



**On
Organization**

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group practice. Although we considered our group “informal,” it carried with it the inevitable tendency of substituting itself for the proletariat. It is no longer a question of arguing about accommodation in the heart of the left but of recognizing that if there has been accommodation, it is because even from the start the theory wasn’t integrally a theory of the proletariat. Thus it is no longer adequate to say that the creation of the party in 1943 was premature; it’s necessary to say that it was an absurdity. Accordingly, it’s necessary to break with our past and return to Marx’s position.

This letter has been written not so much as a definitive and exhaustive treatment of the theme discussed; it is intended as a break with the “whole” group past. The signatures that follow are intended to emphasize this break and do not indicate that we have dropped our previous position on the subject of anonymity.

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Translated by Edizioni International,
Savona, Italy

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This shows the necessity of superseding the bourgeois form of perceiving and conceiving social reality and taking up again, as Marx did, Hegel's demonstration of the mediate character of any form of immediacy. For it is characteristic of "scientific" thought to accept the immediate fact as the real object of knowledge without perceiving and conceiving the mediation that underlies it. It is on the basis of such gnoseology that in capitalist society social appearance becomes reality and vice-versa. The real being of the proletariat is hidden and the class is perceived in its apparent form of life. This is what gives to the problem of consciousness coming from the outside and the fact that when the proletariat manifests its true being (1905–1917), everyone is left stupefied, dumbfounded. The Italian communist left, in spite of its more acute capacities in the domain of the theory of the proletariat, did not in 1950 make a definitive break with its past (1919–1926). Its critique of trotskyism, of council communism, etc., did not achieve the integral restoration of Marx's notions of the party and of the proletariat. Because of this, its official position and its real essence oscillated between a conception of program as a "marxist school" and a trotskyist-brand petty activism. This second aspect became dominant after 1960 due to the fact that a clique of gangsters totally foreign to the theory and to the proletariat took possession of the "school," thanks above all to its continuing ambiguity on some problems of vital importance: the union question and the notion of "vanguard of proletariat," which was actually rejected in acts and in official discussion but which persisted in the official canon of the party. It was then that the Martov-Lenin debate on the question of organization was resurrected, which demonstrated that this current was definitely dead, and led to its third-class funeral during May '68.

It should be noted that since we left the PCI we have tried to remove the ambiguity discussed by our doing our best to reveal the positive aspects of the left. This only resulted in our cultivating the left and becoming its most extreme expression (cf. the articles of *Invariance*). And this led us to fall back into a

conception of revolutionary theory had been destroyed, and it reflected a complete separation between the concepts of theory and practice. For the proletariat, in Marx's sense, the class struggle is simultaneously production and radicalization of consciousness. The critique of capital expresses a consciousness already produced by the class struggle and anticipates its future. For Marx and Engels, proletarian movement = theory = communism.

Mr. Heinzen imagines communism to be a certain *doctrine* which springs from a definite theoretical principle as its *nucleus* and draws further consequences from it. Mr. Heinzen is very wrong. Communism is not a doctrine but a *movement* springing from facts rather than principles. Communists presuppose not such and such a philosophy but all past history and, above all, its actual and effective results in the civilized countries... In so far as communism is a theory, it is the theoretical expression of the situation of the proletariat in its struggle and the theoretical summary of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.

[F. Engels, "The communists and Karl Heinzen" Article 2, *MEW* 4, pp. 321–322].

Actually, the problem of consciousness coming from the outside did not exist for Marx. There wasn't any question of the development of militants, of activism or of academicism. Likewise, the problematic of the self-education of the masses, in the sense of the council communists (false disciples of R. Luxemburg and authentic disciples of pedagogic reformism) did not arise for Marx. R. Luxemburg's theory of the class movement, which from the start of the struggle finds within itself the conditions for its radicalization, is closest to Marx's position (cf. her position on the "creativity of the masses," beyond its immediate existence).

The following letter (dated 04.09.69) led to the dissolution of the group that had begun to form on the basis of the positions set forth in *Invariance*. The letter opened an important area of reflection and debate that has gone on since, certain conclusions of which have already been discussed in "Transition", no. 8, série 1.

Although certain points raised by the letters have been partially dealt with, others have hardly been touched upon. That's why it's necessary – given the importance of making a more clean break with the past – to publish it now. Our publishing it should enable the reader to appreciate the work accomplished thus far, and what still remains to be done.

Since it is simultaneously a break (and thus a conclusion) and a point of departure, the letter contains a certain number of imprecisions, seeds of possible errors. We shall indicate the most important ones in a note. In addition, since it was possible for us then, once we had rejected the group method, to outline "concretely" how to be revolutionaries, our rejection of the small group could have been interpreted as a return to a more or less Stirnerian individualism. As if the only guarantee from now on was going to be the subjectivity cultivated by each individual revolutionary! Not at all. It was necessary to publicly reject a certain perception of social reality and the practice connected with it, since they were a point of departure for the process of racketization. If we therefore withdrew totally from the group-scul movement, it was to be able simultaneously to enter into liaison with other revolutionaries who had made an analogous break. Now there is a direct production of revolutionaries who supersede almost immediately the point we were at when we had to make our break. Thus, there is a potential "union" that would be considered if we were not to carry the break with the political point of view to the depths of our individual consciousnesses. Since the essence of politics is fundamentally representation, each group is forever trying to project an impressive image on the social screen. The groups are always explaining how they represent themselves in order to be recognized by certain people as the

vanguard for representing others, the class. This is revealed in the famous “what distinguishes us” of various small groups in search of recognition. All delimitation is limitation and often leads rather rapidly to reducing the delimitation to some representative slogans for racketeerist marketing. All political representation is a screen and therefore an obstacle to a fusion of forces. Since representation can occur on the individual as well as the group level, recourse to the former level would be, for us, a repetition of the past.

Camatte, 1972

Both of us scoff at being popular. Among other things our disgust at any personality cult is evidence of this. I have never permitted anyone to make publicity out of the numerous testimonials of admiration with which they've overwhelmed me in various countries... When Engels and I first joined the secret society of communists, we did it on the condition sine qua non that they repeal all statutes that would be favorable to a cult of authority. [Marx to Bloss – 10.11.1877, *MEW* 34, p. 308].

It is possible to avoid the dirt in bourgeois intercourse or in its trade? Dirt is its natural element.... The honest infamy or the infamous honesty of the solvent morality appear to me not a bit superior to the unrespectable infamy which neither the first Christian communities nor the Jacobin club, nor our own deceased League could free themselves of entirely. In bourgeois intercourse, however, you get used to the fact that you lose your sense of respectable infamy or of infamous respectability. [Marx to Freiligrath – 29.02.1860, *MEW* 30, p. 492].

The establishment of capital within material existence and therefore within the social community is accompanied by

Marx's activity was always that of revealing the real movement that leads to communism and of defending the gains of the proletariat in its struggle against capital. Hence, Marx's position in 1871 in revealing the “impossible action” of the Paris Commune or declaring that the First International was not the child of either a theory or a sect. It is necessary to do the same now. Those who wish to enter in liaison with the work set forth in this review in order to develop it and ensure a more detailed, precise, and lucid exposition, ought to direct their relations along the lines indicated above in the discussion of Marx's work. Failing to do this, they will relapse into the gang practice.

It follows from this that it is also necessary to develop a critique of the Italian communist left's conception of “program”. That this notion of “communist program” has never been sufficiently clarified is demonstrated by the fact that, at a certain point, the Martov-Lenin debate resurfaced at the heart of the left. The polemic was already the result of the fact that Marx's individual affirmation, which is the distinguishing feature of the current revolutionary phase. It will aim toward the reconciliation of man with nature, the communist revolution being also a revolt of nature (i.e., against capital; moreover, it is only through a new relation with nature) that we will be able to survive, and avert the second of the two alternatives we face today: communism or the destruction of the human species.

In order to better understand this becoming organizational, so as to facilitate it without inhibiting whatever it may be, it is important to reject all old forms and to enter, without *a priori* principles, the vast movement of our liberation, which develops on a world scale. It is necessary to eliminate anything that could be an obstacle to the revolutionary movement. In given circumstances and in the course of specific actions, the revolutionary current will be structured and will structure itself not only passively, spontaneously, but by always directing the effort toward how to realize the true *Gemeinwesen* (human essence) and the social man, which implies the reconciliation of men with nature. (Camatte, 1972)

tice ought to be made:

- refuse to reconstitute a group, even an informal one (cf. The Marx–Engels correspondence, various works on the revolution of 1848, and pamphlets such as “The Great Men of Exile,” 1852).
- maintain a network of personal contacts with people having realized (or in the process of doing so) the highest degree of theoretical knowledge: antifollowerism, antipedagogy; the party in its historical sense is not a school.¹

¹ To talk of reassuming again an attitude adopted by Marx at a certain moment of his revolutionary activity resulted from a profound failure to understand that the phase of capital’s formal domination has been completed. Marx had to take a position only valid for that period. Furthermore, his theoretical position on the subject of the party is not as rigid as the letter indicates here. What is even less acceptable in the above assertions is that they could lead to a new theory of consciousness coming from the outside by way of an elitist theory of the development of the revolutionary movement.

The refusal of all organization is not a simple anti organizational position. To leave it at that would be to again manifest a desire for originality, to try to set oneself up as different and thereby reach a position from which to attract people. From there the movement of racketization would begin all over again.

Our position on the dissolution of groups derives from the study of the becoming of the capitalist mode of production on one hand, and our characterization of the May movement on the other. We are deeply convinced that the revolutionary phenomenon is in motion and that, as always, consciousness follows action. This means that in the vast movement of rebellion against capital, revolutionaries are going to adopt a definite behavior – which will not be acquired all at once – compatible with the decisive and determinative struggle against *capital*.

We can preview the content of such an “organization.” It will combine the aspiration to human community and to in-

the disappearance of the traditional personal capitalist, the relative, and sometimes absolute, diminution of the proletariat, and the growth of new middle classes. Each human community, no matter how small, is conditioned by the mode of existence of the material community. The present mode of existence derives from the fact that capital is able to valorize itself, therefore exist and develop, only if a particle of it, at the same time that it becomes autonomous, confronts the social ensemble and places itself in relation to the total socialized equivalent, capital. It needs this confrontation (competition, rivalry); it exists only by differentiation. From this point, a social fabric forms based on the competition of rival “organizations” (rackets).

It reproduces a new financial aristocracy, a new variety of parasites in the shape of promoters, speculators and simply nominal directors; a whole system of swindling and cheating by means of corporation promotion, stock issuance, and stock speculation. It is private production without the control of private property.
[*Capital* (International Publishers), Vol. III, p. 438].

Expropriation extends here from the direct producers to the smaller and the medium-sized capitalists themselves. It is the point of departure for the capitalist mode of production; its accomplishment is the goal of this production. In the last instance it aims at the expropriation of the means of production from all individuals. With the development of social production, the means of production ceases to be means of private production and products of private production, and can thereafter be only means of production in the hands of associated producers, i.e. the latter’s social property, much as they are their social products. However, this expropriation appears within the capitalist system in a contradictory form, as appropriation of social property by a few; credit lends the latter more

and more the aspect of pure adventurers.
[Ibid., pp. 439–440].

As home of the production process (the creation of value), the business enterprise restrains the movement of capital, fixes it at a particular location. It therefore must overcome this stabilization, lose this fixed character. So the propertyless enterprise arises, which still allows for a mystified yield form of surplus value. Here the constant capital is equal to zero, so only a small advance of capital is necessary to get the “business” rolling. Finally, there are even fictitious enterprises, thanks to which the most unchecked speculation develops.

Today, capital constantly appears in the form of an “organization”. Behind this word-synonymous, in the glorious days of labor conflicts, with brotherhood in an open struggle, but now merely a hypocritical fiction about *common interest* among businessmen, administrators, technicians, unskilled workers, robots and watchdogs—behind the inexpressive and anti-mnemonic trademarks of the companies, behind the terms “elements of production” and “stimulation of national revenue,” capital still fulfills its old repulsive function; a function far more unworthy than that of the entrepreneur who personally contributed his intelligence, courage and true pioneering spirit at the dawn of bourgeois society.

The *organization* is not only the modern depersonalized capitalist, but also the capitalist without capital because it doesn’t need any...

The business organization has its own plan. It doesn’t establish a reliable business firm with assets but a “corporate front” with a fictitious capital.¹ If anything is

1 “Fictitious” is from *finto* in the original Italian, which does not correspond to the term “fictitious” in Capital but is close to it (Trans-

this subject, we can take up again Engels’s critique given at the congress of Sonvillers. What he said at the time about the International applies today to a group. It can be summed up as follows: In Marx’s time the proletariat couldn’t go as far as negating itself-in the sense that during the course of the revolution it had to set itself up as the dominant class: 1848, 1871, 1917. There was a definitive separation between the formal party and the historic party. Today the party can only be the historic party. Any formal movement is the reproduction of this society, and the proletariat is essentially *outside of it*. A group can in no way pretend to realize community without taking the place of the proletariat, which alone can do it. Such an attempt introduces a distortion that engenders theoretical ambiguity and practical hypocrisy. It is not enough to develop the critique of capital, nor even to affirm that there are no organizational links; it’s necessary to avoid reproducing the gang structure, since it is the spontaneous product of the society. This ought to be the basis of the critique of the Italian left and of our mode of existence since the break with the PCI.

The revolutionary must not identify himself with a group but recognize himself in a theory that does not depend on a group or on a review, because it is the expression of an existing class struggle. This is actually the correct sense in which anonymity is posed rather than as the negation of the individual (which capitalist society itself brings about). Accord, therefore, is around a work that is in process and needs to be developed. This is why theoretical knowledge and the desire for theoretical development are absolutely necessary if the professor-student relation – another form of the mind-matter, leader-mass contradiction – is not to be repeated and revive the practice of following. Moreover, the desire for theoretical development must realize itself in an autonomous and personal fashion and not by way of a group that sets itself up as a kind of diaphragm between the individual and the theory.

It is necessary to return to Marx’s attitude toward all groups in order to understand why the break with the gang prac-

this line from the inaugural address of the First International is more valid than ever: “The emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves.”

At the present time the proletariat either prefigures communist society and realizes communist theory or it remains part of existing society. The May movement was the beginning of this prefiguration. It follows from what has been said that the proletariat can in no way recognize itself in any organization since it already suffers them in other forms. The May movement clearly demonstrates this.

With the proletariat broken, its immediate form of existence is the process of capital itself. The workers’ parties in Marx’s time were produced by the immediate movement of the proletariat of that period. Their fate was to play the bourgeois parliamentary game. Today, now that the apparent community-in-the-sky of politic constituted by parliaments and their parties has been effaced by capital’s development, the “organizations” that claim to be proletarian are simply gangs or cliques which, through the mediation of the state, play the same role as all the other groups that are directly in the service of capital. This is the groupuscule phase. In Marx’s time the supersession of the sects was to be found in the unity of the workers’ movement. Today, the parties, these groupuscules, manifest not merely a lack of unity but the absence of class struggle. They argue over the remains of the proletariat. They theorize about the proletariat in the immediate reality and oppose themselves to its movement. In this sense they realize the stabilization requirements of capital. The proletariat, therefore, instead of having to supersede them, needs to destroy them.

The critique of capital ought to be, therefore, a critique of the racket in all its forms, of capital as social organism; capital becomes the real life of the individual and his mode of being with others (cf. on this subject: Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* and Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*). The theory which criticizes the racket cannot reproduce it. The consequence of this is refusal of all group life; it’s either this or the illusion of community. On

paid in advance, it is merely to gain the sympathy of the government agencies which examine bids, proposals, and contracts.

This reveals the falseness of the stupid doctrine that the state or party bureaucracy constitutes a new ruling class which screws proletarians and capitalists alike, a ridiculous hypothesis, easily rejected from a Marxist viewpoint. Today the “specialist” is a beast of prey, the bureaucrat a miserable bootlicker.

The organization differs from the worker commune (a libertarian illusion which cannot be found within any defined boundaries) in that, in each form, rather than equality of performance in a common work, there is a hierarchy of functions and benefits. It can’t be otherwise when the firm has autonomy in the market and must present a profitable balance sheet.

Recent reports from Russia concerning the regional decentralization and enlarged independence of particular concerns show that the trend is towards an explosive extension of the *contract system*, by which the state hires itself out to organizations in all sectors of the economy, organizations which are actual business gangs, with a changing and elusive personnel composition. This is similar to the various greedy forms which characterize the modern construction industry in all contemporary capitalist systems.

[A. Bordiga, “The Economic and Social Structure in Russia Today” in *Il programma comunista*, no. 7, 1957. Edition de L’oubli 1975, pp. 230–31].

Not only does the state hire itself out to gangs, but it becomes a gang (racket) itself. Nevertheless, it still plays the role of mediator.

lator’s note).

Absolute monarchy (which itself is already a product of the growing bourgeois wealth and develops to a point where it becomes incompatible with the old feudal relations) necessitates in a determinate way a general power that affirms itself through egalitarian forms. The absolute monarchy must be able to exercise this power on all points of the periphery; it needs this power as the material lever of the general equivalent; of the wealth that becomes increasingly effective and powerful in its forms and increasingly independent from all special, local, natural, individual relations.

[K. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Europäische Verlaganstalt, Frankfurt) p. 873].

The state appeared in its pure form, with the power of the general equivalent, at the time of the growth of the law of value in the period of simple commodity production. In the phase of formal domination of capital, when capital had not yet dominated the law of value, the state was a mediator between capital and [...] ¹ both remained of prior modes of production and the proletariat itself. The credit system was still undeveloped and had not yet given rise, on a large scale, to fictitious capital. Capital still needed a rigid gold standard. With the passage to real domination, capital created its own general equivalent, which couldn't be as rigid as it had been in the period of simple circulation. The state itself had to lose its rigidity and become a gang mediating between different gangs and between the total capital and particular capitals.

We can see the same sort of transformation in the political sphere. The central committee of a party or the center of any sort of regroupment plays the same role as the state. Democratic centralism only managed to mimic the parliamentary form characteristic of formal domination. And organic centralism, affirmed

¹ unclear in original copy of translation

calumny, which is nothing but the sublimation of assassination. The calumny justifies his exclusion, or is used to force him to leave “of his own free will.”

In reality, of course, the different methods cross from one type of gang to another. There are murders linked to business deals just as there are settlements of account that result in murder.

Thus, capitalism is the triumph of the organization, and the form the organization takes is the gang. This is the triumph of fascism. In the United States the racket is found at all levels of society. It's the same in USSR. The theory of hierarchical bureaucratic capitalism, in the formal sense, is an absurdity, since the gang is an informal organism.

An alternative at the theoretical level is the exaltation of discipline, the demand for the purity of the militant (cf. the group “Rivoluzione comunista,” which broke with the PCI in 1964 on the question of the creation of a true elite of militants who would do nothing but bring back to life the positions of “ultrabolshevism” that Lukacs saw as the alternative to the opportunist mass party, which the German Communist Party had become in the space of two years (cf. “Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organization” in *History and Class Consciousness*). This is like saying that on the level of sexual life the alternative to the decay of values is asceticism. Besides, in abstracting itself from reality, this view creates a gulf between theory and practice.

All this expresses the growing separation of the individual from the human community, poverty in Marx's sense. The formation of the gang is the constitution of an illusory community. In the case of the youth gang, it is the result of fixation on the elementary instinct of revolt in its immediate form. The political gang, on the contrary, wants to hold up its illusory community as a model for the whole society. This is utopian behavior without any real base. The utopians hoped that through emulation all humanity would eventually be included in the communities they created but these communities were all absorbed by capital. So

vering, for example, for supporting one's attempt to gain a leadership position or for justifying the removal of a current leader.

The interior–exterior opposition and the gang structure develop the spirit of competition to the maximum. Given the differences of theoretical knowledge among the members, the acquisition of theory becomes, in effect, an element of political natural selection, a euphemism for division of labor. While one is, on the one hand, theorizing about existing society, on the other, within the group, under the pretext of negating it, an unbridled emulation is introduced that ends up in a hierarchization even more extreme than in society-at-large; especially as the interior–exterior opposition is reproduced internally in the division between the center of the gang and the mass of militants.

The political gang attains its perfection in those groups that claim to want to supersede existing social forms (forms such as the cult of the individual, of the leader, and of democracy). In practice, anonymity – understood simply as anti-individualism – means unbridled exploitation of the gang members to the profit of the direction clique, which gains prestige from everything the gang produces. And organic centralism becomes the practice of hypocrisy, since the double–dealing that one finds in those groups that lay claim to democratic centralism occurs anyway, in spite of the denial that it's going on.

What maintains an apparent unity in the bosom of the gang is the threat of exclusion. Those who do not respect the norms are rejected with calumny; and even if they quit, the effect is the same. This threat also serves as psychological blackmail for those who remain. This same process appears in different ways in different types of gangs.

In the business gang, modern form of the enterprise, the individual is kicked out and finds himself in the streets.

In the youth gang, the individual is beaten up or killed. Here, where we find revolt in its raw form, delinquency; the lone individual is weak, lacks protection, and so is forced to join a gang.

In the political gang, the individual is rejected with

merely in a negative fashion, as refusal of democracy and its form (subjugation of the minority to the majority, votes, congresses, etc.) actually just gets trapped again in the more modern forms. This results in the mystique of organization (as with fascism). This was how the PCI (International Communist Party) evolved into a gang.

The proletariat having been destroyed, this tendency of capital encounters no real opposition in society and so can produce itself all the more efficiently. The proletariat's real essence has been denied and it exists only as an object of capital. Similarly, the theory of the proletariat, marxism, has been destroyed, Kautsky first revising it and then Bernstein liquidating it. This occurred in a definitive manner, for no assault of the proletariat has succeeded since then in reestablishing marxism. This is only another way of saying that capital has succeeded in establishing its real domination. To accomplish this, capital had to absorb the movement that negates it, the proletariat, and establish a unity in which the proletariat is merely an object of capital. This unity can be destroyed only by a crisis, such as those described by Marx. It follows that all forms of working–class political organization have disappeared. In their place, gangs confront one another in an obscene competition, veritable rackets rivaling each other in what they peddle but identical in their essence.

The existence of the gangs derives therefore from the tendency of capital to absorb its contradictions, from its movement of negation and from its reproduction in a fictitious form. Capital denies, or tends to deny, the basic principles on which it erects itself; but, in reality, it revives them under a fictitious form. The gang is a clear expression of this duality:

the boss who commands = caricature of the traditional individual (and his clique)

the collective form = caricature of community based on common interests

The movement of negation is thus reabsorbed in the gang, which is the realization of appearance. The gang also fulfills another requirement of capital: it replaces all natural or human presuppositions with presuppositions determined by capital.

In its external relations, the political gang tends to mask the existence of the clique, since it must seduce in order to recruit. It adorns itself in a veil of modesty so as to increase its power. When the gang appeals to external elements through journals, reviews, and leaflets, it thinks that it has to speak on the level of the mass in order to be understood. It talks about the immediate because it wants to mediate. Considering everyone outside the gang an imbecile, it feels obliged to publish banalities and bullshit so as to successfully seduce them. In the end, it seduces itself by its own bullshit and it is thereby absorbed by the surrounding milieu. However, another gang will take its place, and its first theoretical wailings will consist of attributing every misdeed and mistake to those who have preceded it, looking in this way for a new language so as to begin again the grand practice of seduction; in order to seduce, it has to appear to be different from the others.

Once within the gang (or any type of business) the individual is tied to it by all the psychological dependencies of capitalist society. If he shows any capacities they are exploited immediately without the individual having had a chance to master the “theory” that he has accepted. In exchange, he is given a position in the ruling clique, he is made a petty leader. If he fails to show capacities, an exchange takes place all the same; between his admission to the gang and his duty to diffuse its position. Even in those groups that want to escape the social givens, the gang mechanism nevertheless tends to prevail because of the different degrees of theoretical development among the members who make up the grouping. The inability to confront theoretical questions independently leads the individual to take refuge behind the authority of another member, who becomes, objectively, a leader, or behind the group entity, which becomes a gang. In his relations with people outside the group the indi-

vidual uses his membership to exclude others and to differentiate himself from them, if only – in the final analysis – so as to guard himself against recognition of his own theoretical weaknesses. To belong in order to exclude, that is the internal dynamic of the gang; which is founded on an opposition, admitted or not, between the exterior and the interior of the group. Even an informal group deteriorates into a political racket, the classic case of theory becoming ideology.

The desire to belong to a gang comes from the wish to be identified with a group that embodies a certain degree of prestige, theoretical prestige for intellectuals and organizational prestige for so-called practical men. Commercial logic also enters into “theoretical” formation. With a growing mass of ideological commodity-capital to realize, it becomes necessary to create a deep motivation so people will buy commodities. For this the best motivation is: learn more, read more, in order to be above, in order to be different from the mass. Prestige and exclusion are the signs of competition in all its forms; and so also among these gangs, which must vaunt their originality, their prestige, in order to attract notice. This is why the cult of the organization and the glorification of the peculiarities of the gang develop. From that point on, it’s no longer a question of defending a “theory,” but of preserving an organizational tradition (cf. the PCI and its idolatry of the Italian left).¹

Theory is also often acquired for use in political maneu-

1 Amadeo Bordiga and the theoreticians close to him were known as the Italian communist left. More precisely, “the Italian left” refers to the Italian left-communist tradition: the left opposition in the Italian Socialist Party (1910/12, 1921), the direction of the Communist Party of Italy (1921–24), the left opposition in the Communist Party of Italy (1924–26), the left-communist fraction in Belgium and France (Bilan and Prometeo: 1926–43), the reconstruction of Italian left communism (Battaglia Comunista, Prometeo 1944–52), and the International Communist Party (Il programma comunista: 1952–70; Bordiga died in 1970). (Translator’s note)