Evolutie of Revolutie

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The Main Principles of the Regime

The party's domination over the state and society is evident, as is the domination of the party leadership over the party. The principles of the regime demonstrate this very clearly: in particular, the principles of the leading role of the party and of democratic centralism, which in practice means simply centralism.

Despite the fact that these principles are officially accepted and propagated, they are extra-constitutional. However, it is debatable whether the constitutional legalization of these principles would be advantageous from the point of view of the goals usually accepted when laws are written.

It has been said that the written law should not diverge too far from practice and that it should not contain norms which are certain not to be followed. But a constitution is not a description of the functioning of the social system. The constitution is law, and if government violates the law, this does not mean that such behavior on its part should be legalized in every instance. Otherwise, we would be dealing with a very specific understanding of what the law is: merely a description of governmental action. The element of duty would then disappear.

There are situations when, for the legal consciousness of society, it is nevertheless better to have even a broken and circumvented law, than to have really no law at all, since in such a situation the application of the law becomes entirely flexible and depends only on the unhampered will of the legislator. Such situations constitute a special
case of the positive functions of hypocrisy. It has been said that hypocrisy is the homage which falsehood pays to truth, and which vice pays to virtue. The law may thus constitute a specific homage which the authorities pay to political morality. Even if they do not obey certain laws, at least they admit that these laws should be obeyed.

In any case, despite the fact that the two principles mentioned above have an extra-legal character, it is precisely these principles (as against many constitutional principles) which account for the organization and functioning of the social system in socialist countries.

If one were to extend the list of the main principles of the regime, it would be necessary to add another two: first, the maximalization of nationalization; and, secondly, the limitation of initiative and elimination of variety.

The principle of the maximalization of nationalization is expressed in the law only partially, and often in a distorted form. A "take-over by the state of the main branches of the national economy" (Statute of Jan. 3, 1946) was initially established. The Constitution of the Polish People's Republic speaks of "socialization" (art. 7) and the "common national property" (Art. 8), as well as of the fact that "the Polish People's Republic protects individual agricultural holdings" (Art. 10) and that it "acknowledges and protects (...) individual property and the right to inherit land, buildings, and other means of production belonging to peasants, artisans, and craftsmen" (Art. 12). These are examples of legal descriptions of the role of the state. This role is also underlined by propaganda, and finds its expression in the postulate of "strengthening socialist statehood". In the exposition of the law, the role of the state is sometimes left unclear and sometimes (as in the case of the economic matters described in the Constitution) it is presented as more modest than in actual practice. Thus, the divergence between the law and reality is visible not only with respect to the leading role of the party.
The principle of limiting initiative and eliminating variety is, in a sense, formulated in the statutes of the United Polish Workers' Party (P.Z.P.R.), in the form of a prohibition against factional and anti-party activity. (The principle of centralism is also mentioned in the statutes of the party, although this "centralism" is modified by an additional adjective.) Outside of the party, the principle of the limitation of initiative and elimination of variety has a totally extra-legal character (as does the principle of the leading role of the party contained in the Soviet and Rumanian Constitutions, which cannot be found in the Polish Constitution). The principle of the limitation of initiative and elimination of variety appears often in the form of exhortations against "unplanned" and "spontaneous" activities. Sometimes a special case of this principle is presented, as in the condemnations of the "free play of political forces". It then takes a form of the principle of the elimination of opposition.

We have mentioned four principles of the regime, which describe the characteristics of the regime and are officially voiced and propagated (although sometimes in different words and in a slightly camouflaged form).

The Characteristics of the Regime and Its Name

We are considering here a state-controlled, one party, centralized and fundamentally monolithic and totalistic system, at least in the spheres of politics and economy.

The political system under consideration was given various names. Officially, it most often refers to itself as socialist; but it is occasionally called communist, Russian (or Soviet), and sometimes bureaucratic. With respect to several countries, the phrase "people's democracy" is also used. In the quarterly Critiques de l'économie politique, J. Thibert assembled a series of formulations which were used to describe the regime in the Soviet Union, other than by simply using the adjective "Soviet". According to various sources, what we are dealing with is "oriental despotism,
capitalism, state capitalism, collective capitalism, the rule of the managers, the workers' state, a degraded form of the workers' state, a state moving towards socialism, a socialist country moving towards capitalism, and a socialist country moving toward communism. Even if we omit the less common of stranger names (for example, the rule of the managers of the workers' state), the other names still call for reservations.

The name "communism" is not accepted by some of the partisans of this system, since they claim that communism is only a future goal. According to them, communism has not yet been built, but it will be built and will constitute a higher stage of the presently existing system. What exists right now is already good, at least "in principle", but communism will be better. So far, however, communism does not exist.

The name "socialism" is not accepted by some advocates of socialism who understand socialism as an ideology or even as a political practice, but connected with such parties as the Polish Socialist Party (P.S.S.) and by precisely these socialist parties presently existing outside the socialist camp. The situation is similar in many respects to that of communism. Socialism - just like communism - is good, only it does not exist, or at least it does not exist here. There is also this difference: according to the advocates of the new political order, this system leads to communism; while according to the advocates of socialism, the new order does not necessarily lead to socialism, - sometimes it is a perversion of socialism, and sometimes even its negation.

The Sino-Soviet controversies may help us decide whether "socialism" is a proper name for the new order. It is interesting to ask whether, according to the polemicists, the socialist system exists on the opposite side. We will receive different answers depending on the intensity of the conflict. Sometimes the social system of the adversary remains indeterminate; whether or not socialism exists on the opposite side is a topic not spoken about (in this situation, the very mention of the
subject is regarded as a *faux pas*). Such a situation occurs when, from the point of view of the Soviet Union, it appears obvious that socialism exists in the Soviet Union and, for example, Mongolia, and equally obvious that it does not exist in the United States or France, but when the polemicists on the Soviet side make no claims about socialism in China and Albania. They claim that not the working class, but rather a small clique is in power, one separated from the people and even from the healthy elements in the party; but they refrain from comments on what sort of political regime exists there: socialism, capitalism, fascism, or perhaps even something else. The situation is analogical from the Chinese side. In this case, it is known that socialism exists in China and (once) in Albania, and that what was not socialism for the Soviet Union is still not socialism (i.e. the system in the capitalist countries), but the Soviet Union, Mongolia and several other countries, including Poland, are moved from the socialist sphere to an undesignated area. Intensified conflict means that the authors from both sides claim, this time vehemently, that socialism does not exist on the opposite side. Possible differences concern only closer descriptions of the other regime. Radical Soviet polemicists maintain that fascism exists in China, radical Chinese polemicists claim that the Soviet Union is a socio-imperialist state. In general, the two sides do not feel bound by a Marxist philosophy of history and allow their opponents slow changes from socialism to capitalism, fascism or imperialism. They approve of the beginning stages of the system in the neighboring country, but claim that this system later degenerated.

The name "people's democracy" was made popular after the Second World War. It was proposed then that distinctions should be made between three kinds of states: capitalist states, the socialist state (i.e. the Soviet Union) and the countries of people's democracies. Later, it transpired that the second and third categories form a unity, while Yugoslavia is really neither a socialist nor a democratic country, and in any event, the first people's democracies were created much earlier.
Thus, the first democracy of this kind (or one of the two first) was supposedly Mongolia occupied by the Red Army in 1921. Later, the Soviet troops even left (1925), and after the Second World War Mongolia was accepted by the U.N. and COMECON. The second people's democracy, Tuva, was established also in 1921, and at first printed postal stamps in original shapes - which is why it is known among philatelists - and later (in 1944) it was made a part of the Soviet Union as an autonomous district. The world was interested in other matters at the time, although this case was also worth noting.

The application of different names to the system reigning in Poland depends in part on the divisions of the world in terms of which the regime is considered.

Taking into consideration the division of the world into political and military blocs, the most appropriate name might simply be "sovietism". However, "sovietism" (understood as a description of an affiliation with a particular bloc) is not a name referring directly to the system (i.e. to the internal relations within the state). It could possibly be understood etymologically: "soviet" means in Russian a "council". It was a term made popular during the Russian Revolution, when the Bolshevik government supported the slogan "all power to the councils". But this ended very shortly. All power went somewhere else, although some sorts of councils still exist. If the term were understood in accordance with its etymology, then "sovietism" would still be a better name than "democracy", and far better than "people's democracy". On the other hand, the meaning of councils is roughly the same as that of democracy, and in any case it is not the councils, but the party which plays the fundamental role.

The name "communism" once referred to the politico-military bloc, and simultaneously described a type of system, a characterization of relations within states. But the communist bloc ceased to exist, the world could no longer be clearly divided into corresponding blocs and systems. There is the
Russian (or Soviet) bloc, and there is also China, as well as the non-aligned communist states (Yugoslavia) and the "undecided" states (North Korea, Viet-Nam). "Communism" therefore no longer describes an alliance with a particular bloc of states (some other reservations about the use of this term were mentioned earlier).

The name "bureaucratic system" only weakly reflects the specific characteristics of the new system. The problem is not that these is bureaucracy, but rather the type of bureaucracy it is. Milovan Djilas has written about "political bureaucracy" (The New Class), Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski about the central political bureaucracy (Open Letter to the Party), and Paulina Preiss about "total bureaucracy" (in the book Total Bureaucracy). Maybe a more proper name would be a "system of political bureaucracy", but even this is not satisfactory.

We could also use the name derived from the analyses conducted earlier in this book and call the system a "one-party system of statism". This name describes a party state with a highly advanced state ownership of the means of production. However, if it is to be used, one has to pay attention to the difficulties connected with the term "statism", and one must distinguish between the real and the nominal state, between state power and state organs, between legal rights and possibilities. The actual role of the nominal state government is not great, and the legal rights of the real state are not directly relevant to the realm of its activities. The problems of the state and the party are directly connected, and it is difficult to speak of the state without attention to the one-party character of the system.

To the name "one party system of statism" we can assign a certain pattern, a model of such a system, which is nowhere fully realized. The role of the organizations outside the party would then be reduced to zero, and the state (identical with the party) would direct all aspects of social life.

The particular systems actually existing are somewhat removed from the model, and the actual distance from the model depends on the range of
the powers of state and party. The countries of the Third World which entered the "non-capitalist road to development" and which promote "progressive social change" are close in this respect to the socialist countries. These include the Arab countries, such as Syria or Egypt, and such countries of Black Africa as Nigeria or Guinea.

The formulation "one-party system of statism" reflects the mode of social organization, and does not take into account the affiliation with a particular bloc, or the official ideology. The affiliation with a bloc is rendered obvious by the formula "countries of the Soviet bloc" and the role of official ideology is reported in the formula "communist states" or, less precisely, "socialist states". Let us recall our reservations about the application of the adjectives in these last two phrases to the system existing, for example, in Poland, and especially the reservations about the multiple meanings of the adjective "socialist".

Occasionally it has been claimed that the system existing in Poland was originally socialist, and degenerated only at a later date, ceasing to be socialist a long time ago. The answer to the question of when this system was socialist and when it ceased to be so depends in part on what the person asked understands by socialism. It is easy to find such interpretations of the meaning of socialism, according to which the current political system of Poland is socialist (for example, it is a system where the basic means of production are nationalized, or it is a system of a country whose government can enjoy the special trust of the leaders of the Soviet Union). It is also easy to find meanings of the word "socialist" according to which the system in Poland is not socialist (for example, the basic means of production are not socialized, and there are no political freedoms). It is more difficult, however, to find a meaning of "socialism" according to which the system in Poland ceased to be socialist: that is, at first it was socialist and then it was not.

Obviously, the concern here is not with words, but
also with whether or not one considers socialism to be a very good thing and how one views the beginning of the post-war system of government. This is often connected with wishful-thinking, with someone's transfer of his positive appraisal of the early achievements of society to an appraisal of the system as a means of social organization.

Socialism is sometimes understood as a description and sometimes as a postulate. As a postulate (or rather a set of postulates) socialism has been variously interpreted, and the history of social thought is concerned with examining these different meanings. Socialism as a postulate demands the development of such forms of organization as the self-government of labor and territorial self-determination, the union between producers and consumers, between cooperatives of labor and cooperatives of consumers. Some of these organizational forms were and are currently realized in the capitalist and other systems. In reference to the new order, we often speak about socialism adding an adjective such as "state socialism" or "totalitarian socialism". In the remainder of our discussion we will be using the term "socialism" without an adjective, understanding this term as a description and treating it as an abbreviation for the already used expression "one-party system of statism", with the hope that this will not lead to misunderstandings. In Western publications this system is often referred to as "communism"; however, the leaders of these governments have an ambivalent attitude towards this expression: sometimes "communism" is taken to be too "festive" a word, and therefore it is not used, while at other times they believe that this word would not be well accepted, and thus they prefer the word "socialism".

One can speak of socialism as that which does not exist, or as that which exists somewhere else (Sweden, for example). Here, however, we will speak of socialism as that which exists in Poland, despite the fact that there are other meanings of the term. Socialism is a name which this regime uses to identify itself and we have decided to respect this. We will also speak of people's democracies, and again this will be a self-characterization of these
countries by their rulers. But we have to remember that these are just names. Their meaning will be apparent only when we describe what is designated by them.

Five Structures

The leading role of the party in socialist systems leads to a characteristic multi-track system of organization. We are dealing here with a duplication of the administration by the party apparatus, which has the final power of decision, although this is not always publically revealed. This duplication complicates the decision making process and leads to the existence of many fictional elements in the organizational structure. These are the "dummy-instructions", which quite often do not even fulfill their concealing function, since their fictional character is generally recognized. Despite many personal connections, the party constitutes the second institutional structure, which parallels the state administration.

This, however is not the end of the multiplicity of arrangements; there are others, relatively separate, and relatively independent institutional structures. The police apparatus, which is relatively independent from both the state administration and the party, wields considerable power and constitutes the third such structure. The fourth structure takes us away from the internal situation and concerns the government of the Soviet Union, whose role is not limited by the boundaries of this country. These four structures are supplemented by a fifth, extra-organizational one.

It could be said that the arrangements are even more multiple, including sectors of the state administration, other than the police, such as, for example, the army or industry. Here, however, we are concerned with the distinctions which are most apparent. These structures differ from one another, but are also connected; one can ascertain the coordination of activities and common workings of all of them. Their separation is decided by the relative strength of the differences between them and the occasional appearance of conflicts and
disparities between them.

Members of the administration would occasionally like to reduce or even eliminate the interventions of the party and of the police in the activities of the state organs. From their point of view, such intervention is sometimes treated as unnecessary and informal. In fact, the administrative activities of the party have generally an extra-legal character. It is an informal activity, in the sense that it is extra-legal.

The members of the party through their participation in it, stress that the existence of the party as the second structure is not, in their opinion, improper, that the party is in order, at least in the sense that it is advantageous to belong to the party. On the whole, however, the members of the party do not want the police to rule over the party. This point of view is well represented by some fragments of the book of Władysław Bienkowksi, *The Motors and the Brakes of Socialism* ("Motory i Hamulce Socjalizmu"). The author emphasizes the divergence between the party and the police, paying special attention to the informal and uncontrolled character of police actions. The security forces, according to him, act "impulsively", and that means that they act outside the control of the party. Sometimes the police has also been criticized by the leadership of the party, although it was criticized not for its actions against the society, but only for its anti-party activities, directed against some (sometimes even very highly placed) party members. At the VIII Plenary Meeting fo the Central Committee of the P.Z.P.R., in October 1956, much attention was paid to the anti-party activities of the security forces, and they were then condemned. The director of the Tenth Department of the Ministry of Public Security (i.e. the department concerned with the Party) and the managers and employees of the investigative department were tried in courts. The party attitude towards police is occasionally reflected on the boundaries of art and propaganda. Recently, more and more often, the figure of an noble "spy" - an "ubek" - is glorified (the works of J. Bronislawski,
the career of Czechowicz e.g.). Occasionally, however, a conception similar to that of the October Plenary meeting and of Bienkowski also appears: we are shown the "ubek" as a villain, while the party secretary is a positive hero (such a division of roles is shown in Henryk Kluba's movie about the beginnings of the post-war regime, entitled "The Sun Rises Once a Day").

The members of the police are probably most interested in the richness of the divisions within the whole structure. It is only the existence of the fourth structure which they are likely to complain about, seeing in it something informal. This does not mean that they are not willing to cooperate with the external factors, even if with reservations. It is nice to control, and less pleasant to be controlled, especially if that control comes from abroad; nevertheless such control has existed and continues to exist. Some time ago the connections between the third and the fourth structure - that is between the police and the Soviet Union - were very pronounced. The activity of the security services was coordinated from the Soviet Union and directed towards the entire society, including the party members. When, in October 1956, the anti-party attitude of the police was criticized, party arrangements were not mentioned, while the agreements and directives from outside were not discussed clearly. However, Jakub Berman, the former member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of P.A.P.R., mentioned the strong pressure from the collaborators of Beria, from central and highest sources, and from advisors and the Army Information. Currently, these issues are not officially discussed.

Finally, there exists the fifth structure, extra-organizational, and informal in the sociological meaning of the term. This structure is a meeting place of diverse interests, a place where some may be gained and much may be lost. Everyday problems are taken care of through this informal arrangement. These are the problems, which, in view of the complications of the organizational structures, it is easier to take care of by having some good "side access" to the administration, the party, or
the police.

There exists the borderline area, difficult to investigate, of the organizational and informal activity of the security forces. It is on this borderline that vice-minister gen. Matejewski and his friends playing the leading roles in this department, conducted their activities. In this case, however, het matter was not of everyday importance. There is also an informal borderline between the party and the police. It is on this borderline that the deals and fights inside the party often take place, as, for example, in Poland at the end of the sixties. From time to time, the Soviet Union also intervenes informally.

All these structures are not isolated. First of all, they are tied together "at the top": this connection is based on the issuing of directives and on the arrangement of understandings at the highest level. Discussions about the activities of the government are conducted during the meetings of the Politbureau (the first structure - the administration, and the second - party). The Politbureau issues directives to the security forces (the second structure - the party, and the third - the police). There are party-government talks between Poland and the Soviet Union (the fourth structure - the USSR, the second - the party, and the first - the administration). The structures are also connected by "our people" - people who represent one structure, but act in another.

The leading role of the party is realized in everyday activities by members of the party, who are subject to party directives but fulfill various administrative functions. In March 1968, many (although by no means all) representatives of the so called "forces of order", "our people" from the ministry from Rakowiecka Street (representatives of the security forces), made their appearance in various individual institutions. Similarly, the intelligence services of the country against which Poland, it seems, does not conduct any counterintelligence activities, have some of "their people" installed in Poland.
The different structures are only relatively independent, and one should not exaggerate and demonize their independence. The hierarchy is as follows: the Soviet Union, party, police, state administration. The party is subordinated to the external factors, while the administration and police are responsible to the party. As usual, the executive powers or the subordinated structures do have some possibility of autonomy, opposition, or even resistance; nevertheless, subordination is more prevalent.

Let us turn our attention to the range and methods of activities of the various structures. Gierek and Jaroszewics claimed that the government should govern. But the initiative comes from somewhere else. On most issues the party has the initiative, while on more important matters (the military matters or international politics) the Soviet Union has it, but there are also cases in which the initiative belongs to the police. Russia, the party, and the police constitute the "alarm" institutions; they are to signal dangers and intervene. They also have the power of veto. The alarm activities of the Soviet Union and the police are perhaps less frequent than those of the party. The party took upon itself the care for daily affairs, and because of this it has more occasions to intervene. In the case of the police the interventions usually concern the cases of individuals (i.e., who should be allowed to do what). The alarm activities of Russia are difficult to predict; at this moment it is sporadic, but it can always occur, and occurs in the strangest instances. The alarm activities of the parties are constant. The government does not govern fully, the party does that instead, but the party is also limited from outside (by the Soviet Union) and form inside (by the police).

The complications resulting from the multiplicity of organizational structures are most visible from a central or lateral position in one of the hierarchies. When seen from below, the structures seem undifferentiated. Thus, it is apparent that the way in which one sees the social structure differs according to one's position within this social structure. What is seen from below, and what
is seen from above, is more or less homogenous, although different. From the bottom, one sees that "they" govern; from the top, one also sees "them", who do not understand many things.

Centralized states in which additional structures lie hidden behind the facade have occurred before in history. Without reaching for more distant examples, the co-existence of an official state structure with a highly developed apparatus of secret police existed, for example, in France at the time of Napoleon I, and in Eastern Europe it existed in Tsarist Russia. The activities of the Third Division of the Imperial Chancellory and later of the Okhrana were often directed against the official representatives of government policy. Jozef Azef, who worked for the police, initiated, then denounced effective assassinations of state dignitaries. The fatherland of the international proletariat created in 1917 inherited and further enriched these complications. In addition to the state and the police with constantly changing names, the party entered on the scene, as a "million-fingered hand tightened into a smashing fist", according to Majakovski. After 1933 the same situation occurred in Germany, where the leading role was also fulfilled by a single party and a concealed police with a complicated structure. The police was realizing its own conceptions, occasionally in advance of the activities of the party and the government, and sometimes it acted for purposes different from those of the government. When the people's democracies were created, together with the state, party and police structures, the fourth external force started to play a role, often participating in the very creation of these countries: the fatherland of the world proletariat with its own already well formed state, party and police. These three structures of the great fatherland act upon the structures in the smaller fatherlands.

Elite and Class

The word "class" is assigned various meanings. Sometimes a specific mystique develops around it, and classes are assigned characteristics more commonly ascribed to individuals. In the works of
some thinkers we can find assertions that classes act in history, conduct various struggles, and even have consciousness, and therefore that in some sense they think, and moreover, that what they think is somehow independent of what the individuals who comprise those classes think. It is said that classes have objective consciousness, or final consciousness, and that this class consciousness is neither the sum nor the resultant of individual consciousnesses, but exists independently of individual people. The claims are made that this objective class consciousness of the proletarians which exists independently from the proletarians, is expressed in the activities of the political party, which demonstrates this consciousness in its deeds. Such ideas can be found in the writings of subtle individuals, like the Marxist Gyorgi Lukacs, as well as in the writings of less intellectually refined propagandists.

It is possible, however, to treat the concept of class in a more secular fashion, and believe that classes inhabit earth rather than the heaven of "objective necessity" and that they are composed of people who possess some common characteristics. Different conceptions of class will differ depending on one's choice of these characteristics.

Even on the grounds of Marxist-inspired sociology, it is possible to find quite secular conceptions of classes. Thus, classes are understood as aggregates which differ in their relationships to the means of production. Then, we can devise people into those who own such means of production and those who do not. Various additional characteristics will allow us to distinguish more differentiated classes; for example, it is possible to isolate the aggregates of the owners of some specific kind of means of production. It is also possible in some cases to treat ownership as a graduated characteristic, and claim that there exists situations in which the means of production are owned to a greater or lesser extent. Then, we can order classes hierarchically according to their different degrees of ownership. The division into two classes of those who possess means of production and those who do not, will be in this case only a first
approximation. It will also be possible to speak about the greater or lesser "class-character" of social aggregates whose representatives control the means of production to a greater or lesser extent.

The class differentiation is economic: it concerns the ownership of the means of production, that is a phenomenon in the sphere of economic relations. Another differentiation is political, according to the degree of participation in power. Those whose access to power is greatest - those who actually govern - are called the power elite. Thanks to nationalization, centralism, and homogeneity the power elite controls the principal means of production. Therefore, according to the above definition, the power elite constitutes also a class. A close connection between economic and political power constitutes one of the features of the new order. The power elite, because it controls the principal means of production, not only governs, but also constitutes one of the classes.

It is worthwhile to realize however, that this power elite, understood as a class, nevertheless constitutes a class of different type than its various forerunners. This difference is connected with the particular character of the ownership of the principal means of production in the new order. We will proceed to a discussion of this new class, and specifically of what distinguishes it from the aggregates which were traditionally called classes.

The control of the basic means of production, or property, has, in the case of the new class, a collective and indivisible character. The controllers of the means of production do not constitute an aggregate of individual owners (such a class was constituted by the capitalists, especially in the early stages of capitalism). The principal means of production are controlled by an organization, and an individual is a member of this class by virtue of occupying a special position in this organization.

Historically, there have been other classes of
organizations as collective controllers of the means of production, and even more generally, as controllers of the state. Such states were, however, rarely analyzed in class terms, because in order to do so it is necessary to admit collective, or, more exactly, organizational property as a discriminant characteristic of a class. Thus, it is possible to conduct a class analysis of the priest-state in ancient Egypt, or of the state of Jesuits in Paraguay, as well as of later states which centrally controlled the economy, including the currently existing countries of this type.

The second peculiarity of the organizational form of ownership, and the peculiarity of the new class consists in the fact that inheritance is not, in this case, a transmission of property to another individual subject. In the case of the ownership of the means of production, controlled by the new class, we are not dealing with individual inheritance at all, but with the continuous ownership of property by a group subject (although: the personal composition of the group does change).

In some partnerships, the co-owners are personally responsible for the obligations of the company as a whole; in joint-stock companies this is not so. Because of the limited personal liability of the members of the new class, the property they control reminds of the property of a joint-stock company. There are, however, differences. Shares can be sold to anybody, and co-ownership is thereby transferred. Here, however, there is no possibility of the individual transfer of a share. The co-owners control as a group the entire property, but no one individual can withdraw his share or sell his stock. There are no stocks and no investment.

The number of actual controllers, members of the power elite having economic and political power, is small because of centralization. The small number of members of this group disagrees with some definitions of class. For example, according to Lenin, "classes are huge groups of people, differing one from another according to the place they occupy in the historically determined social system of production, in their relationship (legally sanc-
tioned and determined by law) to the means of production, in their role in the social organization of labor (...)". If a group of people is small, then, apart from the other elements of Lenin's definition, this group would not, according to him, constitute a class. This problem, however, is less essential. What seems more crucial are the specific characteristics of the power elite as a class, which we described above, and which are connected with the collective (organizational) character of ownership.

Let us remember, however, that the "owners of People's Poland" are often described as plenipotentiaries, and that the full ownership resides a little higher and a little further. In any case, the new class (at least at some periods and in some socialist countries) would constitute something like a "comprador Bourgeoisie" (which exists in the Third World countries), whereas the full extent of power would belong in these cases only to the "agents" abroad - in the Soviet Union.

Presently, the processes of economic integration of the socialist countries are not advanced enough for control of the economy to be transferred totally to the Soviet Union. The new class of the owners of the Polish means of production still resides more in Warsaw than in Moscow. And the situation is even clearer in Yugoslavia or Rumania. The new regime and its characteristic relations of ownership of means of production (at least in some countries) can exist independently of Soviet domination and limitation of sovereignty. Although the ruling apparatus in Poland is supported by the Soviet Union, and the role of this state for the governing Poland is important, the range of economic decisions made within Poland is nevertheless quite extensive when compared, for example, with the Stalinist period. It is obvious that we are dealing here with historical changes of degree.

The degree of independence of individual enterprises is connected with ownership; if their independence is significant, additional complications may arise in the class analysis of society. With decentralization, the directors of enterprises
might possess at least a partial share in property. Ownership in this case has the character of a partnership and does not belong only to one group: the enterprise is overseen by the central authorities, but also partially by the director, or even the workers' self-government. These possibilities are, however, scarcely realized. Thus far, even in Yugoslavia, the federal and republican party and state leadership have played a decisive role in economic matters, and therefore in matters of ownership. If, then, one desires to consider the gradation in the control of property, one can distinguish more social classes than the two basic ones and speak, for example, about the middle class. We shall consider this below.

Let us return once more to Marx and to his distinction between a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself. A class-in-itself is a class, an aggregate distinguished on the basis of a similar relationship to the means of production on the part of its members; it is, however, an aggregate whose peculiarities end there. In particular, there are no organizational links between the members of a class-in-itself. A class-for-itself constitutes; according to Marx, a class of a higher type, and its superiority results from its having characteristics not shared by the class-in-itself. One of these characteristics is its consciousness of the class situation, another, its degree of organization. The new class, although small in numbers, and therefore not fulfilling Lenin's definition, compensates for its small numbers through organization and consciousness. Thus, even if the requirement of Lenin's definition are not fulfilled in this case, Marx's requirements specifying the characteristics of a class-for-itself are fulfilled. If, then, we decide to speak about classes in the new regime, then, as we can see, there are reasons to regard the power elite as one of the classes, as an aggregate differentiated because of its particular relationship to the means of production. This class is well organized, and its power is determined by the state and party organization led by the power elite. Directly below the power elite we find a far more numerous group of executives of its directives: the functionaries of the party, state and police, who
act in the middle ranks of the hierarchy of government.

The Privileged Groups

Wanting to effectively realize its goals, the power elite wants to maintain a close connection with the executors of its orders. This elite promotes a consonance of interests between itself and those who carry out its orders. Today, almost all the people are among the executors, but, as is well known, it is difficult to buy off everyone (that might not be so bad!). It is necessary to concentrate the available means. So, the rulers act in such a way as to align themselves above all with those who work in key areas, first of all with activists in the hierarchies of the party, security, and propaganda. By controlling economic incentives, it is possible to provide privileges for persons active in these fields. There are privileges in the form of salaries and monetary prizes, and other types of privileges such as allowances (the allocation of resources without pay) and other social services. These services are distributed in such a way that various facilities (in the acquisition of apartments or the allocation of vacations) are distributed to those who are already favored. There is also legal inequality with respect to certain groups more valuable for the power elite than the rest of the society. This inequality is manifested in privileges in labor law and social security (tax exemptions, longer vacation times, earlier retirements and higher pensions, and the participation of professional soldiers and of the police in a retirement system without having contributed to it during their service). Let us add, however, that the position of those who belong to these privileged groups is especially perilous - both in cases of individual disobedience and in the event of an eventual, more radical change of the system. This heightened sense of danger constitutes the other side of the privileges received by members of these groups.

There are various degrees of interdependence between the citizen and the government, various
amounts of docility and readiness to submission. Those who are employed directly by the state are thus more dependent of the government; members of the party - through their obligations - are more dependent on the authorities than those who do not belong to the party; and those who are privileged are more closely tied to the government than those who are not privileged. But we are speaking here only about various tendencies determined by various contracts, by means of which the authorities bind citizens to themselves. There are exceptions: there are people who are not bound to the state at all; and there are situations (rare, and connected with crises in the system) in which even those who were previously very submissive are ready to refuse obedience to the authorities.

Conflict

There might be (but does not have to be) a conflict between the goals of the citizens and of the various social strata, on the one hand, and the goals of the power elite as a whole or of some elements of it, on the other. We spoke of the interdependence between some occupational groups and the power elite and of the conservative tendencies of the middle strata, the functionaries. However, the main goal of the authorities - the retention of their position of power - often enters into conflict with the interests of specific groups or social strata, especially those situated lower in the hierarchy of power and privilege. This basic goal induces the leaders of the party to seek support among the police and in external forces; they spread the ideological veil, which does not facilitate clarity of vision even for them. The blindness of Władysław Gomułka can be regarded as a metaphor, although it has been confirmed by medical authorities.

The desire to maintain power and the search for external allies, as well as the ideological blindness, pose difficulties for the development of the economy and of culture, lead to a limitation of creative possibilities, and facilitate the destruction of social accomplishments. The realization of this basic goal has the effect of making
impossible the sharing of control with society and
the revision of past decisions.

The conflict between the power elite and society or
specific social groups is not always conscious. The
opposing sides of the conflict are usually conscious
of their goals, but only rarely are they fully
aware of the entire situation, and they do not
always understand the role which they play in this
situation.

The members of the power elite and the functionaries
of the apparatus subjected to the elite have pecu­
liar psychological characteristics, thanks to their
careful selection. Even if they desire the good of
the society (and this cannot be excluded), the way
in which this good is understood and the means of
realizing it are determined by their habits and
through their ideology, and in particular by the
way in which they view themselves and the society.
Thus, in their view - even against some Marxist
conceptions - the society should be passive, and
all actions should be initiated by them alone:
the leaders of the party, of the working class,
and of the entire society. It is possible to see
here a triumph of Lenin over Marx, a triumph of the
Leninist conception of the communist party as a
force shaping history. If something unforeseen by
the leaders should occur in the society, it fills
them with fear and they try to counteract it. They
believe that spontaneity is bad. Quite a few of
the decisions taken by the authorities have as
their goal the prevention of events not initiated
by them; they try thus to insure themselves against
spontaneity. At the same time, they try to leave
their options open and unconstrained by legal
guarantees, by the functioning of representative
institutions, or by letting the citizens have some
freedom. All of this has repercussions on the
effectiveness of the system, on the degree to which
people's needs are being satisfied, and on the
quality of their lives.

The conflict may remain hidden; the power elite
need not know that it is realizing its own goals
against the wishes of the society; it does not have
to know that its actions are not accepted. Moreover,
all those affected by the decisions of the elite might be aware only of their own opposition, or of the opposition of those close to them, and not of what others might think and want. The latent consciousness of conflict, even if it is not revealed on an everyday basis, may, on both sides, become open in the case of more drastic actions by the power elite.

On the part of the society, this consciousness may take the form of rebellion or protest, generally weakly organized; on the side of the authorities it takes the form of an accusation of "counter-revolutionary" opposition. The leaders describe in this way the divergence between what they believe about the true needs of the society, and what the society itself supposedly thinks in this respect. After thus identifying a counter-revolutionary position, the leaders can dispatch the army to the place concerned, or foreign troops might be invited.

To use a sociological metaphor, the conflicts may then reside in the collective subconsciousness of both sides. When they become open they lead to an eruption. When such a conflict, expelled from consciousness, occurs in an individual psyche, treatment is necessary. This seems equally necessary on a social level.

The way in which the conflict is conducted depends on, among other things, the organization of the two sides. The monopolization of the organizational resources by the ruling apparatus is a characteristic of the new order. The society does not organize itself — it is being organized: society is organized only to the extent and in the manner allowed. This means of organization serves to limit the spontaneity of social actions. Thus, we have, on the one hand, a collectivity of isolated individuals, and, on the other, an organization functioning with the participation of the same or similar individuals. As participants in the organization they fulfill one of their social roles; they take part in the functioning of a system harmful to themselves or to others. In other roles, they oppose this same system. These other roles are usually limited to social fraternization,
and consist of private conversations in which one complains about what is happening, but does so only privately, apart from the institutional system. Thus, the system is supported by people who, at different times, and playing other roles, would tend to oppose it. If they oppose the system (partially), they do so as individuals, or, at most, in crowds; if they support the system (again only partially), they do so as the functionaries in organizations (productive, administrative, "social", etc.) in which, if they do not execute orders directed against themselves personally, they are nonetheless prepared to execute orders against others. Of course, not everyone can be entrusted with such orders, but, in general, it is always possible to find enough who are willing to obey. And even if the authorities were not capable of arranging everything by giving orders, then at least they could induce passivity. In any case, orders are not necessary in very case; sometimes non-compelling incentives are enough. If individuals sometimes think that something should be done independently of the government, they do not do it, knowing that it is difficult to act alone.

These are the factors on which the outcome of a conflict between the elite and other social strata might depend. The two sides are, as we have emphasized, not equally equipped. The power elite controls the state, the law, the means of production, the propaganda machine, the police, the army, and it has external support. Effective administration demands, however, cooperation among the executors of orders. These executors might refuse - at least at times - to obey commands of which they do not approve. This insubordination can be used as an instrument of pressure against the authorities. A strike is just such a form of pressure. In turn, the larger the number of people who refuse simultaneously, the more effective will be the insubordination, but this depends on the possibility of coordinated action.

The realization of those goals of the power elite not consonant with the aspirations of the society is more probable in a situation where the possibility of concerted actions by citizens is smaller.
In turn, as the possibility of organization not directed from above and of exchange of information not transmitted from above becomes more limited, the chance of concerted action on the part of citizens grows smaller. Thus, the smaller these chances are, the fewer will be the elements of pluralism in the social system. It is these elements of pluralism which presuppose the existence of centers of information and decision which are at least partially independent from the authorities.

The struggle may thus concern not only concrete decisions, but also limiting the authority of the power elite for the future, so that not everything it might attempt would be possible. The party and state authorities aspire to the situation in which the possibility that particular social groups might organize and inform themselves independently from the authorities is increasingly limited. It is in the interest of society to expand these possibilities, and the particular social groups - in spite of the fact that they act separately more often than together - attempt to achieve this.

In Poznan, in June, 1956, the slogan was "Bread and Freedom". IN December, 1970 and January, 1971, the workers demanded not only a return to the old prices of food, but also independent labor unions and the acceptance of the strike committees as legal representatives of the workers. Edward Gierek said in Szczecin that the existing organizations (P.Z.P.R. and the labor unions) were good enough and the existing organizations should be sufficient for the workers. The behaviour or the official propaganda was inflammatory to the situation at the time. On the coast there were demands for true information, for the removal of the propaganda smoke-screen which was especially irritating at the time. The workers were not only concerned about the specific decision of the authorities, but also about the organizational possibilities of action and institutional guarantees. These demands were not fulfilled, but those who presented them - and not for the first time - knew that this had to be done. Without the fulfillment of social demands...
of this kind in the area of organization and information future conflicts between the authorities and society might take an even more dangerous form than was the case thus far - more dangerous both for the society and for the representatives of the authorities.