintained. Society divided and the family became the realm of "private life."

At the same time the conflict between the individual and society took on a new meaning. On one side appeared "society"—the capitalist economy, the state, the fixed social core that has no space in it for the individual; on the other, the personal identity, no longer defined by its place in the social division of labor. On one side the objective social world appeared, perceived at first as "machinery" or "industry," then throughout the nineteenth century as "society" and into the twentieth as "big business," "city hall," and then as "technology" or "life," as the domination of the proletariat by the capitalist class became more difficult to perceive. In opposition to this harsh world that no individual could hope to affect, the modern world of subjectivity was created.

This sense of an isolated individual ranged against a society he or she cannot affect, distinguishes social life in developed capitalist society. The major tradition of modern bourgeois social thought, as exemplified in the work of Freud and Weber, portrays the conflict between the "individual" and "society" as the "human condition" and thereby encourages "mature" acquiescence to the demands of capital. But there is also a tradition of protest. Its earliest expression did not come from the proletariat but from the petit-bourgeois and artisan classes who, as society divided between capital and wage labor, resisted proletarianization. Beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries petit-bourgeois individualism per-

71. Quoted in Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (New York, 1958), p. 15.

petually ranged itself against the emerging bourgeoisie, and perpetually lost. But political and economic weakness was accompanied by ideological strength. Petit-bourgeois individualism defended what was most progressive in the bourgeois past while articulating what was most oppressive in the condition of the emerging proletariat. It spoke for the whole individual before the deformations of the capitalist division of labor. It argued that one's work should be an expression of oneself rather than just a means to survival. Petit-bourgeois individualism continually threatened to burst and overflow the private property integument that enclosed it and to envision the individual as an end in him or herself.

In the nineteenth century the romantic artist was the great symbol of the individual posed against society. Before the rise of industrial capitalism artists occupied a fixed place within an explicit division of labor. Writers lived on "pensions, benefices and sinecures," composers were "court musicians, church musicians or town musicians," artists were commissioned by patrons.⁷² In this regard the production relations of artists were similar to those of other pre-industrial artisans whose income and position were based less on supply and demand than on custom, social prestige, and traditional standards of pay and workmanship.⁷³ By the early 1800s the artist was producing commodities for newly arisen industries: commercial publishing, popular periodicals, newspapers, galleries and commercial concerts. The artist's defense against proletarianization lay in a new emphasis on the originality of the artist and the uniqueness of the work of art. Beginning with romanticism, artists declared that art was the product less of a particular craft or discipline than of the artist's inner life. "What information does a poet require?" asked Wordsworth in 1800; unlike "a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher" only that which he possesses "as a man"—"the

72. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. 3 (New York, 1958), pp. 53, 81; Williams, "The Romantic Artist," in *Culture and Society*; Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (New York, 1964), p. 307.

73. E. P. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, passim.

sympathies of our daily life."⁷⁴ Wordsworth spoke for the artist, but it was the universality of the experience of pitting oneself, one's inner feelings, private thoughts, and dreams, against "society" that inspired the modern image of the artist.

Wordsworth looked back to "humble and rustic life" in which "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil." But this ideal had lost its social basis with the rise of industrial capitalism. Throughout the nineteenth century the romantic tradition conjured up a series of figures who allegedly stood apart from society on the basis of their own personal uniqueness: the hero, the virtuoso, the mystic, the world traveler, the wandering Jew, the mountain climber; figures who constantly threaten to disappear from society.⁷⁵ The idea of the genius also comes from this period, as well as the idea of the dandy who turns his personal life into art. But dandyism, according to Charles Baudelaire, depends on people "free from the need to follow any profession. They have no other purpose than to . . . satisfy their desires, and to feel and think."⁷⁶ Romantic individualism's final expression, in twentieth-century art, would confine the individual to an entirely subjective and psychological realm, wholly divorced from the rest of society.

The defense of the subjective individual against "science," "industry," or "modern society" continued throughout the nineteenth century. Its characteristic tone was one of protest: for example, Thomas Carlyle in 1829: "Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery but the internal and spiritual also. . . . Men are grown mechanical."⁷⁷ Against the general rationalization of life the romantic tradition upheld the view that men and women were feeling beings. It saw in "nature" (which eventually came to include sexuality) "the

74. William Wordsworth, "Observations Prefixed to 'Lyrical Ballads,'" in Mark Schorer, Josephine Miles, and Gordon McKenzie, eds., *Criticism: The Foundations of Modern Literary Judgment* (New York, 1958), p. 36. Ideas similar to those of the romantics were expressed within evangelical and millenarian groups.

75. Morse Peckham, *The Triumph of Romanticism* (Columbia, S.C., 1970), pp. 36-46. Peckham refers to these as "anti-roles."

76. Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in Peter Quennell, ed., *The Essence of Laughter* (New York, 1956), p. 52.

77. Quoted in Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 73.

repository of [those] inner tendencies opposing the growth of mechanisation, dehumanisation and reification."⁷⁸ In its emphasis on the emotions, on innocence and childhood, on love and on beauty, romanticism invoked a world in which human beings were no longer dominated by the daily discipline of production. In this way, a tradition deeply rooted in the bourgeois ideal of individualism also came to stand for a qualitatively different way of life.

The socialist movement, which arose in the nineteenth century, was closely linked to this romantic tradition, particularly through its utopian forebears. The concept of alienation derives from the same milieu as the artist's assertion that one's product is a part of oneself. Marx invokes a conception of human activity closely related to the romantic vision: "The ancient conception in which man always appears (in however narrowly national, religious, or political a definition) as the aim of production, seems very much more exalted than the modern world in which production is the aim of man and wealth the aim of production. In fact, however, when the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth, if not the universality of needs, capacities, enjoyments, productive powers, etc. of individuals, produced in universal exchange?"⁷⁹

On the other hand, socialism developed in the nineteenth century by defining itself off from this romantic and utopian tradition. Romanticism represented an ideological understanding of capitalist society, and throughout the nineteenth century aligned itself as easily with conservative and reactionary political currents as with socialism. Socialists downgraded the split it portrays between the "individual" and "society" as the expression of a declining class whose productive function was being eliminated. The romantic tradition exalted the "lone individual" at a time when society was dividing irrevocably into two classes. And, indeed, it is likely that the romantic tradition of individualism would have dwindled into obscurity

78. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 136.

79. Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (New York, 1964), pp. 84-85.

if the rise of capitalism had not created a new social basis for it in the proletarian family.

Proletarianization created a new form of the family among the masses of people—one “separated” off from the sphere of goods production. Within it, new needs began to take shape. For those reduced to proletarian status from the petit bourgeoisie, one’s individual identity could no longer be realized through work or through the ownership of property: individuals now began to develop the need to be valued “for themselves.” Proletarianization gave rise to subjectivity. The family became the major sphere of society in which the individual could be foremost—it was the only space that proletarians “owned.” Within it, a new sphere of social activity began to take shape: personal life. The nineteenth century Victorian ideology of the family as the repository of “human values” converged with the tradition of romantic revolt. The proletariat itself came to share the bourgeois ideal of the family as a “utopian retreat.” Although this development did not emerge clearly until the twentieth century, its preconditions were established in the early stages of industrial capitalism.

2. *The Proletarian Family*

WITH THE RISE of industrial capitalism wages replaced productive property as the economic basis of the family. “Private property” was redefined among the proletariat to refer to objects of consumption: food, clothing, domestic articles, and later, for some, a home. The traditional division of labor within the family was threatened as women and children joined men in the factories. Meanwhile, capital was accumulated by restricting domestic consumption and diverting any surplus into industry. The bourgeois ethic of repression and abstinence was extended to the proletariat through the force of material circumstances. The family’s internal life was dominated by the struggle of its members for their basic material needs.

This understanding underlay the politics of nineteenth-century socialists and reformers. Many feared that by turning women and children into wage-earners, industrial capitalism was destroying the family. The goal of “saving” the family

underlay such nineteenth-century reforms as protective legislation and child labor laws. Over time a series of private and public institutions arose—schools, savings banks, insurance companies, welfare agencies—whose function was to mediate between capitalist production and the fragmented realm of private life. The great trade union struggles through which the nineteenth-century working class both resisted and accommodated itself to industrial capitalism were also intended to establish a new basis for the proletarian family. Women were commonly excluded from trade unions and male trade unionists demanded a wage that could support the entire family.

When the socialist movement took up the question of the family in the nineteenth century it expected that a revolution in commodity production would simultaneously transform the family; early socialists did not experience the family as a “separate” political problem. The major critique of the family came from within romantic and utopian socialist currents and from feminists. The great effect that Marx and Engels had on nineteenth-century socialism was to demonstrate the centrality of the sphere of commodity production (the sphere in which surplus value was produced and realized) to all areas of life. This gave the romantic and utopian critique a theoretical basis that it lacked, and encouraged a focus on collective political action rather than on individual transformation. But it also led away from the emphasis on subjective or personal life that distinguishes the petit-bourgeois tradition. Reflecting the struggle for survival that characterized the nineteenth-century proletarian family, Marx and Engels saw no need for a separate program for “personal” life, including the oppression of women by men within the family. Instead they believed that if individuals were freed from economic exploitation they would arrange their private lives according to earlier ideals of domestic and personal fulfillment, unrealizable under conditions of industrial capitalism.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF capitalism destroyed this hope and to a great extent “separated” the socialist movement from the subsequent development of the family and of personal life among the proletariat. The reduction of the economically

"independent" family to a houseworker and a factory worker was part of a process that led to greatly expanded productivity of labor. In the face of a growing labor movement, European and American capitalists began to meet some trade union demands, while diverting the working class from its attack against capitalist production.

By the middle of the nineteenth century in England and America bourgeois economists had begun to argue that the development of leisure time among the workers coupled with a rise in wages would benefit capital by greatly expanding the domestic market for consumer goods. This argument was also adopted by the labor movement. In 1863, for example, an American labor spokesman, Ira Steward, called for *A Reduction of Hours, An Increase of Wages* which jointly would encourage "the workers, through their new leisure, to unite in buying luxuries now confined to the wealthy."⁸⁰ In the second half of the nineteenth century the great industries of domestic consumption arose in England: clothing, food, furniture, housing.⁸¹ By the end of the century bourgeois spokesmen were proclaiming that workers were becoming "capitalists," since a frugal and fortunate working family could in some cases eventually purchase its own home. Along with this, the bourgeoisie encouraged the belief that human meaning could be found primarily within the sphere of consumption.

At the same time, women and children lost the central place they had occupied in the early proletariat. Child labor was slowly eliminated and women were transformed into a marginal labor force in relation to capitalist production, with their primary loyalty to the home. The housewife emerged, alongside the proletarian—the two characteristic laborers of developed capitalist society. Her tasks extended beyond the material labor of the family to include responsibility for the "human values" which the family was thought to preserve: love, personal happiness, domestic felicity. In contrast, the working-class husband's primary responsibility was understood to be earning a wage, whether or not his wife worked. The

80. Jurgen Kuczynski, *The Rise of the Working Class* (New York, 1967), p. 115.

81. Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (New York, 1968), p. 73.

split in society between "personal feelings" and "economic production" was integrated with the sexual division of labor. Women were identified with emotional life, men with the struggle for existence. Under these conditions a new form of the family developed—one that understood itself to be operating in apparent freedom from production, and that placed a primary emphasis on the personal relations of its members. A separate sphere of personal life began to develop among the proletariat. This development can be seen most clearly in the twentieth-century United States.

3. *Personal Life and Subjectivity in the Twentieth-Century United States*

AS CAPITALISM DEVELOPED the productive functions performed by the family were gradually socialized.⁸² The family lost its core identity as a productive unit based upon private property. Material production within the family—the work of housewives and mothers—was devalued since it was no longer seen as integral to the production of commodities. The expansion of education as well as welfare, social work, hospitals, old age homes, and other "public" institutions further eroded the productive functions of the family. At the same time the family acquired new functions as the realm of personal life—as the primary institution in which the search for personal happiness, love, and fulfillment takes place. Reflecting the family's "separation" from commodity production, this search was understood as a "personal" matter, having little relation to the capitalist organization of society.

The development of this kind of personal life among the masses of people was a concomitant of the creation of a working class in capitalist society. Peasants and other pre-capitalist laborers were governed by the same social relations "inside" and "outside" work; the proletarian, by contrast, was a "free" man or woman outside work. By splitting society between

82. Although much of the following also applies to black and other "third world" families, there are also enormous differences that I do not discuss. A good starting place for such a discussion is Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *Black Scholar*, December 1971.

"work" and "life," proletarianization created the conditions under which men and women looked to themselves, outside the division of labor, for meaning and purpose. Introspection intensified and deepened as people sought in themselves the only coherence, consistency, and unity capable of reconciling the fragmentation of social life. The romantic stress on the unique value of the individual began to converge with the actual conditions of proletarian life, and a new form of personal identity developed among men and women, who no longer defined themselves through their jobs. Proletarianization generated new needs—for trust, intimacy, and self-knowledge, for example—which intensified the weight of meaning attached to the personal relations of the family. The organization of production around alienated labor encouraged the creation of a separate sphere of life in which personal relations were pursued as an end in themselves.

But the creation of a separate sphere of personal life was also shaped by the special problems of the capitalist class in the early twentieth century. Increasing proletarianization, along with deepening economic crises, created increasing labor unrest and class conflict, as well as the growth of the socialist movement. Beginning in the early twentieth century a significant minority of American capitalists saw the possibility of integrating labor within a capitalist consensus through raising its level of consumption. Besides expanding the market for consumer goods, such a strategy would divert the working class from socialism and from a direct assault on capitalist relations of production. Edward Filene, for example, a Boston department store owner, urged his fellow capitalists to recognize unions and raise wages as a way of extending "industrial democracy" and "economic freedom" to the working class. "The industrial democracy I am discussing," he explained, "has nothing to do with the Cubist politics of class revolution." Instead, he urged that workers be free to "cultivate themselves" in the "school of freedom" which the modern marketplace constituted. "Modern workmen have learned their habits of consumption . . . in the school of fatigue," but mass production was transforming the consumer market into a

"civilizing" experience for the working class.⁸³ The emphasis on consumption was an important means through which the newly proletarianized, and still resisting, industrial working class was reconciled to the rise of corporate capitalism, and through which the enormous immigrant influx of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was integrated with the industrial working class.

The extraordinary increases in the productivity of labor achieved during the nineteenth century, along with increasing American dominance within the world market, made it possible for capitalists to pursue this course. By the 1920s many firms had acceded to the sustained demand for a shorter workday. This demand, probably the most persistent trade union demand of the nineteenth century, was the necessary prerequisite to the establishment of personal life among the proletariat: it freed life-time from the immediate demands of capital. In the nineteenth century, socialists had emphasized the eight-hour day, since it would free the working class for self-education and political activity. But with the decline of American socialism after World War I, this issue receded. In the 1930s the eight-hour day and the forty-hour week became the standard in mass-production industry. Work time has been fixed at these levels ever since, in spite of subsequent technological progress. The capitalist class has extended "leisure" to the proletariat, but only within the limits set by the capitalists' need to retain control of the labor force.

Similarly, the capitalist class has raised wages in accord with its overall interests. Monopoly control of the market made it possible for capitalists to "compensate" themselves for wage increases by simultaneously raising prices. Beginning in the 1930s state programs such as welfare and unemployment insurance financed a minimum level of consumption among the entire working class by taxing its better-paid sectors. Along with these measures corporate capitalists created a sales force and employed the new media of radio and television to spread the ethic of consumerism into every home.

83. Stuart B. Ewen, "Advertising as Social Production," *Radical America*, May 1969, pp. 46-47.

The family, no longer a commodity-producing unit, received a new importance as a market for industrial commodities. Mass production forced the capitalist class to cultivate and extend that market, just as it forced it to look abroad for other new markets. As a result, American domestic and personal life in the twentieth century has been governed by an ethic of pleasure and self-gratification previously unknown to a laboring class. Working people now see consumption as an end in itself, rather than as an adjunct to production, and as a primary source of both personal and social (i.e., "status") identity. This is symbolized within the "middle class" as "lifestyle," a word that is used to defend one's prerogatives regardless of the demands of "society."

The rise of "mass consumption" has vastly extended the range of "personal" experience available to men and women while retaining it within an abstract and passive mode: the purchase and consumption of commodities. Taste, sensibility, and the pursuit of subjective experience—historically reserved for leisure classes and artists—have been generalized throughout the population in predetermined and standardized forms by advertising and other means. This is reflected in the modern department store in which the wealth, culture, and treasures of previous ruling classes now appear in the form of cheap jewelry, fashions, and housewares.⁸⁴

On one hand there has been a profound democratization of the idea that it is good to live well, consume pleasurably, and enjoy the fruits of one's labor. On the other hand, "mass consumption"—within the context of capitalism—has meant the routinization of experience and the deepening of divisions within the proletariat. The deep material deprivation that still characterizes the lives of most Americans—bitter inadequacies of housing, food, transportation, health care, etc.—has taken on added emotional meanings. The "poor" feel personally in-

84. Honoré de Balzac noted a similar phenomenon in the Paris arcades of the 1820s and 1830s, perhaps the earliest form of the department store: "The magic columns of these palaces show to the connoisseur on every side in the articles which their portals display that *industry rivals the arts*." Quoted in Walter Benjamin, "Paris—Capital of the Nineteenth Century," *New Left Review*, March 1968, p. 77. Italics added.

adequate and ashamed, while the more highly educated and better-paid sectors of the working class experience guilt toward the "less fortunate."

IN DEVELOPED CAPITALIST SOCIETY, the enhancement of personal consumption has been closely related to the devaluation of labor. Like the rise of mass consumption, the idea that labor is worthless results from its vastly expanded productivity. Expanded production of necessary goods—for example, food, clothing, and housing—without expanding the labor time spent in such production, began in agriculture after the Civil War and in manufacturing during the 1920s.⁸⁵ As a result, the sphere of necessary goods production has shrunk in relation to other spheres of production. To counteract the effects of this tendency—particularly rising unemployment—and to maintain a level of "scarcity" in consumer goods, corporate capitalism has fostered inflation, waste, planned obsolescence, and underutilization of productive capacity. It has vastly expanded "non-productive" industries such as advertising and finance, and used the state to subsidize the production of useless or destructive goods, such as armaments. A great amount of labor time in capitalist society is spent in activities that have the purpose of perpetuating capitalist relations of production, rather than producing necessary goods. This deepening irrationality of capitalist production has obscured the place of production within our society.

In the nineteenth century, every sacrifice to the engine of capital accumulation was justified in the name of "material necessity," the driving force of all previous human history.

85. Martin J. Sklar, "On the Proletarian Revolution and the End of Political-Economic Society," *Radical America*, May 1969, terms this tendency "disaccumulation" to contrast it with the accumulation process of industrial capitalism. In some way every attempt to describe what has changed in capitalism since the nineteenth century must make this tendency central. For example, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* (New York, 1966) refers to it as the tendency of the surplus to capitalism central. Other examples include Maurice Dobb, "Some Features of Capitalism since the First World War," in *Capitalism, Development and Planning* (New York, 1970), pp. 38–39, and Tom Nairn and Angelo Quattrocchi, *The Beginning of the End* (London, 1968), pp. 156–73.

Similarly, socialists defined their revolution in terms of taking over the productive capacity as it had been developed under capitalism. But in the twentieth century the center no longer holds. Most people see no meaning or value in their work. In addition, marginal employment and unemployment characterize major groups in American society—youth, housewives, “hippies,” the black “lumpenproletariat.” Within these groups, which are themselves marginal to the sphere of commodity production, the idea has developed that production is itself marginal to social life.

This tendency has also been reinforced within the sphere of goods production. In the nineteenth century the capitalist class and its representatives directly supervised the labor process. By contrast, capitalists are often physically absent in the modern corporation. Instead the labor process appears to be governed by neutral, scientific laws such as centralization, efficiency, the imperatives of technology, etc. This appearance reflects the increasing rationalization of the labor process and reinforces the tendency to understand modern society in terms of the domination of the individual by anonymous, impersonal forces. Rather than encountering the capitalist class, the proletariat is faced by abstract, scientific laws and “countless, immediate oppressors.”⁸⁶

The combination of waste, underemployment, and rationalization has come close to destroying people’s understanding of their part in an integrated system of social production. It has reinforced the tendency to look to personal life for meaning, and to understand personal life in entirely subjective terms. The isolation of so much of modern life from the sphere of necessary goods production gives it its “abstract” character. Both “society” and personal life are experienced as formless, with no common core, in inexplicable disarray.

THE CHANGING CHARACTER of developed capitalist production has expanded personal life in constricted, capitalist forms. As opportunities for capital investment have declined within

86. *Il Manifesto*, “Technicians and the Capitalist Division of Labor,” *Socialist Revolution* 9 (May–June 1972), pp. 66–69. This sense is even more pronounced within bureaucracies.

the sphere of necessary goods production, capital has spread to the sphere of personal life. Whole new industries—the “services”—have developed in this way.⁸⁷ Examples include the media and other forms of culture, travel, sports, psychotherapy, health, and commercial religions. Since production no longer integrates social life, the capitalist class has sought new means of social solidarity. In particular the education system has been assigned the function of teaching people to “get along” with one another.⁸⁸ The increasing role of mental labor within the process of production has entailed the creation of new skills such as “imagination” and “sensitivity,” which have in turn shaped personal life.

Both the emphasis on salesmanship, integral to the rise of mass production, and the emphasis of the services and the state on “working with people” have encouraged an attention to psychology and new forms of sensitivity. Insight into the personal lives of others, gained to a large extent through self-awareness, has been taught to large sectors of the working class: it has become a productive skill necessary to capitalist development. Similarly the working class and petit bourgeoisie have been urged to shed the “selfish individualism” associated with laissez-faire capitalism, in favor of cooperation, sociability, and tolerance.⁸⁹ But “cooperation” and “sociability” are enforced through authoritarian institutions such as the public schools that have the responsibility—and power—to make people get along with one another.

Similarly, the increasingly technological character of modern production has created a need for workers with abilities of self-expression, independence, and creativity. But the educational system has cloaked these skills in an ideology of

87. Many services are direct adjuncts of goods production. Further, a large component of all service industries can be resolved into goods production—consider the health industry as an example.

88. The best introduction to this function of the modern state is James O’Connor, “The Fiscal Crisis of the State,” *Socialist Revolution* 1 and 2 (January–February and March–April 1970).

89. This ideal (“the family of man”), like the ideals generated by mass consumption, takes the form of a conflict between the “new middle class” and the rest of the proletariat.

personal development rather than presenting them as necessary skills of production. As a result men and women (but particularly men) have been encouraged to dwell upon their own uniqueness and to understand themselves in terms of chimeras such as "brightness" or "talent" supposedly innate in certain individuals. In fact "brightness" and "talent" are developed as alienable forms of mental labor. Nevertheless, the aspirations toward self-expression, like those toward "cooperation," continually threaten to go beyond the specific form they take within capitalist production. While these tendencies are more pronounced among highly educated sectors of the work force, the ideology that underlies them is spread to all sectors.

A collective consciousness of great diversity has been created. Experienced personally as individual and unique, it is simultaneously integral to and shaped by capitalist development. Non-Marxist thinkers have always understood this development ideologically, abstracting either the pole of personal aloneness or the pole of social control. Their theories of the twentieth century portray either "mass society," "other-directed man," "men without qualities," "organization man," "conformism," the "rise of the masses," or, the polar opposite, "existential man," "irrational man," "psychological man," "post-industrial" or "post-scarcity" man, man for whom hell is other people. In fact, developed capitalism has mass-produced specific forms of personal life, and of individuality, which simultaneously reinforce and threaten capitalist hegemony.

INCREASINGLY CUT OFF from production, the contemporary family threatens to become a well of subjectivity divorced from any social meaning. Within it a world of vast psychological complexity has developed as the counterpart to the extraordinary degree of rationalization and impersonality achieved by capital in the sphere of commodity production. The individualist values generated by centuries of bourgeois development—self-consciousness, perfectionism, independence—have taken new shape through the insatiability of personal life in developed capitalist society. The internal life of the family is dominated by a search for personal fulfillment for which there

seem to be no rules.⁹⁰ Much of this search has been at the expense of women.

Already in the late nineteenth century American women were consumed with a sense of their own diminished role and stature when compared with their mothers and grandmothers,⁹¹ women who labored within the productive unity of the family defined by private property. In a letter to Jane Addams in the early twentieth century, Charlotte Gilman described the married woman's sense of living second-hand, of getting life in translation, of finding oneself unready and afraid in the "face of experience."⁹² By 1970 this fear had become a desperate sense of loss. Meredith Tax describes the "limbo of private time and space" of the housewife: "When I am by myself, I am nothing. I only know that I exist because I am needed by someone who is real, my husband, and by my children. My husband goes out into the real world. . . . I stay in the imaginary world in this house, doing jobs that I largely invent, and that no one cares about but myself. . . . I seem to be involved in some sort of mysterious process."⁹³

Just as the rise of industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cut women off from men and gave a new meaning to male supremacy, so the rise of mass education has created the contemporary form of youth and adolescence. The "generation gap" is the result of the family lagging behind the dominant tendencies of the culture and of the transformation of productive skills which children learn in school and through the media. Parents now appear "stupid" and "backward" to their children, representing, as they do, an earlier stage of

90. Asked for an explanation for the proliferation of clinics for sex therapy William Masters (of Masters and Johnson) gave as one reason "a man and a woman need each other more now than ever before. People need someone to hold on to. Once they had the clan but now they only have each other." *New York Times*, 29 October 1972.

91. Gail Parker, ed., *The Oven Birds: American Women on Womanhood, 1820-1920* (New York, 1972), pp. 4 ff.

92. Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type*.

93. Meredith Tax, *Woman and Her Mind: The Story of Daily Life* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 7, 17.

capitalist development. Beginning in the early twentieth century the family began to appear to young people as a prison cut off from reality.⁹⁴

At the same time, in the form of "public opinion," the imperatives of capitalist production have been recreated within the family, particularly in the "expectations" through which parents bludgeon themselves and their children into submission.⁹⁵ Fathers, like school teachers or policemen, appear to stand for the whole bourgeois order. Hence, the split between the public and the private is recreated within the family. As in the "outside world," people feel they are not known for themselves, not valued for who they really are.

While serving as a refuge, personal life has also become de-personalized; subjective relations tend to become disengaged, impersonal, and mechanically determined. Introspection has promised to open a new world to men and women, but increasingly the inner life reverberates with the voices of others, the imperatives of social production. This is inevitable because the expansion of inner and personal life has been as integral to capitalist expansion in the modern epoch as has the spread of capitalism throughout the world.

But this process has also given shape to the revolutionary possibilities of our time. In previous centuries only a handful of individuals were prized for their special qualities of mind or character; the mass of men and women were ground down to an approximate sameness in the general struggle for existence. What distinguishes developed capitalist society is that the stress on individual development and uniqueness has become a tendency characterizing all of society.

The bourgeoisie made its revolution on behalf of a specific property form—private property—which it already possessed. But the only "property" that the proletariat possesses lies

94. At this point, "What is the meaning of life?" becomes a pervasive question among youth. Eugene Gant in *Look Homeward Angel* is a good example.

95. Aaron Esterson, *The Leaves of Spring* (Harmondsworth, 1970), a study of a schizophrenic family, distinguishes between "public opinion" which dominates the family's collective life and "God" who operates primarily when the individual is alone, especially in the toilet, the only room within the family in which privacy actually prevails.

within itself: our inner lives and social capabilities, our dreams, our desires, our fears, our sense of ourselves as interconnected beings. Reflecting the "separation" of personal life from production, a new idea has emerged on a mass scale: that of human relations, and human beings, as an end in themselves.

This idea as it currently prevails is ideological. It presents human beings as an end in themselves only insofar as they are abstracted from the labor process. These ideas flourish within the worlds of modern art, psychology, and communes, and in such utopian authors as Norman O. Brown who envision a society passing totally beyond the realm of necessity. But in themselves they cannot supply the basis for a transformation of society, since a new society—whether socialist, communist, or anarchist—would necessarily be based upon a new division of labor and a new mode of production.

But these ideas also express what is realistic: the possibility of a society in which the production of necessary goods is a subordinate part of social life and in which the purposes and character of labor are determined by the needs of the individual members of society. It is appropriate that the family, in which so many of the most universal and impelling material processes of society have so far taken place, should also indicate the limited ability of capitalism to subordinate human needs to its own empty aggrandizement. The latest and most democratic form of an old hope can be discerned in the often tortured relations of contemporary personal life: that humanity can pass beyond a life dominated by relations of production. In varying forms this hope has given shape to radical and revolutionary movements since the nineteenth century.

The conclusion of this article will appear in the next issue of Socialist Revolution. It surveys the modern movements that have sought to transform "personal" and family life. It focuses on Charles Fourier and utopian socialism, Friedrich Engels's Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State and the Socialist movement, the Russian and Chinese revolutions, American feminism, the "young radicals" of the early twentieth-century United States, and psychoanalysis, an attempt to transform personal life without a political movement.

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AMILCAR CABRAL AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN PORTUGUESE GUINEA

I. AMILCAR CABRAL, 1921-1973

By Steve Goldfield

AFRICA AND THE WORLD lost a great revolutionary with the assassination of Amilcar Cabral, the secretary-general of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC).

Cabral was born in 1921 in the Cape Verde Islands, where the slave trade began in the fifteenth century and where forced labor from Guinea still operates the plantations. Cabral was one of the 0.3 per cent of Guineans who were literate, and

Steve Goldfield works with the Liberation Support Movement.

one of only fourteen sent to Lisbon for higher education during five hundred years of colonial rule. While studying agricultural engineering in the late forties, Cabral met secretly with fellow students from Angola and Mozambique to discuss the liberation of his people; they first introduced him to Marxism-Leninism.

In 1952, Cabral returned to Guinea and spent two years studying the class structure of rural society while he was employed by the colonial administration to take an agricultural census. He summed up his results and their strategic implications in a speech in May 1964. He had found that the peasantry in Guinea was very different from that in China, for example. (It was not until 1961 that he encountered the works of Mao Tse-tung.) In Guinea there was a long history of national anti-colonial uprisings but not of uprisings against peasant class relations *per se*. The peasantry in Guinea is the overwhelmingly important *political* force, but not a *revolutionary* force. The PAIGC at first had great difficulty convincing the peasantry to fight. In the absence of even a proletarian pre-class formation (with the important exception of the dockworkers), the petit bourgeoisie was in the best situation to be conscious of colonial exploitation, even though the exploitation of the peasants was greater.

Cabral understood that this petit-bourgeois leadership at a certain point in the struggle has the choice of becoming a national bourgeoisie leading the struggle to neocolonialism, or of liquidating itself as a class (as occurred in Cuba) and leading the struggle toward socialism. Cabral, of course, made it quite clear that he and the PAIGC planned to follow the socialist road as the only way of eliminating all forms of human exploitation.

After he was exiled in 1954, first to Lisbon and then to Angola, for his outspoken anti-colonialist views, Cabral returned secretly in 1956 to help found the PAIGC. In Angola, he was a founding member of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) the same year. He again returned to Guinea to direct the nonviolent urban phase of the struggle, during which a group of potential cadre drawn primarily from the petit bourgeoisie and the wage-earners were recruited and

tested by strikes and demonstrations. In 1959, following the massacre of fifty striking dockworkers, a PAIGC conference decided to go to the peasantry and prepare them for armed struggle. A cadre training school led by Cabral was set up in Conakry, Republic of Guinea, in 1960. Cabral trained hundreds of cadre in the political skills they would need to mobilize the Guinean peasantry.

Cabral's way of getting to the kernel of a question is illustrated by his view of Portugal. He countered the oft-made assertion that Portugal is an imperialist nation in the Leninist sense. Portugal is itself an underdeveloped agrarian neocolony of West Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, and has no monopoly capitalist productive base. The weakness of the Portuguese economy explains its inability to coexist with nominal independence and neocolonialism, which would allow the major imperialist nations to push the Portuguese aside.

At the end of 1972, Cabral came to the United States and secured observer status for the PAIGC at the United Nations. He spoke at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania on national culture and the role of the petit bourgeoisie in anti-colonial revolution. At the beginning of 1973, the PAIGC was consolidating its control of the country by conducting popular elections for a National Assembly. Amilcar Cabral was assassinated by Portuguese agents in Conakry on the evening of January 20, as Richard Nixon was being inaugurated. But Cabral's loss is not a fatal defeat for the people of Guinea. Cabral helped to build an organization capable of carrying out and developing a revolutionary strategy. His assassination shows how much the Portuguese feared him. Of course, the people of Guinea, like many before them, could falter because of internal weakness, but today, led by the PAIGC, they are fighting on with increased determination. Amilcar Cabral would ask no more, and no less.

In the accompanying interview, Cabral's brother Vasco describes the development of the struggle, some of its problems, and its current progress.

The concept of a party and the creation of parties did not occur spontaneously in Europe, they resulted from a long

process of class struggle. When we in Africa think of creating a party now we find ourselves in very different conditions from those in which parties appeared as historical social phenomena in Europe. . . .

We are not a Communist party or a Marxist-Leninist party, but the people now leading the peasants in the struggle in Guinea are mostly from the urban milieux and connected with the urban wage-earning group. When I hear that only the peasantry can lead the struggle, am I supposed to think we have made a mistake? All I can say is that at the moment our struggle is going well.

—*Amilcar Cabral, 1964*

II. INTERVIEW WITH VASCO CABRAL

By Marc Cooper and Gary Cristall

In the past twenty-five years, the world has witnessed the breakdown of Western European colonialism on the African continent. Of course, a number of the newly independent countries immediately fell subject to new forms of oppression, and in some cases these new forms caused even greater suffering than the old colonial regimes. Neocolonialism replaced colonialism. In places like Rhodesia and South Africa, the indigenous white minorities imposed national governments that are based on race and sustained by overt police terror.

Ironically, the poorest of the West European nations, Portugal, still practices overt colonialism in Africa. Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola are the only colonies of significance that remain in the continent. These three colonies constitute the present vanguard of the African Revolution.

Since the early 1960s, Portugal has been embroiled in a difficult and expensive adventure as she tries to quash the wars of liberation growing in these territories. Guinea, Mozambique, and Angola have surmounted almost incredible odds in taking up arms against Portugal backed by the United States, France, Germany, Italy, and others. And yet, the Africans remain on the offensive, gaining more and more ground, and

Vasco Cabral is a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the PAIGC. The interview took place October 9, 1972, in Santiago, Chile; the italicized introduction is by Cooper and Cristall.

trying to build a new humane society within the liberated zones. The Portuguese, taking their cue from the United States in Vietnam, have resorted to the most barbaric methods to suppress the peoples' wars. Napalm, herbicides, defoliants, and the intensive bombing of civilian areas, have taken their toll, but have not stopped the liberation struggles.

Q: Mr. Cabral, what were the conditions that produced armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau, and how has that struggle developed?

A: In our country, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, we have lived under the domination of Portuguese colonialism—for us this has meant exploitation, misery, and obscurantism . . . our people had nothing. We have always believed that our people, like any other people, have the right to live a life of dignity and liberty. From the moment the Portuguese arrived in our country the people have resisted in one form or another. However, it was only with the foundation of our party, in 1956, that it became possible to unite the people into the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. For that reason the foundation of our party marks an important historical stage in the development of our fight. For one thing, it allowed the unification of our people—which we consider to be one people, although they are separated geographically in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. Our party has also overcome tribal divisions, which is important, as these divisions severely impeded, in the past, any victory over the Portuguese. Immediately after its formation, our party began to mobilize various strata of the population. This mobilization was begun in the cities, starting with the capital. But because of the brutal repression with which the Portuguese responded—for example, the massacre in 1959 of fifty dockworkers in a port strike—we were forced to change our original orientation and to concentrate on mobilizing the people in the countryside. And why? Because the cities were the literal forts of the enemy; that is where the repressive forces, the army, etc., were concentrated. And, of course, the majority of our people are peasants. Thus we decided to mobilize the rural areas. This has permitted us to develop a high level of political work and at the same time to continue our work in the cities.

Beginning in 1961, we decided to move to a higher phase of struggle. We began employing sabotage . . . the destruction of military vehicles, the blocking of highways, the tearing down of bridges, and so on. This was a way of testing the courage and initiative of our militants, and also a way of striking a blow at the colonialists. This was the preparation for armed struggle. We could call this phase sabotage, or direct action.

By 1963, we had a sufficient number of people to begin the formation of the first guerrilla groups. At that time, we had the problem of providing ourselves with weapons. Since 1959, we had been providing people with military and other training abroad. And we drew from the experience of comrades inside our country who had taken part in direct actions. So with a combination of our militants inside Guinea-Bissau, along with our people trained outside (in military, political, and union activity), we began armed struggle in 1963. This struggle grew very quickly; today we control seventy-five per cent of Guinea-Bissau.

Since 1965, we have had a regular army, and in our first party congress, held in 1964, we decided to begin the construction of schools and hospitals and to open up commercial relations. We have also created a system of popular tribunals throughout our liberated zones. They are a form of doing away with the old colonial system of justice. They are to an extent based on the traditional laws of our people, but they have also incorporated many elements of our struggle, as well as the principles of our party. These tribunals are composed of three judges, one of whom is generally a woman. The tribunals exist on the village level, as well as the regional level, and they are to be found in our liberated zones of the north, south, and east.

At present, we are able to attack the Portuguese troops where and when *we* want to. This year, for example, we have attacked the capital city twice, as well as having launched several other attacks against other urban centers.

All this means that we are in fact an independent nation already, with a small parcel of our territory being occupied by Portuguese colonialism. As a consequence of our struggle, we find ourselves in a new political situation—we are now pre-

paring the formation of our first National Peoples Assembly. This assembly was preceded by elections throughout our territory, and these elections were realized with both enthusiasm and discipline. And within a very short time, we will be ready to declare “*de jure*” in our own state.

Q: Is the political-military strategy employed in the Cape Verde islands different from the one employed on the Guinea-Bissau mainland?

A: On the mainland we have a large base of support—we are bordered by two countries that give us quite a bit of support, the Republic of Guinea, and the Republic of Senegal. Naturally, the logistical situation of the islands is much different. But our orientation is the same. Of course, it is the people of Cape Verde who have to unite and liberate themselves. But we already have, in Cape Verde, a large clandestine organization, and the political work has reached a high level.

Every day there are clashes between the people of Cape Verde and the Portuguese, between the soldiers of Cape Verde and the Portuguese troops. We will consider that we have liberated our country only when both Guinea and Cape Verde are free.

Q: Mr. Cabral, how is life different in the liberated zones than in the Portuguese areas?

A: We have built a new society in the liberated areas. We have built many more schools than there were when the area was under Portuguese control. Under Portuguese control there were only two thousand children going to school. Now we have between fifteen and twenty thousand. We provide all school materials free, as well as medical assistance for the population. In the zone occupied by the Portuguese the economic situation is very bad, even catastrophic. In the Portuguese zone, the people are oppressed, not able to buy even the bare essentials . . . and of course, the discrepancy between European and African salaries continues as always. However, some things have become better because the Portuguese have found it necessary to keep people from fleeing to the liberated zones, and have thus made some concessions. But despite the propaganda of the Portuguese, more than a hundred young people

have recently come to our zone. The Portuguese had to increase the repression to avoid this situation.

Q: What role has world imperialism played in the struggle in Guinea? The United States, NATO, large multi-national corporations?

A: The western European countries and the imperialist countries like the United States, West Germany, France, Britain, help and support Portugal. They provide economic, financial, and military support. Not long ago, the United States provided Portugal with \$500 million. Of course, the Portuguese are going to use this in the war with the colonies . . . besides this, NATO also gives Portugal help. In reality, we have nothing against these countries, except their help to Portugal. And we hope that they will modify their politics . . . for us it would be a good thing, and we sincerely hope for this.

Q: In the struggle that is developing and that exists there now, how secure are the liberated areas, and, in reference to the maintenance and security of the struggle, who are the friends of Guinea, how have they shown their support—how do you see the future of the struggle?

A: We have large liberated areas, and in those areas, we are the owners, and the people have the power. The Portuguese cannot disturb us in the zones that are liberated, except with their air force. They launch air raids that are mainly directed against schools and hospitals. They also launch terrorist attacks from helicopters, commando attacks, but this is the most they can do. They are not able to enter our zones and remain for very long. We have a structure that includes our security system, our militia, and our army. Lately, we have strengthened our local forces, the progressive forces and the democratic forces . . . and the anti-imperialist forces.

We have had help from the socialist countries since the beginning, and continue to receive more and better help. But nowadays, we get help and support from many organizations around the world, from such countries as Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The socialist country that has helped us the most has always been the USSR. We also have received help from

the World Council of Churches and other humanitarian organizations. In Africa, we receive bilateral help from various countries, mainly through the OAU [Organization of African Unity]. Our future is good, as you can see through this interview.

We are sure of liberating our country in the not-too-distant future . . . to create a better life for our people. This was always our main goal and desire. This has been our preoccupation since we liberated the first territory in Guinea. We are sure that once we liberate our country totally, we will be able to develop and advance through our resources, natural and human, to benefit our people.

Due to post office error most mail sent to us between December 15 and January 7 was returned marked "Moved." If you had a letter returned please send it again.
