Palliative Marxism or Imminent Critique

Włodzimierz Brus and the Limits to Classical Marxist Political Economy

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> 'There are ... reforming Communists, and then there are the real Communists'.
> Vyacheslav Molotov (quoted in Cohen 1985:131).

In 1956 communists North of the Limpopo discovered, to their horror, that 'he who had been the leader of progressive humanity, the inspiration of the world, the father of the Soviet people, the master of science and learning, the supreme military genius, and altogether the greatest genius in history was in reality a paranoiac torturer, a mass murderer, and a military ignoramus who had brought the Soviet state to the verge of disaster' (Kołakowski 1978:450). The decade which followed was to witness an important although inconclusive challenge to the orthodoxy and authority of the once omniscient Soviet Union; a development characterised by increasingly heterogenous relations within Comecon, and by a series of bold but ultimately unsuccessful attempts at economic reform (Swain & Swain 1993:127).

Although the 'communist' countries had begun to reform aspects of their political and economic systems since 1953, Khrushchev's 'secret speech' served as a catalyst for a 'second wave' of reform which began in 1956 and lasted, in various guises and with considerable national variations, until roughly 1968. This 'second wave' can be said to fall between the extreme orthodoxy which characterised the generally rather minor and technical 'adjustments' and 'rectifications' of the 1953-1956 'Thaw', and the 'Normalisation' of economic and political relations in the latter half of the 1960s.

Whilst this period has received considerable attention from social scientists interested in the dynamics and limits of 'reform communism', these studies have generally focused on economic and political changes which occurred on a regional or national-specific basis, and

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have tended to ignore the actual content of the dissidents' proposals.[1] Insofar as the arguments of the post-war 'dissidents', or 'orthodox revisionists' as they are sometimes called, are considered, it is generally believed that although they were genuinely committed to the classical marxist tradition, the 'inner logic' of their arguments soon carried them 'beyond the frontiers of Marxism'.[2] Most of the post-1970 reformers, by contrast, are believed to have rejected the classical (or any) marxist tradition, and to have legitimised their proposals by appealing to nationalist or religious sentiment rather than by attempting to democratise communism.[3]

There is some justification for this neglect. Although politically interesting, critiques of the commandist method of planning, even in the late-1970s, were often extremely naïve and were in any case hardly novel by Western standards.[4] For the most part, the debates were cast in excessively technocratic (and usually extremely dull) terms, and generally failed to provide any measured and substantive alternative to the systems they were opposing. Solutions offered seldom brought the conceptual foundations of classical marxist economic theory into question, and, even when they involved extensive use of the market mechanism, were usually depicted as technocratic adjustments to an essentially rational process which was leading, ultimately, to a stage of complete socialisation and hence communism.

The emphasis on technocratic 'adjustments' was not accidental, as it followed from the generally anti-political nature of the terms in which the debate was cast. It was still not possible to imagine that a socialist or communist society would be beset with internally generated antagonisms which would require institutional mediation. For this reason, 'economic' and 'political' decisions were typically treated as mutually exclusive categories, with only 'non-political' reform being tolerated. These reform models were simply a means to achieve an ultimate goal, and were not meant to bring the identity of the goal itself into question. In structure, they often reproduced the distinction introduced by Marx and Engels between 'utopian' and 'scientific' methods of inquiry.[5]

Although one must be careful not to overemphasise the influence of classical marxist theory on concrete developments in Comecon, there are two (related) reasons for this essentially anti-political approach to economic debates. Firstly, as the founders of classical marxism had argued, the end of commodity production was supposed to mean the end of political economy and the shift from political decision making to an essentially administrative order. Although we should not pretend

that the 'communist' countries allocated neutrally – they operated on a highly politicised (and often personalised) system of reward and punishment – it was widely believed that the essential contradictions which underpinned capitalist allocation had been overcome. For all their inadequacies, Brus' reform proposals are unique in that they begin by rejecting this approach, and seek to demonstrate that fetishism (and ideology in general), and contradictory relations between particular interest groups, will continue to exist under socialism. In the main, however, economic debates in this period were presented in explicitly non-political terms. At best they entailed 'adjustments', 'rectification', and the 'correction of past mistakes', slogans which remained faithful to the stalinist belief in the 'perfection' of socialism. Partial exceptions to this include the Yugoslavian model, the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism in Hungary, and the short lived reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

A more important reason for the anti-political terms of the reform debates is entirely political. As writers like Claude Lefort and Hannah Arendt have shown, totalitarianism necessitates the denial of any division or contingency in social relations. Identities (in the terms of the totalitarian imaginary) are reflections of a transhistorical truth – History, the Nation, Race, etc.; they cannot arise out of the interaction and conflict between autonomous interest groups or sectors of society. In the communist tradition, this finds expression in Marx's vehement opposition to the heterogeneity of commodity production, which he regarded as a threat to the symbolic integration of society. Not only does it entail the decentralisation of important decisions to the level of autonomous production units, but, as subsequent generations of marxists discovered, it undermines the dependence of these units on the central authorities. By giving productive units the political freedom to make their own decisions about costing, price strategies, product mix, marketing strategies and employment practices, one is effectively subverting *both* the symbolic and the real power of the Communist Party. Attempts to reform the economy were tolerated only to the extent that they did not undermine the political monopoly of the Communist Party in power.

We should not, however, simply cast the works of the East European 'revisionists' aside. Although marred by an almost uncritical adherence to classical doctrines of marxist political economy, it is often possible to provide a symptomatic reading which reveals, in the practical state – to use Althusser and Balibar's phrase – the operation of an entirely alien and subversive set of assumptions concerning the

operation of institutions like the market and of economic coordination in general; assumptions which are, strictly speaking, 'unthinkable' within the theoretical constraints of these texts. This article is concerned to do just that. By examining the work of Włodzimierz Brus, one of the most important and influential of the post-war reformers, we suggest that it is possible to trace in Brus' work evidence of a problematic which is subversive to the naturalism and fatalism of classical marxism, and which contains important elements of what might loosely be described as a post-classical marxist understanding of political economy. To make sense of Brus' formulations, however, it is necessary first to situate his work in the context of the post-war Polish economy.

Gomułka's Poland

Władsław Gomułka had been arrested and removed from his post as General Secretary of the Polish Workers Party in September 1948, ostensibly because of his willingness to explore the possibility of a specifically Polish road to socialism. In a country in which national independence was often taken to mean freedom from Russian intervention,[6] this sentiment appealed to many ordinary Poles, and it is perhaps because of this that the Communist Party, now called the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR), responded to the challenge of Poznań by restoring Gomułka to power in October. In these circumstances, Gomułka emerged as a 'liberal' within the Party – opposed to the Natolin (pro-Stalin) faction of the Party, represented by people like Ochab (Bierut's successor), Rokossovsky, Zenon Nowak, Mijal and Gierek (who joined the Party in July 1956) – and his rehabilitation was regarded as the only way to prevent the spread of further revolts without having to resort to a major police crackdown. Having confidently stood up to the Soviet authorities (and narrowly averted a full-scale Soviet invasion), Gomułka proclaimed that the period of Soviet mastery 'has passed into the irrevocable past'. In a frank admission to the delegates to the Eighth Plenum of the PZPR, Gomułka went on to claim that:

> The causes of the Poznań tragedy and of the profound dissatisfaction of the entire working class are to be found in ourselves, in the leadership of the Party, in the government ... The loss of the credit of confidence of the working class means the loss of the moral basis of power. It is possible to govern

> the country even in such conditions. But then this will be bad government, for it must be based on bureaucracy, on infringing the rule of law, on violence.

Significantly, Gomułka accepted that 'The road of democratisation is the only road leading to the construction of the best model of socialism in our conditions', although he qualified this by insisting that 'Our Party is taking its place at the head of the process of democratisation and only the Party ... can guide this process'.[7] However, despite the popular support for the political reforms which Gomułka promised to introduce, it was the perception that he was willing to stand up and defend Polish national traditions that provides the key to the short-lived popularity which both he and the Party enjoyed in 1956.[8] This, coupled to the tight grip on power which the PZPR would increasingly exert, helps explain why most opposition was channelled through the Communist Party, rather than through movements which outrightly rejected communism, as would be the case in the decades which followed.

Initially the authorities appeared to succumb to popular sentiment, and, at the Seventh Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee, the PZPR accepted many of the demands for the democratisation of the economy. After making the obligatory claim that the failures in the execution of the Six-Year Plan (1949-55) had been the result of 'the violation of the Leninist norms of party life and the principles of socialist democracy', and after attributing this to the 'effects of the cult of the individual and the lack of collective leadership in economic policy', the Party went on to discuss the source of economic problems in Poland. In terms which owed more to the spirit of the day than to an ideological commitment to reform, the failures in the implementation of economic policy were attributed to 'excessive centralisation and bureaucratization in economic planning and management methods', and to a 'lack of candour in economic life, in the stultification of initiative, and an inadequate development of material incentives combined with a lack of democratic control by the working masses over the activity of state and economic administration'. Most importantly for our concerns, the Six-Year Plan's failure to utilise 'rational economics' was singled out for criticism. (Although this latter term should not be read to imply an unqualified acceptance of the law of value *per se*, it does imply the need to extend its operation beyond the narrow sphere of the labour and consumer goods markets.)

In September 1956 a commission headed by Piotr Jaroszewicz, the Deputy Prime Minister, was established to consider and where possi-

ble support the proposals for worker self-management. Uniting for the first time the various political advocates of workplace democracy and a number of key socialist economists – notably Brus, the then head of the Economic Research Centre of the State Commission for Economic Planning, Edward Lipiński, the president of the Polish Economic Society, and Michał Kalecki, the only non-Party member of the commission.[9]

Encouraged by the widespread and fairly spontaneous growth of the worker council movement, and by the hopes ignited by the reinstatement of Gomułka, the commission drafted three pieces of legislation. The first was concerned to increase the scope for enterprise management by reducing the number of centrally-planned indicators so as to give enterprises a greater say in their choice of product mix, employment and wage ceilings. In line with this, enterprises would be given the right to make certain types of minor investments on their own. The second law allowed enterprises to incorporate some of their profits into a Workforce Fund, which could be distributed within the enterprise in the form of wages. Finally, and most importantly, the commission drafted a law on workers' councils. This was unique in the Soviet bloc, in that it gave the councils the power 'to manage, on behalf of the workforce, the enterprise which is owned by all the people'. However these laws did not reflect accurately the mood of the PZPR at the time, and the fact that they were approved owed more to their desire to appease the radical factory workers and intellectuals than to any *volte face* on behalf of Gomułka.

The main actors in the commission were Brus, Jakubowicz and Kalecki. One of its aims was to find a way to integrate worker initiative from below with central planning; harnessing the creative energies of the masses at the level of the factory floor, but ensuring that the powers of self-management did not undermine the powers and functions of the central authorities. At the same time, an Economic Council was established, ostensibly to advise government on possible economic reforms, but with the intention of giving voice to the democratic aspirations of the self-management movement.

Although it survived until 1962, the Economic Council was only active for two years. Its most important proposals – published in June 1957 as the *Theses on Some of the Proposed Changes of the Economic Model*[10] – outlined three general principles for the socialist sector. These envisaged the use of a combination of incentives, economic instruments and compulsory directives in order to fulfil national plan targets; provisions to democratise decision-making by

allowing a wide range of forces – including the workforce, workers' councils, local self-management and the Sejm – to participate in the drawing up of central plans; and, finally, the replacement of bureaucratic central industry boards by workplace associations or trusts.[11] The main aim of the *Theses* was to find a balance between the use of economic instruments and enterprise autonomy, and the retention of a central planned economy (particularly the central control of investments and prices). Despite close Party control, and considerable internal debate over the extent and aim of these principles, it was clear that the Council envisaged fairly extensive reforms: proposing that central industry boards be reorganised in the first half of 1958, and calling for an extensive price reform of production supplies by the end of 1958. However, although the government paid lip service to the Council, no rules were actually drawn up to facilitate these changes. Clearly seen as a threat to the autocratic style of rule which characterised the post-1956 Gomułka government, the advice of the Council was soon disregarded and the Council itself was not reappointed in 1962. As Brus comments, although the interconnectedness of political and economic reform had initially been recognised, 'After October 1956 the political load of the economic reform turned from an asset into a liability'. As such, the 'illusions cherished by numerous party intellectuals (including myself) with regard to Gomułka's own reformist intentions in the political sphere' were shattered.[12] The workers' councils suffered a similarly fate. In May 1957 they were placed under the direct control of the enterprise trade union, and in December 1958 were subordinated to the newly formed 'Conference of Workers' Self-management'.[13]

In general, Gomułka's liberalism, and the atmosphere of freedom and national pride which emerged in the wake of the 1956 events, proved extremely limited and short-lived. By its Third Congress in March 1959, the PZPR had effectively ceased to criticise stalinism and had clearly backed down from its earlier opposition to Soviet interference in Poland's domestic affairs. In the decade which followed, the Party tightened its grip over Polish society, and those reforms which had been won were undermined. Gomułka increasingly abandoned the 'liberal' wing of the PZPR, and came to regard the 'revisionists' as a hostile enemy, accusing them of wanting to 'weaken the powers of the dictatorship of the proletariat' by granting freedoms to the enemies rather than the advocates of socialism.[14] In order to isolate the 'revisionists', Gomułka attempted to capitalise on anti-semitic feeling in Poland, characterising them as part of an inter-

national Zionist conspiracy to undermine Polish society.[15] Brus' ideas would also come under attack in East Germany – in which he had had some influence until 1957 – whilst Lange would be publicly targeted at an 'anti-revisionist' conference in Moscow.[16]

For a few years after 1956 living standards rose, and this allowed Gomułka to consolidate the power of the PZPR and to head off pressure for economic reform. However this was merely a temporary breathing space – primarily as a result of delayed returns on earlier investments – and, as was the case in other Eastern European countries, the rate of economic growth slowed substantially in the 1960s. Life was particularly harsh, and, according to Brus, annual increases in real wages were 'not even statistically important'.[17] In typical Comecon fashion, Poland concentrated its economic resources in a few key industrial areas, as a result of which they neglected the production of consumer goods. This contributed towards a general decline in living standards and further alienated the régime from its citizens. (In the 'Great Leap Forward' of the 1970s, it would also lead to a very substantial foreign debt.) Their inability to increase the output of consumer goods served to further undermine the legitimacy of the PZPR, and was a major reason why the hopes which Gomułka had once ignited were so rapidly doused. Although this obsessive commitment to industrialisation was openly criticised by Gomułka's economic advisors, their advice was almost completely overlooked. As Myant comments, this put the final nail into the coffin of the Polish Spring, and 'once again, over-ambitious economic policies were coming from an autocratic leadership that refused to listen to its critics'.[18] After broaching the limits of the system, in short, an initially 'reform' orientated leadership soon chose to pursue a typically 'conservative' program once it had managed to restore Party control.

However it is not so much the history of Poland in the 1960s that concerns us as the arguments and proposals of the 'revisionists'. Although the invasion of Hungary managed to silence the oppositional movements, the concerns and aspirations which initially gave rise to the uprisings in Central Europe were never satisfactorily addressed. In Poland, the authorities were never sufficiently repressive to keep all oppositional forces under control, and for most of the decade 'revisionist' and increasingly 'dissident' voices continued to be heard. This relative intellectual openness is important, for it provided the space for socialist economists like Lange, Lipiński, Kalecki, Rakowski, and Brus to develop the proposals for economic reform that they had begun to explore in the Economic Council.[19] It was also

a period in which marxist (and neo-marxist) philosophy flourished, as evidenced by the work of Kołakowski, Bauman, Schaff, Baczko, Pomian, Zimand, Bielińska and others.[20] At this point, let us consider Brus' reform proposals.

Włodzimierz Brus

Włodzimierz Brus is best known for his work as a political economist and as a member of an advisory body to the government in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[21] Trained originally at the Free University of Warsaw and then in the Soviet Union, Brus occupied the chair of Political Economy at the Institute of Social Science, which was connected to the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party in the early 1950s. Between 1954 and 1968 Brus served as Professor of Political Economy at the University of Warsaw and headed a department for economic research in the Planning Commission. Between 1957 and 1963 Brus served as vice-chairman of the State Economic Council, during which time he gained a reputation as a staunch supporter of the experiments in worker self-management. In this period, Brus worked closely with Professor Lange and, together with Kalecki, designed many of the Economic Reforms of 1956-57. Labelled a 'revisionist', Brus resigned from the Party at the end of 1967, and was expelled from the University the following year. In 1972 Brus left Poland to take up an academic position at Glasgow and, in 1973, at Oxford, where he went on to become Professor of Modern Russian and East European Studies.

In discussing Brus, we have not attempted to evaluate his most recent work, in which he departs completely from the marxist tradition (in the broadest possible sense).[22] Instead, we have focused on his three major books in the period following the dissolution of the Economic Council: *The Market in a Socialist Economy* (1962); *The Economics and Politics of Socialism* (a collection of essays penned between 1966 and 1969); and *Socialist Ownership and Political Systems* (1975). Although the latter text was published in the mid-1970s, with the exception of its cautious endorsement of multi-party politics – something hinted at but not developed explicitly in his earlier discussion of political pluralism – it is essentially concerned to restate and develop the type of proposals which emerged in the aftermath of the 1956 revolts. Although we have made use of his many other articles and books written during the past three and a half decades, Brus'

work after *Socialist Ownership* does not admit to easy periodization, although it bears witness to his ongoing attempt to grapple with the problems of socialist economics whilst being forced to recognise the limitations of his own model of a 'regulated market'.

Brus was well aware of the economic problems facing the socialist economies in the 1960s. The generally impressive levels of post-war development had not been sustained, and the central planning apparatuses were proving unable to come to terms with the complexity of the economic systems which they were supposed to control. Whereas a simple increase in inputs had once sufficed to sustain the necessary levels of growth, it was now increasingly necessary to make the actual productive process more efficient.[23] In more general terms, it become necessary to move from extensive to intensive growth. In his later work, Brus described this 'loss of dynamism' as 'conservative modernisation', by which is meant an initially impressive level of growth which soon slackens off as the method in which the factors of production are employed is inadequate to their intensive usage, and after which continued investments hamper rather than facilitate growth. (Importantly, Brus later came to regard this tendency as one which is inherent in the socialist modernisation process itself.[24]) Moreover, Brus was willing to acknowledge many of the problems which bourgeois economists like Ludwig von Mises and Frederick von Hayek had raised in their criticisms of socialism:[25] the lack of competition, the fact that egalitarian tendencies in distribution can undermine the need for and effectiveness of incentives, the danger of creating a new and even more powerful form of monopoly, bureaucratization and the reduction of the powers of the consumer in the face of giant planning authorities.[26]

In this historical and social context, Brus began to develop his reform model by affirming the classical marxist belief that communism is destined to emerge out of the socialisation of the productive forces and the concentration of ownership in developed capitalism. It is only under socialism, we are told, that it becomes possible to 'tap the gushing sources of economic progress',[27] and in this sense the overthrowal of capitalist relations of ownership and production is an indispensable prerequisite for communism. However, Brus questions the idea that real democratic relations are only possible after the onset of communism, and stops just short of suggesting that it is only by encouraging democratic participation that post-capitalist relations of production might emerge. As a result, it is only possible to have 'centralised planned economic management and the blossoming of the

creative activity of the masses' if we accept that 'both of these requirements spring from the same root and must be satisfied jointly'. Without fully anticipating the consequences of this argument, Brus stresses the necessity of developing this common 'root'.

> At a deeper level, mere execution of economic tasks to promote active participation in production requires a system of management based on a thoroughgoing economic democracy. This democracy should guarantee each economic branch a wide area of independence in its own sphere of operations and also a real influence on general matters. Centralisation, on the other hand, means something else; the concentration of decision-making at the centre to the detriment of the lower levels.[28]

It is this concern to link the construction of communism to the facilitation of democratic participation in the economy that Brus inherited from the factory self-management movement in 1956. Before we can assess the broader consequences of this, it is necessary to spell out Brus' proposals in some depth. Like most of the 'orthodox revisionists', Brus wanted to extend the operation of money-commodity relations beyond the narrow sphere of labour and consumer markets in order to break from the extreme centralisation which characterised the centrally planned economies. Central to this, though, is the claim that despite the inexorable contradiction between the market and the plan as *principal* mechanisms of economic regulation – for this is what distinguishes capitalism from socialism – it is wrong to believe that these mechanisms are in themselves mutually exclusive. Rejecting what he describes as 'market socialism' – and here he is referring specifically to the post-1954 Yugoslavian model, and *not* to the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian reform attempts in the 1960s, of which his model was an important source of inspiration[29] – Brus draws a distinction between 'a system where the market has become the principal regulator (even though there might be state ownership) and the operation of the market within an overall planning system'.[30] It is in this latter sense that we must understand the nature of Brus' reform model. Markets are to be subordinate to the plan, and their usage is not a retreat from the traditional socialist demand for macroeconomic regulatory control. For reasons outlined below, Brus envisages an essentially functional relationship in which the market is used as a means through which to fulfil the objectives of the plan: 'One can visualise the use of the market as a better tool than direct target planning for achieving the planned objectives'.[31] The problem, in short, is one of balance: how to ensure the correct mix between plan and mar-

ket in order to achieve economic and political objectives which have been determined at a macro-level.

The novelty of Brus' work lies in this attempt to extend the operation of the value form under socialism, not simply as a means to secure a more efficient economic management of economic resources but also as a tool through which to facilitate increased popular participation in economic activity. However, although Brus accepts that the value form will continue to operate under socialism, he insists that its operation is more centrally linked to *khozraschet* (self-accounting) than to fully fledged commodity relations, and that through the central determination of economic parameters (and sometimes directives) the dependence of the market on prices and private ownership can be overcome. This, Brus concludes, will be superior to both the extreme centralisation of the Soviet-type economies and the over-decentralisation of the Lange and Yugoslavian models. If our analysis of the vicissitudes in Brus' work is correct, however, it is his attempt to conceptualise the market in these terms that provides the background for both the classical marxist limits and the post-classical marxist potential of his analysis.

From 'Directive' To 'Parametric' Planning

Although he subsequently came to question many of these assumptions, Brus' work in the period under review is characterised by its almost uncritical endorsement of the rationalistic conception of planning found in the classical marxist texts, even to the point where he insists that this is based on an entirely neutral process of scientific calculation. Here Brus was influenced by the model of a 'simulated market' developed in the 1930s by Fred Taylor and Oskar Lange, in which it was argued that the price mechanism might be utilised under socialism so as to ensure rational allocation. Taylor and Lange believed that the prices of primary goods prices could be set by a central planning board, and would thus be 'technically determined' rather than market based. Drawing on Walrus' discussion of *tâtonnements*, or trials leading to equilibrium, they envisaged a situation in which enterprises would compete with one another, using these 'given' prices as a guide to action. Enterprises would thus have to respect the 'parametric function of prices' – and therefore operate efficiently – allowing the central planners to ensure that markets cleared by raising or lowering prices to correct market distortions.[32] In a similar vein, Brus

accepted that it was possible for a central planning authority to determine accurate prices (even in the absence of a 'free' market), and accepted Taylor and Lange's depiction of the price mechanism as a technically conditioned parametric guide. This is significant for, as Brus put it, it meant that 'insofar as the economist concerns himself ... with the theory and technique of programming, he is not directly concerned with social problems. The theory and technique of programming is socially neutral'.[33] This 'hyper-rationalist' conception of planning is no different to that proposed originally by Marx and Engels,[34] and is central to Brus' attempt to introduce a type of market into a planned economy.

Having drawn a distinction between the operation of the law of value and the unrestricted employment of money-commodity forms, Brus then attempts to delineate the role of the market in a socialist economy by identifying three 'spheres' in which the market can operate: the consumer goods market; the labour market; and the market between separate enterprises and between enterprises and the planners.[35] Although Brus accepts that the first two spheres should be opened up to a form of money-commodity regulation – although this should not be taken to imply a labour or capital market in the strict sense of the term – his support for the 'third' sphere is always highly qualified, and is dependent on the idea that commodity production (and the law of value) be subordinated to the dictates of the plan.[36]

But how will the centre use the 'regulated market' to 'steer' decentralised enterprises onto the 'general course' defined by the plan? On this Brus offers only general (and rather evasive) guidelines, all of which point to the limits to enterprise autonomy in his model.[37] The key consideration here is the need to ensure that the centre is able to determine the parameters within which enterprises make their economic decisions by manipulating the signals to which markets (usually) respond. The operation of the law of value is thus not made dependent on the existence of the competitive capitalist market, and (under socialism) 'cannot be separated from attempts to control the output structure so that supply and demand balance at price ratios which correspond to value ratios'.[38] In this way, Brus rejects Mises and Hayek's contention that the law of value is necessarily dependent on commodity forms and private property, and insists instead that the law of value 'is not an absolute, general regulator of output and exchange proportions. It retains this role only within limits determined by autonomous decisions at the level of the central authority and primarily by decisions on investments and on certain current preferences'.[39]

The consequences of this approach to the law of value are easily summarised: Macroeconomic policies will be 'transmitted' to the lower elements of the economy through financial parameters rather than orders and physical constraints. These parameters, or 'centrally determined market magnitudes', include moral persuasion, wage levels, credit policies, interest rates, taxes, and, above all, prices. At the same time, macroeconomic decisions will continue to be based on 'direct calculus', calculated on the basis of 'physical magnitudes' rather than market criteria.[40] In this sense, prices need not reflect directly either the scarcity of supply or the relative intensity of the consumers' wants, and will have a purely 'parametric role'. They will be little more than a 'guide for the sub-systems', and will assist the centre to control what Brus describes as 'the objective functions of the outlay function of the economic units at the lower levels of the pyramid'.[41] When these 'steering mechanisms' fail to achieve their desired objectives, however, the centre will still have the power to intervene directly in the affairs of the enterprise in question. The relationship, once again, is an essentially functional (and ultimately teleological) one. The law of value will be allowed to operate within certain limits *so as to achieve the goals of the plan*, but without ever undermining the autonomy and powers of the central authorities.

In making these arguments, Brus rejects any attempt to provide an *a priori* account of the *modus operandi* of particular institutional arrangements, and seeks instead to examine the ways in which their identity is determined by the context in which they operate. In a subsequent debate with the editor of *Critique*, Brus spelt this out in some detail.

> The market is a social and economic institution. The meaning and scope of this institution cannot be judged outside the prevailing system of relations of production. From this point of view I think that I am a very orthodox Marxist, more orthodox than Hillel Tickten who talks about the market 'in general'. One must try to put it into a particular context. The relations of exchange never determine the socio-economic character of the system. They are secondary to the fundamental relations of production, which in turn are linked to ownership and, in particular situations, to the political system as a socioeconomic (and not simply legal) category cannot be defined without reference to the political institutions. It follows therefore that one should not transplant the features and consequences of (for instance) the market under capitalism to the market under (let us call it cautiously) 'existing socialism' where property relations, wealth, income distribution, organisation of the economic process are, or ought to be, different.[42]

It is here that we see the first significant signs of tension in Brus' problematic. For if it is true that the identity of institutions depends on

the socio-historical context in which they operate – and this includes political institutions! – then we have moved a long way from the positivity underlying the classical marxist concept of history. Pushed to the limits, and this is something which Brus was never able to do, it is possible to discern a substantive break from classical marxism in these formulations. Once social relations are understood as textually dependant, they cease to function as epiphenomenon. Instead, they are embedded within a set of symbolic relations which secure the conditions of their existence and reproduction. On this reading, socialism itself becomes a contingent and therefore political construct, rather than a manifestation of History's progressive unfolding.

At this point it will be useful to consider the epistemological premises which underscore Brus' analysis. In so doing, we will return to the second of the two main advantages which Brus claims for his model of socialism: its ability to transcend the general/particular distinction in order to facilitate the convergence of *homo socialis* and *homo œconomicus*.

Brus' Epistemology

Brus' reform model must be understood within the context of the classical marxist conception of the transition to communism as outlined in *Capital* and the *Anti-Dühring*. As he (frequently) reminds his readers, his 'methodological position' is that of 'Marxist historical materialism' which finds expression in 'the conviction that the evolution of society is subject to laws at the basis of which lie the processes of development of productive forces'.[43] However Brus' use of classical marxist theory is by no means restricted to this latter problematic, and it is possible to identify the operation of a second, embryonic, set of assumptions about the relationship between power and social relationships which produce 'practical effects' at odds with the problematic in which they are operationalised. In order to make this claim, it is necessary to identify and discuss several additional components of Brus' analysis.

Much of the stimulus to the development of marxist theory occurred as a result of the 'gap' between Marx's general predictions and the events which occurred in the twentieth century. The traditional example of this *supplement* is the leninist vanguard Party, but we might just as well include the attempt by the Bolsheviks to militarise labour in this category. In both cases, the question that needed

to be asked was the same: Given the failure of the process of socialisation, how do we ensure that people actually act as the 'single social labour force' predicted by Marx? In many senses, Brus' discussion of decentralisation is an attempt to provide a solution to this problem. For the most part, Brus' defence of decentralisation is connected intimately to the classical marxist conception of the transition to communism, which sees in the socialisation of the productive forces and the processes of production the development of a higher form of economic rationality and social consciousness out of which communism will (ultimately) 'evolve'.[44] (It is with this in mind that Brus makes his claim to the effect that socialisation is a process and not an event which corresponds to the nationalisation of the means of production.[45]) However, although these formulations could quite easily be interpreted as a desire to 'perfect socialism' – and many of Brus' comments suggest that this is all that he has in mind – they do not exhaust the possible readings of his work. Interpreted critically, these supplementary concepts provide an important prism through which to examine the way in which the structure of Brus' argument not only anticipates a considerable scope for political intervention in the transition to socialism, but forces us to reconsider the classical marxist understanding of this transition. To do this, we need to tease out and explore two aspects of Brus' discussion of the political advantages of the 'regulated market'. The first concerns the prospects for worker self-government which this facilitates, whilst the second relates to the development of the *homo socialis*, or new communist man, predicted by the classical marxists.

Well aware of the disempowering effects of administrative directives from above, Brus' defence of (some) decentralisation is concerned to increase the opportunities for ordinary people to manage their day to day economic affairs. Building on the proposals made by the factory council movement, Brus argued that administrative directives left little space for independent decision making. In order to talk about meaningful self-management there must be a 'field of decision' at the level of the enterprise. And this, Brus stresses, is linked to the extension of commodity-money relations, 'for it is impossible to extend the areas of an enterprise's decision-making without simultaneously increasing the role of the market'.[46]

> Democratic centralism and the recognition of the wide role of economic incentives, are mutually dependent, since the initiative 'from below' can be reconciled with the priorities of general economic goals only if economic measures for affecting this initiative are employed as a matter of principle. By

> uniting these two aspects into a single whole, the decentralised model has a vital significance for the development of socialist self-government and hence in overcoming 'alienation'.[47]

Despite the restrictive terms in which it is framed, this is a very valuable point. As with other aspects of Brus' discussion, however, its importance is undermined by the model of historical process into which it is cast. Marx's most central critique of commodity production is the fact that it replaced 'directly social' labour with individual labour; institutionalising a form of heterogeneity which is fundamentally at odds with the vision of communism as an homogenous body politic in which the distinction between state and society had been overcome. For economic *and* moral reasons, communism is supposed to restore the unity of the social by 'returning' to a new (sublated) form of 'directly social' labour.[48] Although Marx's 'late' work does not necessarily ground the convergence of *homo œconomicus* and *homo socialis* on any overt anthropological claims, this convergence implies a corresponding transformation in the consciousness of communist men and women. Seen in this light, it is perhaps not accidental that the attempt to facilitate a degree of self-management and decentralisation is presented as a means with which to alter the way in which workers relate to one another and to the productive units in which they work. By giving workers a say in decision making, Brus argues, we are likely to create a creed 'of genuine co-management of the means of production' which will help to overcome feelings of alienation and in so doing will 'release' the initiative of people who would otherwise feel no responsibility for the success of the enterprises in which they work. Decentralisation is thus a 'politico-economic' mechanism with which to ensure that people develop 'the necessary attitude of responsibility for public ownership'.[49] Decentralisation of this nature will create the preconditions for a socialist democracy by facilitating the transition to a situation in which 'the working man ceases to treat his production task as a private affair'.[50] Although Brus would no doubt baulk at the Bolsheviks' attempt to decommodify labour through military means, the general contours of his argument suggest very little deviation from the type of society envisaged by Lenin in which labour become nothing more than a 'habit' and would thus be performed voluntarily.[51] Not only does Brus envisage a transformation towards a socialist consciousness as a result of this combination of macroeconomic management and decentralisation but, most importantly, he anticipates that this coordination will

provide the basis for a fundamental transformation of the state *form* under socialism. If successful, Brus insists, this latter transformation will lead (ultimately) to the stateless society known as communism:

> The general direction of development is clear; the system for the exercise of state power must evolve so that there is a constant real growth in the influence of society on the politico-economic decisions at all levels and an increase in social self-government in all areas of life, especially in economic activities. *This is the fundamental sense of the traditional Marxist thesis that the state, as a socially alienated apparatus of coercion, will gradually wither away.*[52]

This is the first of two possible readings of Brus' epistemology. Although his understanding of socialist economics differs from those of the classical marxists, at the end of the day Brus' reform model is no less teleological, and is compatible with the general contours of the classical marxist problematic. Here we might ask whether, despite Brus' claim that a form of self-management is likely to alter the relations of production and lower the costs of supervision in the workplace, his problematic allows for the possibility that this might facilitate anything other than a predetermined socialist consciousness? Similarly, we might ask whether, despite the close correlation between the size of an enterprise and the possibilities for self-management, the negative effects of centralised directives might be overcome without real enterprise autonomy and a substantial freeing of prices?

The debate on decentralisation must, however, also be considered in the light of Brus' general account of the relationship between instruments of macro- and micro-coordination. As in his discussion of markets and plans, Brus stresses that the lower units (enterprises) should remain subordinate to the central authorities. Pointing out that the democratisation of enterprises at the lower level is, at best, a partial solution, which ignores the more pervasive questions of democratisation under socialism – as was the case in the post-1954 reforms in Yugoslavia – Brus insists that 'the solution must be sought, first of all, in *the taking of decisions at the centre*', in the 'genuine democratisation' of the system as a whole.[53] Were the central authorities to abandon their responsibility for macroeconomic and political management, they would simply be contributing towards the 'depoliticisation of the economy'.[54] This will create a society in which the ability of ordinary people to influence the 'sub-systems' of which they are directly part is achieved at the expense of their ability to influence the 'system' itself. Rather than seek to 'depoliticise' the economy, the solution to the question of socialisation needs to be

solved through the democratisation of the central decision-making organs. 'To cast our discussion in the form of a slogan', Brus concludes, 'it is not "depoliticisation of the economy" but "democratisation of politics" that is the correct direction of the process of socialisation of nationalised means of production'.[55]

Brus' stress on the need to democratise the centre is of considerable importance, and should serve as a warning to recent strands of 'democratic-socialist' thought whose struggle to democratise the increasingly fragmented 'elements' of society results in their abandonment of any conception of the need for macro-economic and macro-political transformation; and whose well-intentioned rejection of the operation of an hegelian 'expressive totality' in marxism results in their abandonment of any concept of the totality itself, i.e. of the systemic integration (and system-effects) of all socio-political systems. Typically, those who make a fetish out of the complete relativity of social relations place their trust in the supposedly inherent virtues of 'civil society' – a realm of the social identified in almost complete isolation from the systemic logic of the structure, and which they propose to protect from the malevolent interference of a Leviathan state. To a large extent, this has simply reversed the base-superstructure typology, and does not help us to understand the more important political form of society, or the symbolic relations within which and out of which all social relations are cast.

But how does Brus propose to 'democratise politics', and why is it so important for our discussion of his 'epistemological break' from classical marxism? By exploring this point we get to the heart of Brus' ambiguous relationship to the classical marxist tradition, and identify a second possible reading of his epistemological premises.

Political Pluralism and the Concept of the Political

Central to the classical marxist conception of communism – as is well known – is the idea that there would be no *structurally generated* conflicts in post-capitalist societies. Although neither Marx nor Lenin forbade the existence of several competing parties and interest groups under communism, the assumption of an essentially homogenous and transparent order left no conceptual space for us to understand how these competing groups might function in ways that were not subversive to the logic of historical process upon which their vision of communism is based.[56] (Almost) by default, Brus' defence

of decentralisation, and the need to increase avenues for political participation *in order to achieve the objectives of the plan*, led him to provide such a space.

Although initially rather cautious and vague on this point, Brus soon realised that this need for democratisation went beyond the opening up of space for debate, and that it necessarily required (a form of) multi-partyism which took seriously the distinction between different groups in society. Thus, Brus called for a 'fundamental change' which would facilitate a move 'from totalitarian dictatorship, unrestricted monopoly and uncontrolled power in the hands of a narrow leading élite,' to a system in which government was dependent on society. This, Brus insisted, required

> the creation of a mechanism which permits legal questioning, modification and ultimately rejection of government policy and its replacement by a different policy enjoying the support of the majority. Effective dependence of government on society ... assumes real freedom of speech, freedom of association, the rule of law and, above all, the necessity of periodically seeking a social mandate for power by way of elections in which there are both personal and political alternatives.[57]

This, in turn, implies the destruction of the 'political, organisational, ideological and informational monopoly of a single party'.[58] To 'wait until the masses are mature' until one introduces democracy is a spurious and dangerous approach which 'must be treated as evidence of ignorance or as a disguise to maintain the existing monopoly of power'.[59]

Brus' call for the liberalisation of the political arena is important; however this is not the distinguishing feature of his argument. His concern to link decentralisation to the expansion of powers of self-government is more a reflection of the disappointments of the post-1956 reformers than an original contribution to the debate on socialist possibilities. Where Brus differed from his contemporaries, and where his argument obtains its theoretical novelty, is insofar as he attributes to politics an active and necessary role in the constitution of social identities and relationships. Rather than view political democracy as a sham, as a formalistic ritual that fails to impact on the real processes of history, Brus tentatively attributes to such political practices and institutions a causal efficacy. 'It is no longer the absence of a social basis that destroys the chance of political democratisation', we are told, 'but the lack of political democratisation that threatens the future of the social achievements, and thus *a fortiori*, the possibilities of satisfying the need to enrich them further'.[60] Although it is

possible to present Marx's work in such a way that the development of appropriate relations of production must necessarily precede the development of new forces of production,[61] such a conception of History is of a very different order from that advanced by Brus here. Not only do Brus' formulations imply that the 'social basis' for communism includes far more than just the economic relations and 'habits' (Lenin) of production developed under capitalism, but, more importantly, the terms of Brus' problematic suggest that the identity of a socialist society is itself a contingent construct. Politics, in this sense, implies more than just the removal of 'fetters' to the continued growth of the forces of production. Instead, politics comes to imply meaningful activity (*le politique*), a form of social interaction which not only illuminates the particular manifestation of the real, but which, through its presence, becomes a constitutive component of the social.

In a similar vein, Brus insists that 'the *character* of the state – a political institution, an element of the superstructure – is considered to be a factor determining a basic relation of production: the nature of the ownership of the means of production'.[62] This latter point is important, for it suggests that the state is an actor in its own right, albeit one whose identity is linked to the processes of production, as opposed to an ideal collective capitalist (as depicted in the *Anti-Dühring*) or an instrument of class rule (*The Manifesto of the Communist Party*).[63] And if the state becomes an actor, then it must also be seen as a 'site' of political struggle, as Nicos Poulantzas has shown. Again we find that Brus' problematic implies that it is possible to have meaningful social and political freedoms *prior* to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the onset of communism. In this sense, democracy becomes more than just a supplement introduced to allow socialist relations to mature in a more rational manner. Democracy is a *condition of possibility* for these relations. This approach to politics constitutes the second possible reading of Brus' epistemological premises, and goes well beyond the formulations of many of the more famous Western marxists.

We should not overstate our case here, however, for Brus' 'break' from these elements of the classical marxist tradition is never *sans phrase*, and this 'second reading' is always submerged and subordinated to his more general claims about historical materialism. We need cite only one example to make this point. In the spirit of the classical marxist tradition, Brus argues that parliamentary democracy – linked to 'worker, territorial and cooperative management' and with 'independent trade unions' – will assist the process of socialisa-

tion by allowing the masses to 'learn by their own experience'.[64] Although there is nothing controversial in the attempt to link practical experience in government to the process of self-empowerment, for as long as the direction towards which this process of socialisation is said to be heading is not itself opened to question, the learning process to which Brus refers remains in accordance with the functional relationship between markets and plans so central to his model, and is ultimately little more than a restatement of Lenin's famous distinction between the 'schools' and 'drill-halls' of communism. Once again, politics is reduced to a mechanism with which the degree to which true proletarian interests have actually matured might be *measured*, as opposed to an instrument through which the nature of these interests might be *discovered*. At no stage does Brus provide any independent justification for the validity of the proletariat identity implied in this equation, assuming simply that the aim is to develop institutions and social practices which will facilitate the emergence of this identity. Seen in this light, both markets and instruments of political democracy are once again reduced to functional instruments through which the objectives of the central planners might be achieved. Although, as we have seen, Brus' analysis often suggests a substantial 'break' from classical marxism, it is this latter commitment which restores his fidelity to this tradition. The tensions in Brus' work, in short, are both valuable and important for our understanding of the political economy of socialism, but they should not be confused with a clear 'epistemological break'.

Palliative Marxism or a Break from Marxist Determinism?

If our analysis of Brus' work is correct, its great power and originality stems from his sustained and imaginative engagement with the conceptual horizons of classical marxism. At times astoundingly orthodox, seeking to defend elements of classical marxism which were by no means central to the reform debates of the day, at times astonishing in its willingness to transgress these frontiers – however innocently and perhaps even unwittingly understood – prodding and searching for a model of politics and power better able to accommodate the socialist possibilities he defended vigorously. Although we have drawn attention to the limits of Brus' analysis, and to the presence of competing problematics which underpin his argument and

produce contradictory effects, this does not undermine the relevance of Brus' work. By reading Brus symptomatically, we are able to discern important elements of a post-classical marxist approach to the study of politics and power, and this is of enormous importance to the socialist tradition.

The important elements of this 'second reading' of Brus' epistemological premises can be summarised thus: Whereas the arguments of many Eastern European and Soviet 'dissidents' were essentially palliative, the contradictions in Brus stem from his tentative movement beyond classical marxism. By stressing the 'political preconditions for socialism', Brus has transgressed the confines of classical marxism, for in so doing he has begun to treat the development of democratic conditions as both a condition of possibility *and* an essential part of the definition of socialism itself. Once he concedes the need for decentralisation and for multi-partyism, Brus is forced to acknowledge that it is not enough to overthrow the political and economic powers of the bourgeoisie and to develop the material base to a point where it is possible to sustain socialist relations of production. Instead, the transition to socialism is made dependent on 'the difficult and complex task of developing the socio-political factors necessary for the development of the socialisation of the means of production'.[65]

At one point Brus tackles this point head on. Questioning the universality of the model of causality developed by Marx in the 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Brus suggests that:

> In my opinion, the traditionally accepted relationship between economy and policy as 'base' on the one hand, and 'superstructure' on the other and hence as, 'in the last resort', the determining factor and the determined factor, needs, *with respect to socialism*, fundamental modification. Economy and politics are so intimately intertwined, especially when considered dynamically, that the continued use of the old conceptual apparatus of 'base' and 'superstructure' becomes more and more inadequate.[66]

Brus' analysis, in short, has 'reversed the base-superstructure relationship, as *it derived the character of ownership from the character of power* and thus defined socialist production relations on the basis of the essence of political relations'. This is an important point, for, and despite the temporal qualification, it means that '*the category of productive relations is inseparable under socialism from the way in which power is exercised*'.[67] If our analysis is correct, Brus' comments here go well beyond the terms of the base-superstructure

debate as it was framed in Western Europe – largely as laid down in Althusser's essay on Ideology – and as it developed in Poland at the time; although here the main influence was Stalin's *Marxism and the Problem of Linguistics*, in which the ability of the superstructure to model the base in its own image was first suggested.[68] Brus' analysis clearly suggests that the delineation of these terms is itself problematic, and implies that it is impossible to understand the workings of society if the component parts of the social are presented in functionalist and teleological terms. It is here that the link between Brus and 'post-Marxists' like Ernesto Laclau is most fruitfully made, and in which Brus goes beyond Althusser's concept of determination in the 'last instance'.

Although we have come a long way from the advisory Economic Council set up in 1956, the connection has not, we hope, been lost. Brus' work serves as a testament not only to the rich and valuable 'dissident' or 'orthodox revisionist' marxism of Eastern Europe, but also to the strength of Polish political economy in the 1960s. Whilst it is doubtful whether the price mechanism can be delinked from a system of market competition in the way that Brus suggests, the fact that Brus' formulations accept, explicitly, that the market must be understood in relativist terms, and that its identity is always 'overdetermined' by the context within which it operates, is of enormous interest and continued appeal to those who do not accept the hegemony of capitalist relations of production. For it is only once economic processes are conceived in political (as opposed to naturalistic) terms that it becomes possible to defend a socialism which grants priority to planned systems of economic regulation, and which, in so doing, makes it possible to develop a system in which the values of equality and liberty are made central to all economic (and political) decisions.

NOTES

1. A point well made in Thomas Ołeszczuk, 'Dissident Marxism in Eastern Europe', *World Politics*, 1982. More general overviews of the 'dissidents' can be found in Rudolf Tökes (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1979; Robert Sharlet, 'Dissent and Repression in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe', *International Journal*. 33, 1978.
2. Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*. Volume 3, Reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.465.
3. Kołakowski, *Main Currents*, 3, p.466.
4. In 1976 Ota Šik, Alexandr Dubçek's deputy prime minister until August 1968, wrote a book 'to reveal the truth about the communist power system for all to

know', and, in nearly two hundred pages, managed to prove that 'this system is not a socialist system' (*The Communist Power System*, New York: Praeger, 1976, p.169, p.3). The revelatory tone of Šik's work is characteristic of much of the 'dissident' East European literature: 'My task today is ... to tell the truth about the communist system'; and 'I consider it my duty as a scientist to reveal the true nature of the communist system' (p.170).

5. Hence Rudolf Bahro (writing in the mid-1970s) describes his 'alternative' as one which is 'maturing in the womb of actually existing socialism, and in the industrially developed countries as a whole', and insisted that 'This bears the character of that comprehensive cultural revolution, that transformation of the entire former division of labour, way of life and mentality that Marx and Engels predicted' (*The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, London: Verso, 1977, p.14).
6. Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* London: Granta Books, 1991, p.5.
7. Cited in Flora Lewis, *The Polish Volcano: A Case History of Hope*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1959, pp.221-22.
8. Martin Myant, *Poland: A Crisis for Socialism*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982, p.45.
9. This and the four paragraphs which follow are a summary of the discussion in Tadeusz Kowalik's, 'Michał Kalecki and Early Attempts to Reform the Polish Economy', in Mark Knell and Christine Rider (eds), *Socialist Economies in Transition: Appraisals of the Market Mechanism*, Aldershot: Edward Edgar, 1992. The main proposals of the Economic Council are outlined and discussed in Myant, *Poland*, pp.53-56; and in Swain and Swain, *Eastern Europe*, p.131. See also Michał Kalecki, 'Workers' Councils and Central Planning', in idem., *Selected Essays on Economic Planning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
10. An English translation of the *Theses* can be found in N. Spulber, *Organisational Alternatives in Soviet-Type Economies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
11. Kowalik, 'Michał Kalecki', p.74. See also Brus, 'The Political Economy of Polish Reforms', *Praxis International*, 5, 1985, p.197.
12. Brus, 'The Political Economy of Polish Reforms', p.197.
13. On the fate of the councils, see Janina Miedzinska, 'Social Policy Under Gomułka', *Soviet Survey*, 35, January-March, 1961.
14. Myant, *Poland*, p.49; Lewis, *The Polish Volcano*, pp.259-62.
15. Marian Kostecki and Krzysztof Mreła, 'Workers and Intelligentsia in Poland: During the Hot Days and in Between', *Media, Culture and Society*, 4, 1982, p.230.
16. Brus, 'The Political Economy of Polish Reforms', p.199.
17. Brus, '1966 to 1975: In Search of Balanced Development', in M.C. Kaser (ed.), *The Economic History of Eastern Europe: 1919-1975*, Volume III, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, p.59.
18. Myant, *Poland*, p.59.
19. Cf. Oskar Lange, *Political Economy*, 1 (transl. by A.H. Walker), Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963, espec. chapter 1, chapter 5, chapter 6; and *Political Economy*, 2 (transl. by S.A. Klain and J.Stadler), Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968, espec. chapter 1. See also Mieczysław Rakowski, *Efficiency of Investment in a Socialist Economy* (transl. by Eugene Lepa), London: Pergamon Press, 1963.

20. The main points of the revisionists' philosophical attack are set out by Kołakowski in *Main Currents*, 3, pp.462-63. Kołakowski's own ideas in this period are developed in 'Hope and Hopelessness', *Survey*, 17, Summer 1971. The most representative example of the revisionists' 'political' work is Adam Schaff's 'Marxist Concept of the Individual', *Polish Perspectives*, 7, July/August, 1964. Like many 'revisionists' in the period, Schaff attempted to rescue marxist thought by emphasising its Feuerbachian origins. As he put it, 'for when man is not treated as the central issue of the socialist ideal, its essence is lost and it is impossible to grasp its meaning' (p.88). Louis Althusser argues that this attempt to resurrect a humanist anthropology was typical of the immediate post-Stalin period, and that it generally entailed an attempt to privilege Marx's pre-1845 texts (*For Marx*, [transl. by Ben Brewster], London: Verso, 1965, pp.9-12).
21. Details of Brus' life can be found in his 'The Bane of Reforming the Socialist Economic System', *Banca Nazionale del Lavoro Quarterly Review*, 187, 1993.
22. See in particular, Brus, 'Socialism: The Very Concept Under Scrutiny', in Ota Šik (ed.), *Socialism Today? The Changing Meaning of Socialism*, London: Macmillan, 1991; Brus, 'The Compatibility of Planning and Market Reconsidered', in Anders Aslund (ed.), *Market Socialism or the Restoration of Capitalism?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; and Brus, 'From Revisionism to Pragmatism', *Acta Economica*, 1989.
23. Brus, 'The East European Reforms: What Happened to Them?', *Soviet Studies*, 31, April, 1979.
24. Włodzimierz Brus and Tadeusz Kowalik, 'Socialism and Development', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 7, 1983, p.250. See also Brus, 'Political Systems and Economic Efficiency', *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 4, 1980.
25. Notably in the volume edited by Hayek, *Collectivist Economic Planning*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935.
26. Brus, *The Market in a Socialist Economy* (transl. by Angus Walker), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, pp.4-8 (hereinafter cited as MSE).
27. MSE, p.9.
28. MSE, p.9.
29. The influence of Brus' work on Czechoslovakia and Hungary is acknowledged in Domenico Nuti, 'Market Socialism: The Model that Might Have Been But Never Was', in Anders Aslund (ed.), *Market Socialism or the Restoration of Capitalism?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.20; and in Włodzimierz Brus and Kazimierz Laski, *From Marx to the Market: Socialism in Search of an Economic System*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p.76. Adam Michnik describes Brus' book, *The Market in a Socialist Economy*, along with studies by Kołakowski and Ossowski, as a 'key intellectual stimuli for the student activities of 1968' (quoted in Charles Wankel, *Anti-Communist Student Organisations and the Polish Renewal*, London: Macmillan, 1992, p.217, fn. 62).
30. Brus, 'Is Market-Socialism Possible or Necessary? A Debate', *Critique*, 14, October, 1981, p.33. See also Brus, *Socialist Ownership and Political Systems* (transl. by R.A. Clarke), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp.74-75 (hereinafter cited as SOAPS).
31. Brus, 'Is Market-Socialism Possible', p.33.
32. Taylor and Lange's articles are reproduced in Benjamin Lippincott (ed.), *On the Economic Theory of Socialism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938.

33. Brus, *The Economics and Politics of Socialism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965-69, p.80 (hereinafter cited as EPS).
34. See, for example, Engels' remark that, under communism, 'The quality of social labour contained in a product need not then be established in a roundabout way; daily experience shows in a direct way how much of it is required on the average. Society can simply calculate how many hours of labour are contained in a steam-engine, or a hundred square yards of cloth of a certain quality ... The useful effects of the various articles of consumption, compared with one another and with the quantities of labour required for their production, will in the end determine the plan. People will be able to manage everything very simply, without the intervention of much-vaunted "value"', in *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978, p.375.
35. Brus, 'Is Market-Socialism Possible', p.22-23.
36. EPS, p.6, p.4, p.43; SOAPS, pp.74-75, pp.102-03, fn. 57, pp.202-03; 'Is Market-Socialism Possible', pp.21-26, pp.32-34; 'The East European Reforms', pp.257-261.
37. The clearest indications of the limitations of enterprise autonomy can be found in EPS, pp.52-55, pp.58-59, pp.100-101; and SOAPS, pp.74-75, pp.202-03. Not only this, but the scope of the 'regulated' market is unclear, given that Brus insists the provision of 'consumer goods and services' be strictly limited (EPS, p.64).
38. MSE, p.127.
39. MSE, p.127.
40. Brus, 'The East European Reforms', p.266; EPS, pp.24-25, pp.28-30, p.10, p.14, p.4.
41. EPS, pp.58-59.
42. Brus, 'Is Market-Socialism Possible', p.22.
43. SOAPS, p.2.
44. EPS, p.31, p.49, pp.65-66.
45. Here Brus is indebted to Lange's formulations, which are discussed in Brus and Kowalik, 'Oskar Lange: Theorist of Socialism', *Polish Perspectives*, 8, 1965.
46. MSE, p.62 and *passim*.
47. MSE, p.195.
48. Cf. Marx's discussion of communism in *Capital*, 1, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986, pp.171-73; and Marx, 'The Civil War in France' in idem., *Selected Works*, 2, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1986, Part III.
49. EPS, pp.14-15, emphasis removed, p.41, p.50, pp.65-66, p.84, p.90; Brus, 'The East European Reforms', p.266. Brus' thoughts on the 'two-way relationship' between the economic and democratic advantages of decentralisation are considerably indebted to Kalecki's formulations. On this, see Brus, 'Kalecki's Economics of Socialism', *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 39, February, 1977, pp.60-61.
50. EPS, pp.65-66.
51. Lenin, 'The State and Revolution', in idem., *Selected Works*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977, p.212, p.213, p.312.
52. EPS, p.99, emphasis added.
53. EPS, p.66.
54. SOAPS, p.92.
55. SOAPS, pp.202-04, p.92.

56. Cf. A.J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics*, London: Methuen, 1984.
57. SOAPS, p.208.
58. EPS, p.46, pp.31-32.
59. SOAPS, p.199.
60. SOAPS, p.32.
61. Cf. G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978; and Charles Bettelheim, *The Transition to Socialist Economy* (transl. by Brian Pearce), Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1975.
62. EPS, p.88.
63. Brus' more recent reflections on the state, in which a similar ambiguity vis-à-vis the strictures of classical marxist state theory can still be traced, can be found in 'The Economic Role of the State: West and East', *Survey*, 25, Autumn, 1980.
64. SOAPS, p.197, p.210, p.199.
65. EPS, p.96. In his comments on the Gdansk crises. Brus attributed the 'fundamental causes of the troubles' to 'the political mechanism' ('Six Months After the Gdansk Crisis: A View From Inside', *Survey*, 17, Summer 1971, p.88).
66. EPS, p.87
67. SOAPS, p.209, emphasis added.
68. For an important discussion of the various positions taken in the Polish 'base-superstructure debate', see Ray Taras, 'Polish Sociology and the Base-Superstructure Debate', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 13, 1983.

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