

**Rethinking Theory and History in the Cold War: The State, Military
Power and Social Revolution**

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Abstract

This thesis provides a critique of existing understandings of the Cold War in International Relations theory, and offers an alternative position. It rejects the conventional conceptual and temporal understanding of the Cold War, which assumes that the Cold War was, essentially, a political-military conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union that originated in the collapse of the wartime alliance after 1945. Using a method derived from historical materialism, in particular the parcellization of political power into the spheres of 'politics' and 'economics' that characterises capitalist modernity, the thesis develops an alternative understanding of the Cold War through an emphasis on the historical and thus conceptual uniqueness of it.

After the literature survey, Part One interrogates the conceptual areas of the state, military power and social revolution and offers alternative conceptualisations. This is followed in Part Two with a more historically orientated argument that analyses Soviet and American responses to the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions.

The main conclusions of the thesis consist of the following. First, the thesis suggests that the form of politics in the USSR (and other 'revolutionary' states) was qualitatively different to that of capitalist states. This derived from the relationship between the form of political rule and the social relations of material production. Secondly, this conflict was not reducible to the 'superpowers' but rather, was conditioned by a dynamic associated with the expansion and penetration of capitalist social relations, and the contestation of those political forms that evolved from them. Finally, the relationship between capitalist expansion and the 'superpowers' rested on the distinctive forms of international relations of each superpower over how each related to the international system and responded to revolution.

Dedicated to the memory of my mother,
Jane Irene Saull (1942-1987)

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Chapter One

Introduction: What was the Cold War ?

The Cold War as a focus of intellectual enquiry has occupied a rather unusual position within the discipline of International Relations. Although recognised as a distinct period in world history,¹ its theorisation, at least in terms of traditional theories, did not recognise it as such. The acceptance of the transformation of world politics that World War Two and its end produced did not manifest itself in the form of a reconstitution of traditional IR theory. Rather, IR theory sought to downplay the uniqueness of the Cold War, instead subsuming it within a broader history of great power conflict, or limiting it to a discussion of strategic (nuclear) rivalry.

This anomaly, the lack of a general theoretical recognition of the Cold War, is one of the principal concerns of this thesis. This thesis will also challenge the traditional temporal understanding of the Cold War by imbuing this period of international history with a new theoretical insight. The temporal perspective is important because it derives from certain historical and theoretical assumptions about what constituted the Cold War.² This is most evident in the historical debates³ concerning who was to blame for the outbreak of hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union. And it is this core assumption of the traditional understanding of the Cold War, that it emerged between 1945-47 in Europe between the 'superpowers' that will be challenged.

The traditional temporal definition of the Cold War rests on the identification of particular actors and currencies. These could be summarised as the state, particularly the USSR and the USA, and the characterisation of foreign policy in the currency of military power based on specific strategic or balance of power objectives. Although these concepts cannot be dismissed, in themselves they are conceptually weak in providing an understanding of the Cold War. What needs to be made clear is the qualitative distinction of these concepts in the Cold War in general, and more importantly with respect to the distinctive international

¹ Generally accepted as 1947-89, from the Truman Doctrine to the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and also by the acceptance into the IR lexicon of 'post-Cold War' studies in security and so forth.

² This is most obviously the case with arguments over the nature of the end of the Cold War. Although this thesis does not directly address this issue, it does implicitly raise issues, and is informed by the end of the Cold War. The conceptual arguments put forward amount to a specific understanding of what the Cold War was, and thus imply an understanding of its end.

³ Between 'traditionalists' and 'revisionists' in the 'origins of the Cold War debate.' For an overview see R. Melanson *Writing History and Making Policy: The Cold War, Vietnam, and Revisionism* (Lanham, Md: University Press of

relations of the 'superpowers.' Thus, this thesis will focus on these traditional explanatory concepts, but will seek to provide an alternative conceptualisation of what one understands by the 'state' and 'military power.' The objective of this conceptual interrogation is not necessarily to replace these concepts, but rather to locate them within an alternative historical and social framework.

The other conceptual point that can contribute to a better understanding of the Cold War is concerned with social revolution. This issue, as an *international* phenomenon, has not been addressed by traditional theoretical debates.⁴ Through a focus on social revolution as a constituent feature of the Cold War there is a means to anchor what we may take to understand by the state and military power in the Cold War. In this sense then, social revolution as a conjuncture in the Cold War exposed, both intellectually and politically, alternative meanings to traditional understandings of the state and the currency and form of military power. Social revolution as a mode of social and political change dislocated and reconstituted the state and military power, and the relationship between them within the overall reproduction of a social order.

Social revolution not only provides a conceptual opening with which to historicise the state and military power, and locate them within a domestic-international relationship, it also highlights the impact of capitalism as an international social relationship that rests on specific political and economic forms. Capitalism as a form of social relations in turn highlights the role of particular social constituencies identified in terms of social class as a distinct type of political agency in the Cold War. Social class and its association with political agency is also important with respect to the substance of the state and military power in the reconstitution of these concepts through the process of revolutionary social transformation. Class, manifested in specific forms of political agency that to a greater or lesser degree were founded on organised class mobilisations from below, helped determine the outcome of revolutionary conjunctures, and also provided for a structural class 'content' within the post-revolutionary state.

The three constitutive conceptual areas of this thesis, then, are the state, military power and social revolution. All three areas are prioritised in one way or

America, 1983).

⁴ See F. Halliday *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994a) p.124-46 for a discussion of the relationship between revolution and IR, and D. Armstrong *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) for a 'dissident' view within traditional theory.

another by the existing theorisation of the Cold War that will be surveyed in the following chapter. However, the main goal beyond their respective individual interrogation will be to relate them to each other to produce an historical sociology of the Cold War. In doing so the objective is to provide an alternative Historical Materialist account of the Cold War that serves to distinguish the Cold War as a unique period in modern world history characterised by distinct forms of political and economic organisation, and singular currencies of international relations.

Although the role of the 'superpowers' in the Cold War needs to be qualified, necessarily, because of their relative concentrations of political, economic, and military power, a focus on their respective roles in the Cold War conflict is required. However, it must be stressed that, *contra* to much analysis of the Cold War this era was not reducible to the 'superpower' relationship, strategic or otherwise. The United States and the Soviet Union could be seen to be defining of particular forms of state and consequently international relations, but because of their respective constitutive forms the dynamic of the Cold War went beyond both direct relations between themselves, and their relations with other states. This brings me to my final point with respect to the conceptual framework of this thesis. Because the Cold War was not reducible to state-to-state relations and inter-state conflict, both the United States and the Soviet Union existed within an international system that was also characterised by the social relations of capitalism. This is important as it provides the 'conceptual and empirical cement' between the state and the economy, and between the domestic and the international. It also provides the qualifying criteria in what distinguished the relations between the state, military power, and social revolution, which are the concerns of this thesis. The Cold War, then, was an episode within the history of capitalism. It is not only, however, in this broader historical aspect that an understanding of capitalism is important. Rather, the consolidation and expansion of capitalist social relations in the postwar period, the contradictions and conflicts within this process, and the forms of contestation that emerged, was the dominant dynamic of Cold War history. However, this is not to collapse the Cold War into capitalism as a specific period of international capitalist development, but to identify the specific kinds of conflict, and the particular political, economic and

military forms that emerged in this period of world history that were directly related to the transformation of international capitalism under American leadership after 1945.

The transformation of international capitalism in terms of the internal changes within the advanced capitalist states, and in the wider international relations of capitalism from a 'formal' imperialism to reconstituted political and economic relations with former colonial states provided a parallel but inseparable development from the conflict that became manifest after 1945 between the USA and the USSR. The emergence of the Soviet Union as an international power with a means to project itself beyond its own borders became apparent with the occupation of East-Central Europe. However, it was with the political ruptures, facilitated by the war⁵ in large swathes of the colonial world that helped trigger a global contestation of capitalist political and economic power that was to quickly drag in the 'superpowers' as either benefactor or suppresser of anti-colonial revolt. Thus, it was the redefining of international capitalism through the experiences of war and successful social mobilisation and transformation that largely determined the postwar material and political standing of the USA and the USSR after 1945, but also the weakness of the traditionally dominant capitalist states and possibilities for anti-colonial and other national liberation movements.

Thus far I have outlined the conceptual terrain of this thesis. What unites the conceptual areas above is the methodological framework of the thesis. The methodological assumptions could broadly be described as Marxist. However, this still needs a form of qualification as to what particular Marxism this thesis will be attempting to develop. The principal methodological assumption relates to the need to distinguish what we mean by the 'economic and political form' within and without of states. It is the relationship between these two spheres, more conventionally understood as 'state and society' that provides the principal methodological basis of this thesis. It is the relationship between the political and economic spheres of human organisation and action where the *originality* of the Cold War is to be found. It is also the conceptual area where the thesis will seek to develop an original contribution to an understanding of the Cold War. How we

⁵ Specifically the defeat of European colonial power by Japan and their subsequent political and military weakness after 1945, the incubation of a nationalist (in large part led, or strongly influenced by local communist parties, and thus, indirectly the Soviet Union) liberation movement, and the unsympathetic attitude of the United States to the return of colonial relationships.

conceptualise politics, indeed, what constitutes 'politics' and the form that politics can take, 'economic,' 'political,' and 'military' is one of the principal points that the thesis wants to make as an original contribution to an understanding of the Cold War. The relationship between the political form, or the state, and the sphere of social and material production, and the social relations between individuals determines what constitutes international relations. Thus, the Cold War was a period dominated by the expansion and conflicts within capitalist social relations and the political and economic forms that flowed from such relations, and the conflict with the social revolutionary product of those relations that manifested into the social form of historical communism. The international relations of the 'superpowers' were different and founded on a mutual antagonism derived from their respective social relations of production. This is not to suggest that what constitutes international relations is solely reducible to the domestic form, but rather that what *constituted* the international relations of the USSR and the USA in the Cold War was the *interaction* of the domestic form with the international system,⁶ where the *form* of relations was *determined* by the internal nature of each, and the *content* was determined by the evolving relationship between the domestic and the international.

Alongside this is the notion of process. This is obviously the opposite of anything static or fixed. However, process should not be understood to mean a continual state of flux and change, but rather as something that shifts and develops. The moments of fundamental change are those associated with major political ruptures within and without the state. The Cold War from this perspective should not be seen as a continuum or static stand-off frozen for 45 years, but rather something that shifted and moved politically, militarily, socially and geographically. It could be suggested that the Cold War began at different moments and ended at different moments, depending on where one chooses to focus. Europe was not the only source of ideological and military tension between East and West in 1945, and the events in 1989 that secured the collapse of Communist Party-state rule in East-Central Europe were but one form of change that was mirrored elsewhere with the defeat of anti-capitalist forces. Process, then, highlights the notion of change, and how revolution is but one form of

⁶ Be it in the form of the arms race and nuclear weapons, the workings of the international economy, or the transformation of other states through war and revolution.

change that cannot be isolated or abstracted from other forms of change. The Cold War and the international relations of the 'superpowers' highlight this notion of 'process' or 'processional change' through the recognition of détente, the new or second Cold War, and the shifting patterns of 'superpower' involvement in world politics.

The organisation of the thesis reflects a concern to put a theoretical framework in place, which will be followed by a more historically focused discussion that will seek to 'concretise' the theory. The next chapter is a literature survey that will broadly discuss three 'schools' within IR that have attempted to understand the Cold War: Realism, Pluralism and Historical Materialism, outlining their descriptive and analytical features in an attempt to provide a critical foundation for subsequent chapters. The third chapter begins Part One, which deals with Theory. This chapter is the first of three that will focus on the three conceptual areas mentioned above. It will analyse the state, particularly how we might conceptualise the 'politics' of the state with respect to the 'superpowers.' The fourth chapter will focus on military power, specifically how each 'superpower' was defined by the form and currency of military power, how military power related to the wider social order, and how far we can see military power as a specifically *international* determinant of the international relations of the 'superpowers.' The fifth and final theoretical chapter will focus on social revolution as a class-based response to the international expansion of capitalist social relations.

Part Two consists of chapters six and seven, which are attempts to locate the theoretical propositions put forward within an historical context. They will seek to link and historicise the three conceptual areas analysed in chapters three, four and five. To do this the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions and the involvement of the 'superpowers' have been selected as providing valid historical cases in the Cold War of the theory put forward. These two revolutions are paradigmatic of the Cold War. They reflect specific class-based responses to international capitalist penetration, and how the internal social-political transformation was conditioned by 'superpower' involvement. Moreover they reflected, in the relationship between domestic change and international relations,

the shifting impact of the *political* currencies of political, economic and military power. Chapter six will focus on the international involvement of the USSR in conditioning revolutionary developments within Cuba and Vietnam respectively. Chapter Seven will focus on American relations with these revolutions. The final chapter, the conclusion, will seek to address the claims made, how far they have been met in the thesis, and how the theory put forward can explain the end of the Cold War.

Chapter Two

The Cold War and International Relations Theory

The aim of this chapter is to provide a survey of literature drawn from both theoretical and historical sources that has sought to provide IR with an understanding of the Cold War. It is obviously selective, yet generally representative of the principal theoretical traditions within IR. In overviewing this literature the aim is to identify what each suggests is defining and most important about the Cold War for IR. Through such a survey the foundations of the subsequent framework of the thesis will be laid where the principal conceptual issues mentioned in the introduction will be interrogated and reconceptualised.

Before the literature survey begins, it needs to be made clear what scholars will be discussed in this chapter, and why. The survey has been organised into three broad theoretical traditions within IR, and in particular how these IR scholars have understood the Cold War. They are: Realism, Pluralism, and Historical Materialism. With respect to Realism this chapter draws upon those scholars associated with ‘historical’ or ‘power-politics’ approaches, and in particular those that have engaged at both a theoretical and empirical level with the Cold War. This needs to be emphasised because of the breadth of the Realist canon, and also because much Realist scholarship has *not* explicitly focused on the Cold War as a category for speculation.¹ Because of this neglect at the level of general Realist scholarship, the comments are confined to those diplomatic historians and theorists that have *explicitly* and *singularly* focused on the Cold War. This being the case this literature survey will outline and criticise the main conceptual arguments provided by these scholars, which will then be related to wider Realist conceptual positions later on in the thesis. The essential point that needs to be made in this survey is the identification of what these scholars find distinct or not, and defining of the Cold War.

The examination of Pluralist approaches is not meant to be a ‘catch-all’ category, but rather to address those scholars that have sought to go beyond an understanding confined to the state or military power. Rather, these scholars have sought to locate the state within a wider conceptualisation that relates to ideas and norms. Ergo, the focus for these scholars could, arguably, be said to be in the realm of ideas and the role of the process of learning patterns in international

relations. These scholars have also attempted to question conventional notions of 'power,' and the impact of other (non-military/coercive) currencies of international relations on states.

The final conceptual grouping is distinguished by their focus on the internal-international relationship as being determined by the 'state-society' relationship within the dominant states of the Cold War. These scholars, then, have directly engaged with Marxist categories such as capitalism and class, and in doing so have sought to understand the Cold War from a wider historical-social perspective. The rest of this chapter will proceed with an analysis of each of these theoretical positions beginning with Realism.

1. Realism and the Cold War

The corpus of Realist scholarship that has analysed the Cold War, either directly or indirectly, is huge, and well beyond any exegesis in this section.² This being the case I will limit my analysis to those scholars who have sought to develop general Realist methodological and theoretical assumptions directly through studying the Cold War. In this endeavour I will address the work of George Kennan,³ Henry Kissinger,⁴ John Lewis Gaddis,⁵ and David Armstrong.⁶ This will obviously limit the scope of my project and the power of its critique. However, in many respects such a strategy exposes, arguably, the most important flaw in Realist analyses of the Cold War. This problem relates to the fact that although Realism has sought to understand and conceptualise the Cold War, the basic premise of its understanding is that the Cold War was *not* historically unique.

¹ See Fred Halliday (1994a) comments p.172.

² However, an interesting aside to note is that what could arguably be seen as the three most important postwar IR texts (particularly from a teaching point of view), H. Morgenthau *Politics Among Nations; The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948); H. Bull *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977); and K. Waltz *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub., Co., 1979), do not in fact analyse the Cold War in any great depth, and manifestly do not problematise the Soviet Union and its form of international relations.

³ *American Diplomacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1960); *The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet-American Relations in the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1941* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1978); 'The Long Telegram,' in *The Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946 Volume VI* (Washington D.C: US Government Printing Office, 1969); *Memoirs, 1950-63* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1972); *Realities of American Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954)

⁴ *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

⁵ *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Synthesis on the Origins of the Cold War,' in *Diplomatic History* Volume 7 Summer 1983; 'International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War,' in *International Security* Volume 17 no.3 Winter 1992c; *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1997); and *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992a).

⁶ (1991).

The Cold War, rather, reflected in general terms, the ongoing logic of inter-state conflict derived from the anarchical constitutive nature of the international system. What *did* matter for Realists was the form of that conflict, particularly its strategic-nuclear manifestation, and how the transformation of military power conditioned traditional inter-state relations.⁷ This issue obviously provided a source of justification for a focus on the ‘superpowers’ and the military currency of their competitive relationship.⁸ But, as a specific historical or conceptual category, the Cold War did not provoke a plethora of specialist texts devoted to an understanding of the Cold War.⁹ Rather, the Cold War was either subsumed within a broader history of great power conflict, or limited to a discussion of strategic (nuclear) rivalry. If ideology or other broader issues came to the surface they were discussed in terms of internal relations and sources of internal political legitimacy or rhetoric. The internal arena, and its empirical clutter, then, did not matter.

The focus of Realist analysis of the Cold War is fixed on the political relations between states, principally the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, the paramount concern with the relationship of bipolarity; for Realists *the* regulating relationship of the Cold War and postwar world politics. This concern explains the Realist argument over the origins of the Cold War and the principal relationship between the superpowers and the blocs they led, based upon military competition.¹⁰ The Cold War began with the end of the Second World War, which produced a geopolitical situation of two states being militarily preponderant globally, in the sense that the Americans had a monopoly of nuclear weapons and the Soviets a huge conventional army bestraddling most of Europe and Asia. It was this that provided a starting point for the evolution of the Cold War that saw the dominance of the arms race and military competition as the main currency in the superpower relationship.

The timing of the origins of the Cold War and its identification as a particular but traditional relationship between states is based upon the fact that

⁷ See H. Kissinger (1994) p.774;778; 801 and J. Lewis Gaddis (1992a) p.160-8.

⁸ Indeed, in terms of a Realist specialisation in the Cold War it was in the development of ‘Strategic Studies’ as a specific area of scholarly enquiry.

⁹ As Fred Halliday has noted, the major postwar Realist texts did not specifically focus on the Cold War. Bull talks about it in terms of the great powers and the ‘special category’ of nuclear weapons that actually leads to the USSR and the USA sharing common strategic goals. Waltz talks about a bipolar system, Morgenthau discusses the maximisation of state power.. etc. See F. Halliday (1994a) p.172.

¹⁰ See H. Kissinger (1994) p.424 and J. Lewis Gaddis in M. Hogan (ed.) *The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning*

prior to 1945, geopolitically the situation in Europe and the world was very different. It was a change in the balance of power brought upon by World War Two that triggered the Cold War and not just the fact that the Soviet Union claimed to be a revolutionary state.¹¹ The end of the war provided for a geopolitical environment of particular spheres of interest that became the basis for political, economic and military competition, which was to be at its most intense in divided Europe.

With a prioritising of the political relations between the principal state actors as being the prism to view the Cold War, Realist theorists have focused on the foreign policies of the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively. Containment as a security policy that evolved from the late 1940s has been the main tool for Realist understanding of American policy in the Cold War. Similarly, Soviet actions have been dominated by the intrinsic state interests expressed through a shifting foreign policy that saw expansion, consolidation and then more attempts at global expansion through the projection of military power.¹² The relationship between the two superpowers, though on a relatively stable footing in Europe after the blocs were formed, was a case of each side trying to counter the expansion of the other, and expanding at the expense of the other. Thus the former colonial world was soon caught in the bipolar struggle which saw its first non-European dispute over Iran in 1946, and later, and more importantly in China and the rest of Asia. It has revolved around that all-powerful conceptual tool of Realist theory, the balance of power. This explains the emergence of military blocs in Europe to occupy the vacuum left by weak and defeated powers. It also explains what became the increasing involvement of Washington and Moscow in the affairs of the rest of the world, as each seized opportunities for increasing its balance of forces against the other by strategic and political alliances with the newly emerging states of the Third World.

This brief description of some of the major aspects of Realism and the Cold War raises a number of conceptual issues, which I will now explore. Most importantly, the prioritisation of the state as an international actor, acting according to the enduring *diktat* of security, spheres of influence and power

and Implications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992b) p.27.

¹¹ See H. Kissinger (1994) p.424

¹² For an historical survey of Soviet foreign policy that is imbued with Realist assumptions, see A. Ulam *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1973* Second Edition (London: Holt, Rhinehart &

maximisation. If there were differences between the two main protagonists in their conduct of foreign policy it was in the sense of the traditional strategic and political concerns of each. For the United States a concern to prevent any one state becoming preponderant in one area of the world and grounding its criteria for allies on hostility to the Soviet Union. For the Soviet Union the concerns reflected the traditional Russian fears of continental encirclement, and fear of attack through central Europe. It also reflected the expansionist desire for global domination through the creed of the ideology of communism.¹³ Corresponding with this focus on the politics of state to state relations is a marginalisation of the impact of domestic politics and the constituent values of each society. The fact that America and its alliance were characterised by liberal democratic forms of political organisation and an economic system based on private property-capitalism, and the Soviet Union and its alliance on a monopoly of political power in the Communist Party and a socialised state controlled economy are not ignored. Each Realist theorist has something different to say about these things, but in themselves they do not impinge on the conceptual appreciation of the separation of the domestic from the international. And in themselves these differences do not explain the nature of the Cold War.¹⁴

The reification of the state, the separation of the domestic or societal influences from the practice of *Realpolitik* and security is matched by the currency of military relations as being the principal channel for the conduct of the Cold War, both in its manifestation in the unprecedented arms race and its economic impact, and in the conducting of war and insurgency in the Third World. With military-bloc stability in Europe the Cold War was conducted with military and technological competition which ultimately manifested itself in the mid 1980s with American research, and the threat to develop space weapons (SDI) to make the Soviet nuclear arsenal obsolete, and by involvement in wars in newly

Winston, 1974).

¹³ For more detailed appraisals of these reflections on the statecraft of each superpower see J. Lewis Gaddis (1982); (1987); and (1992a).

¹⁴ Kissinger for example suggests that the peculiarity of American history, born of an idealist revolution against colonial tyranny imbues or tarnishes the pursuit of a genuine national interest in American foreign policy and the conduct of the Cold War. Indeed he argues that it was this idealism and desire to cast the rest of the world in its own image that led to the calamities of American foreign policy during the Cold War as in Vietnam. Gaddis invokes this argument too, tying it with a notion of overstretch which Paul Kennedy in his *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500-2000* (London: Fontana, 1989) has developed on. Similarly, Realist theorists most notably, George Kennan have stressed the dictatorial and repressive nature of the Soviet state as being reflected in its foreign policy. Its cautiousness and need to have an external threat to justify its own internal legitimacy. See H. Kissinger (1994) p.17-18 and G. Kennan (1984) p.110-13; (1972) p.322, 340-1.

independent states. It was in this arena of conflict that the Cold War was won and lost.¹⁵

The concepts that Realists have identified shed some light on our understanding of the Cold War. The focus on states, as the principal movers in the Cold War in its origins and development is difficult to dispute. Even in terms of the end of the Cold War Realists have a point in emphasising the central importance of the state. The transformation of Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev, especially the ditching of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' provided one of the principal external stimuli to the internal changes in East-Central Europe in 1989. The emphasis on security and military competition is also important. Indeed, the role of military conflict, the ups and downs, most marked in official Soviet triumphalism in the apparent shift in the 'correlation of forces' during the 1970s were extremely important in setting the international scene of later developments in the Cold War. Military competition and the economic cost of that competition and its consequences are pertinent to any understanding of the Cold War. Finally, the claim that one side won the Cold War needs to be taken seriously, even if it is limited to Realist concerns with security and political relations.

However, these conceptual insights in themselves, though valuable are rather limited, and only provide a partial conceptual understanding of what Realism purports to explain. Realism fails to provide a sociology of the state. Even one of the most nuanced of Realist scholars of the Cold War, George Kennan, failed to recognise the significance of the relationship between a particular type of society and the social forces it contains and is dominated by, and the state in international relations. This is not to suggest that Kennan does not have an understanding of the internal politics of the USSR and the USA. His 'Sources of Soviet Conduct' published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947 remains one of the most prescient pieces of Realist political analysis. However, although Kennan wanted to identify the *internal* sources of Stalin's actions in East-Central Europe, because these were not recognised as invoking a new and different *form* of international relations his analysis failed to fully appreciate the relationship between internal politics and foreign policy. This was equally the case with US

¹⁵ Both Kissinger and Gaddis are classic exemplars of this kind of Realism and both argue that it was in the military competition, both technological competition and direct participation, that the United States won the Cold War. See H. Kissinger (1994) p.774, 778, and 801; J. Lewis Gaddis (1992b) p.30 and (1992a) p.160-8.

foreign policy that Kennan criticised for its undue emphasis on military strategy to contain the Soviet Union. Kennan argued that though the Soviet Union was a brutal dictatorship, imbued with the historical angst of traditional Russian xenophobia mixed with a messianic Bolshevism,¹⁶ in practice it was cautious and behaved like any other great power.¹⁷ He did not see any particular expression of Soviet revolutionary internationalism in the actual conduct of Soviet foreign policy, rather great power opportunism.

Kennan attacked American foreign policy for its over-emphasis on military power, which was unnecessary in terms of containing the USSR. Indeed American policy, in the medium-term, actually helped consolidate Stalinist power within the Soviet Union after 1945, and Soviet power within East-Central Europe through the internal manipulation of a perceived external military threat. Kennan's concern was to justify his attacks on American policy by pointing to the disjuncture within Soviet policy between the rhetoric of revolutionary internationalism and the internal necessity of the Communist Party to maintain political control, which was facilitated by the identification of an external military threat making it easier to defend a coercive and authoritarian polity. Ideology, then, was used as a means of internal political justification and legitimacy for the Soviet regime.

While Kennan was certainly right in identifying this aspect of Soviet ideology and the relationship between the domestic and international, it is only partial because he fails to fully explore the nature of Soviet and American political forms (states), and instead solely concentrates on the state and military-political relations. Although Kennan advocated the successful 'expansion' of American values through force of example that represented the best reflection of what America stood for,¹⁸ he did not fully distinguish the specific nature of the United States as a capitalist state, and in particular the relationship between 'military containment,' and the reproduction of a specific kind of internal and international politics. This was equally the case with the Soviet Union where Kennan failed to recognise the distinctive form of military power vis-à-vis the USA. Kennan's conceptualisation of the internal-ideological and international

¹⁶ See G. Kennan (1984) p. 107-8

¹⁷ *Ibid* p.118; 123 and (1982) p.141-2; 153.

¹⁸ (1984) p.119-20; 126-8.

relationship fails to bridge the gap between the internal political form and how this conditions and determines the form of international relations. Although he recognises internal differences he does not transplant these differences to different international relations, and in this sense remains trapped within the traditional Realist ontology of the state.¹⁹

This problem also undermines Kennan's appreciation of the end of the Cold War too. Unlike most other Realists he disputes whether America won the Cold War. This is based on the economic cost incurred, especially because of Vietnam and military containment with America losing out to its allies Germany and Japan. This is all rather curious, and based on not having a sociology of the state. If one looks at the events that ended the Cold War, and more importantly, post-Cold War changes, one can see that what America is, as a liberal and capitalist state and society, is to greater or lesser degrees being replicated or imposed on the states of its former ideological foes.²⁰

Without a sociology of the state, without a recognition and analysis of the international impact of the relationship between politics and economics we end up ignoring and misunderstanding one of the most dramatic episodes of rapid social change this century, brought about by the defeat and collapse of a particular model of state and social organisation. Why is it that, something that Realism as a conceptual model is unable to explain, with the end of the political and military conflict between the two 'superpowers' there was a parallel collapse of the ideological programme, and actual social creation of that programme in the Soviet bloc. This is a classic example of the relationship between the political and economic forms derived from the social relations of production in action. The social forces unleashed by the reforms of Gorbachev and the political agency of the social movements in the Soviet bloc destroyed the state form in those societies as it had existed under 'socialism' and the social system it headed. For Realism this is not an issue. The issue for its analysis is that the Soviet state collapsed due to the weight of internal economic stagnation and the self-determination of national groups. We are left with a diminished Russian state and other successor republics that no longer pose a global or military threat. The changes in the

¹⁹ Indeed ignoring the rhetoric, the Soviet Union was a traditional great power. See *ibid* p.118; 123 and (1982) p.141-2; 153.

²⁰ See F. Halliday *From Potsdam to Perestroika. Conversations with Cold Warriors*. (BB Radio 4 'The World Tonight' April 7 & 14, 1995) p.15 and 'Neither Geostrategy nor Internalism,' in *Contention* Fall 1994b,

internal political and economic make-up of the former Soviet Union is documented but there is no appreciation of what this portends for international relations or IR theory.²¹

The partiality of locating an explanation on the state as a focus for the Cold War relationship is matched by the considering of military conflict away from the broader concerns of each state and social system. This has a number of problems. Military competition-the arms race and military conflict in the Third World-cannot be understood as being purely a concern with port facilities and access to mineral wealth and so forth. Europe remains distinct in this respect, mainly because there was no military conflict only the consolidation and arming of blocs. However, the formation of NATO was not purely a military decision to deter possible Soviet aggression towards Western Europe. It was also formed, after the Truman Doctrine as an arm against the possible threat of social revolution in Western Europe.²² However, it was in the Third World that real military conflict is the focus of a flawed Realist analysis. Again, Realists are right to point to the impact of military victory and defeat in the shifting balance of global power between the two sides in the Cold War, but in isolating military conflict from the social circumstances and the impact that conflict had on social formations they ignore the social complexity of conflict in the Third World.

In the other aspect of military relations-the arms race-this needs also to be seen in a broader light than merely securing technological and military dominance over the other. Throughout the Cold War, despite claims of Soviet superiority, the USA had a military edge derived from its stronger and more technologically dynamic economy. Although the costs to both states were high the impact of intense military competition was felt strongest in the Soviet Union. This is for two reasons that Realists recognise but fail to properly link. One, because of the nature of the centrally planned economy Soviet military production had a distorting effect on the performance on the rest of the economy mainly due to its consumption of

Volume 14 no.1 p.49-66.

²¹ Gaddis has looked at the claims of IR theory after the end of the Cold War, but only in terms of its predictive capacity, that is, why scholars could not predict the exact timing of the end of the Cold War. He does not even consider the problems that the nature and type of change the end of the Cold War brought about. See his (1992c).

²² The formation of NATO in 1949 went hand-in-hand with the American aid package named after the US Secretary of State, George Marshall, which sought not only the reconstruction of war-ravaged European economies, but also reconsolidated social stability, with the threat of social revolution removed by reducing 'socialist' influence in governments. This was achieved most notably in Italy and France with the expulsion of Communist members of the early postwar coalition governments and the banning of the KPD in the western half of Germany.

the cream of technological resources, expertise and materials. Second was the impact this had on society itself, particularly because of the inability of Soviet military planning and production to have a positive effect on the civilian economy.²³ The Soviet Union could never hope to transcend Western living standards so long as it maintained high levels of military spending and resource allocation. Thus military competition led by American technological superiority not only contained Soviet power, but actually helped to undermine the performance of the Soviet economy, and in turn undermined the foundations of the 'socialist' project. It was not necessarily the case that Soviet socialism in its organisation as an economic system would inevitably collapse as a system if it could not spread, but that the burden imposed on it, even from the ravages of Lenin's 'war communism' by military competition with capitalism ultimately distorted its performance and helped accelerate its demise. This provides another link between the external and internal which was at the heart of American containment policy. It had as much to do with the health of the Soviet social system as it had to do with preventing the Soviet Union's military dominance and expansion.

The diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis, has, probably more than any other scholar, framed our understanding of the Cold War. Following his intellectual and political 'mentor' Kennan, Gaddis has flirted between Waltzian Neorealism²⁴ and more Pluralist-ideas based approaches to understand the Cold War.²⁵ Gaddis, in his most recent contribution, has recognised the role of ideology in Stalin's policy toward East-Central Europe after 1945. Stalin's foreign policy did not reflect strategic interests codified into *Realpolitik*, alone, but also ideological concerns, to expand the sphere of Soviet socialism. However, although this might seem a welcome revelation for a Realist thinker, it does not overcome the continued methodological framework that rests on separating what are seen as distinct conceptual and empirical categories. Rather than seeing how ideology helps reproduce a specific kind of politics, tangled up with the social relations of social and material production, which in turn is directly related to the form of political rule (the state), Gaddis and Kennan de-

²³ This was mainly due to the rigid and centrally-directed nature of the Soviet economy, and the lack of links with the civilian economy, something which capitalist forms of military production have not been characterised by.

²⁴ In particular, see his (1983).

couple ideology as a factor or variable that does, and does not effect foreign policy. Ideology is treated as an autonomous factor that can be 'picked off the explanatory shelf' at certain conjunctures, alongside national interest. Thus, in this respect, though Gaddis's recognition is important, it does not help us to understand, in greater complexity, the nature of the Soviet Union and its international relations, because the Soviet Union's *use* of ideology was in many respects similar to how other states (including the USA) were 'ideological.'

Gaddis has attempted to conceptualise the international relations of the 'superpowers' in the Cold War, in terms of how particular domestic values (authoritarian socialism in the case of the USSR, and liberal democracy and the 'free market' in the case of the USA) contested with other values and interests in foreign policy within the state.²⁶ Domestic variables were important, but in the case of their impact on the foreign policy of the state, they were desegregated from a wider conception of not only what the United States was, as an historical-social form, but the USSR as well. The agency and notion of politics is confined to the state form, and other factors are only significant as they have an impact on state policy. Moreover, with respect to the USSR Gaddis does not problematise the Soviet social form in terms of how the relationship between the form of political rule, the Vanguard Party-state, and the social relations of material production determined a specific kind of international relations that conditioned not only the USSR's form, but also its substance and objectives in international relations.

Realist theories of the Cold War, then, have singularly failed to analyse what the Soviet Union was, and how the social transformation ushered in after 1917 transformed its international relations. Realists have identified security concerns as being the defining element in the international relations of all states, but have failed to distinguish how this goal may be realised in different ways. David Armstrong²⁷ is a notable exception in this regard. A Realist in the mould of the English School, Armstrong has developed an understanding of revolution for a Realist theory of IR, and in doing so has addressed one of the principle problems

²⁵ See his (1997).

²⁶ Gaddis is also known for describing the Cold War as the 'long peace,' which he argues was reflected in the political-military stability in 'superpower' relations derived from the nuclear relationship. The Cold War then was characterised by great power stability despite the instability in the Third World. See (1987) p.30 and (1992a) p.105-18.

²⁷ (1991).

that Realism has in constructing a theory of change that is able to connect the internal constitutive properties of a (revolutionary) society with the dominance of the structures of the international system. Drawing primarily on the work of Hedley Bull,²⁸ Armstrong has attempted to go beyond the fixation with the state and actually attempt to talk about the constitutive values of the states that make up international society. Like Hedley Bull, Armstrong is concerned to focus on the maintenance of *order* in the international system arguing that it is the existence of an international society that best facilitates orderly conduct between sovereign states.²⁹ It is the dominance of order in international relations that curtails the ability of states and social forces through social revolution to change the constitutive values, rules and conduct of international relations. What is refreshing about Armstrong's analysis is that it actually begins with the assumption that revolution does have an impact on the international system-society by challenging the existing concept or norm of order; this is an almost unique recognition for Realism.

However, Armstrong's understanding of revolution and his specific reference to the Soviet Union and its conduct in world politics, is qualified, and this weakens the boldness of his original exploration of revolution. For example, Armstrong emphasises the importance of (mis)perception and communication as being imperative to maintaining order, and the language of revolutionary states only serves to problematise this.³⁰ Yet, to give Armstrong credit he does suggest that in some respects revolutions *do* pose a unique threat to international order. He recognises, albeit with qualifications, that the Bolsheviks were not distinct as international actors only in their political rhetoric. He accepts that in the 'dualism' of the Soviet involvement in world politics in the form of the 'peaceful coexistence' between states and the 'proletarian internationalism' that sought to transcend the politics of states through class, the Soviet Union and Comintern did pose a serious threat to the order of international society.³¹ However, his acceptance is contingent and limited to the immediate events during and after the revolution,

²⁸ (1977)

²⁹ (1991) p.5-6

³⁰ *Ibid.* p.6 Armstrong does not pursue this point, but by raising it seems to suggest, as many liberals have done in how to respond to revolution by ignoring the rhetoric of revolutionaries, which is regarded as something only for domestic consumption. Such an understanding belittles the impact of revolution on international relations and fails to understand the principle concerns of revolutions to exactly reshape the international order; this has always been a constitutive feature of social revolutions.

³¹ *Ibid.* p.134.

and for the most part Armstrong suggests that the Soviet revolution in the form of a state as an international actor was socialised by the constraints of the international system and the need for cooperation through acceptance of the norms of international society.³²In these arguments, Armstrong tends to endorse the general Realist understanding of revolution and thus the Cold War.

In suggesting that revolutions can and do impact on the internal constitutive forms within a society, Armstrong seems to be undermining one of the defining features of Realism, the separation of the domestic political sphere from the international. In this he encroaches on liberal territory that has a concept of the understanding of internal forms and how they can determine external behaviour. Like liberal theories, however, Armstrong fails to adequately explain what he means by internal values, and the concept of international society evolving to now include the internal organisation of states that are deemed legitimate,³³ what he does not do, is suggest what is the mechanism for the evolution of international society, beyond the evolving political relations between states.³⁴There is no argument that seeks to explain why it is that America has become the dominant state and principal enforcer of the external and internal values of international society.

Armstrong confines his notion of norms to political relations between states, and does not address the corresponding norms of private property and capitalist social relations as international and internal norms. Thus, he overlooks the nature of the social transformation of Russia that 1917 ushered in, and how this created a distinct social form with a distinct form of politics, which rested on a transformed social space. This did *not* change throughout the Cold War until 1989. Because Armstrong tends to concentrate on the external political relations, particularly the 'export of revolution,' he ends up missing some of the complexities of the Soviet Union. Just because the USSR ceased to pursue a foreign policy that rested on the direct export of revolution did not mean that it had become 'socialised' like any other state. Of course the shift in Soviet policy reflected a recognition of the problems and risks associated with this policy, but one cannot, as Armstrong does, jump to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was, ultimately, no different because of the political and legal constraints of

³² *Ibid.* p.120, p.127, p.135, p.147.

³³ *Ibid.* p.304.

³⁴ See J. Rosenberg *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations* (London: Verso, 1994) for a history of international society that transcends the 'state-based' sphere of politics.

international society. The appearance of normality, participation in diplomatic forums, and the acceptance of certain legal norms obscured the fact that the Soviet Union was characterised by a different form of international relations, based on a different internal politics.

Realism can be seen to provide only a partial explanation of the Cold War which derives from its understanding of political forms, deprived of an historical sociology. Without a sociology of the state as a political form we ignore social forces and social conflict which have as much explanatory value as war and the balance of power. Realism is distinct in its prioritising of political conflict and especially military conflict and in doing so, does provide us with some analytical tools to understand the Cold War. For a richer understanding of the Cold War we would need to look at the position of the superpowers within the broader international system in its social manifestation.

2. Pluralist and Ideas-Based Approaches to the Cold War

While there have been numerous publications and scholars of a liberal and pluralist background writing on the Cold War, as a distinct theory, conceptually, this has not been the case. However, with the end of the Cold War, it has been these theorists that have been the main theoretical challengers to Realist and conservative arguments that American military dominance in the form of the Reagan arms build-up won the Cold War, or accelerated Soviet decline.³⁵

Despite its looseness, one can still identify a number of themes that can be labeled as 'Pluralist' with respect to the theorisation of the Cold War. These conceptual themes include the following: a concern to move beyond discussion of the permanence of the military antagonism between the 'superpowers,' and focus on the changing nature of that relationship; developments in world politics, most notably the emergence of former colonies as independent sovereign states that provided a rival political agenda removed from 'superpower' conflict; a focus on alternative forms of power and influence in international relations, most notably the growth of rival sources of economic power that challenged American and Soviet postwar dominance, commonly known as multipolarity; the role of

³⁵ See R. Garthoff *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington D.C: The Brookings Institution, 1994) and 'Why Did the Cold War Arise, and Why Did it End?' in M. Hogan (ed.) (1992); T. Risse-Kappen 'Did "Peace Through Strength" Win the Cold War?' in *International Security* Volume 16 no. 1, 1991-2 (p.162-89).

misperception in determining foreign policy responses of each 'superpower';³⁶ locating importance in internal political change based around shifting political coalitions and processes and how this had an impact on the utility of the Cold War for each side. Internal changes signaled external change, based on a conception of political learning; Gorbachev (and Reagan/Bush) provide the best example of this, but *détente* is also emphasised as providing the watershed in the evolution of the Cold War. Unlike Realist analysis these scholars do have a theory of the relationship between internal politics and external state behaviour located in the constitutive political values of each 'superpower.' And it is in this sphere that they identify a process throughout the history of the Cold War that saw its logical conclusion with Gorbachev's reforms and the events of 1989.

Pluralist theories seek to chart the process of the Cold War from its beginning in the mid-1940s and the stark hostility provided by the Berlin crisis, and then the Korean War. But they emphasise that, especially after the death of Stalin, the Cold War relationship itself, as much as what they consider wider global developments, began to change. World politics was not reducible to the Cold War, rather it developed separately from the broader changes of world politics characterised by decolonisation and the growth of an international capitalist economy.³⁷ These developments were not directly related to the 'Cold War System' as some Pluralists termed the 'superpower' relationship, and ended up threatening the dominance of this relationship and the political actors involved. It is in a sense a theory of decline that is not explicitly asymmetrical. Rather it argues that the Cold War was a source of weakness for both principal participants, the Soviet Union and the United States. This was apparent even by the 1960s with the difficulties each superpower began to confront in its own economy, polity and international position. This was partially recognised by both sets of elites with the *détente* of the early 1970s, a recognition that marked a watershed in superpower relations with a near recognition of areas of mutual interest that did not conform to the ideological straight-jackets of each side's world view. However, it was to take the *rapprochement* guided by Gorbachev and Reagan/Bush that formalised a

³⁶ See the work of Allen Lynch *The Cold War is Over - Again* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992) and R. Jervis *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976)

³⁷ See R. Crockatt *The Fifty Years War: The United States and the Soviet Union in World Politics, 1941-91* (London: Routledge, 1995) pages 112-3; 209; 212; 278; 297; 301.

recognition of a relationship based on a degree of interdependence.³⁸ With respect to the New or Second Cold War of the early 1980s and its impact on world politics, for Pluralists, Realist theorists exaggerate its impact. The quote below highlights this and is striking, in that the metaphor is almost exactly the same as that used by George Kennan in the famous 'X' Article of 1947:

'..the New Cold War may be seen as the dyeing phase of the Cold War like the brightness of a star shining its brightest, before it burns out.'³⁹

There are a number of issues that emerge from such an understanding of the history of the Cold War, which relate to Pluralist conceptions of the Cold War. In the appreciation above, the Cold War relationship between the 'superpowers' and their blocs, is based upon power maximisation or dominance within each respective sphere of influence. Whereas within Pluralist approaches there is a consideration of social-economic change in the rest of the world, the emergence of other units of economic power and multipolarity that are removed and separate from developments within the Cold War relationship. The marginalising of the social-economic determinants of the Cold War is curious when they are central to the understanding of developments in world politics. The narrow focus on political power is a major simplification, especially the removal of the Cold War from developments in world politics. This is a misreading of developments, especially in the Third World. In failing to point out the link between US involvement in world politics with the triumph of capitalism, Pluralist theory is guilty of a major oversight. They recognise that international capitalism proved to be more successful in terms of adoption in the Third World, but it does not tell us why it was, and why the Soviet or state-centred models failed:

'The ideological attraction of the Soviet system, which gained some prestige as a result of the Second World War and some adherents among newly independent Third World countries, waned over the period. By contrast, Western culture and economic methods proved eminently exportable and adaptable to local conditions in many parts of the world.'⁴⁰

Here Pluralism fails to provide any real understanding and analysis of the Soviet experiment's impact on world politics, and how far the Soviet Union *did* play an important role in providing some alternative for a number of states in the Third

³⁸ *Ibid...* p.260; 301; 304. In many respects this argument is also put forward by the Marxist theorist of the Cold War, Michael Cox. See his 'What Happened to the "Second" Cold War? Soviet-American Relations: 1980-88,' in *Review of International Studies* Volume 16, 1990 (p.155-72).

³⁹ R. Crockatt (1995) p.5. Also, see George Kennan's 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct,' (1984) p.125

World in paths of social development. We can talk about its impact or not in world politics, but it should be recognised that it played a significant role in developments in world politics, and the spread, or obstacles to the spread of global capitalism. The Soviet Union, historically, was the most important, and in some respects most successful attempt to pioneer an alternative to capitalism. Most Pluralist analysis does not even question let alone answer this, why capitalism successfully spread and provided a better model for emulation than socialism in world politics. It did not just happen, it was not inevitable. It was the actions of states, nations and classes that facilitated this, and the policies and actions of the USA and the Soviet Union were prominent in this. Consequently, Pluralist theory fails to draw the strands together that link the Cold War conflict with a broader world politics. Although correct in emphasising the tensions and developments within each bloc that undermined the individual capacity of each 'superpower' to act unilaterally, this ultimately constrained one superpower more than the other. And with the success of capitalism and liberal democracy as the only systemic forms, we saw the triumph of one side in the Cold War.

Pluralist theory does however go beyond Realism in its understanding of the Cold War, and does have a theory of change that provides an explanation for the evolution of Cold war politics between the 'superpowers' and their respective blocs, and an understanding of the domestic-international relationship which is encapsulated in its explanation of the end of the Cold War. In identifying what they label internal *constitutive* norms and values of political systems, they have sought to offer a distinct appreciation of the Cold War and its end. This concentration on internal political values *contra* the Realist fixation with the security dilemma is used to explain the changes initiated by Gorbachev, which led to a US-Soviet understanding that occurred in a security environment that had not radically altered. Capabilities remained the same but the norms and rationale that dictated the logic of these capabilities had shifted.⁴¹

Pluralist or liberal theories, by looking at the security relationship, principally, the end of the bipolar security system in Europe of two mutually hostile security blocs-NATO and the Warsaw Pact- seek to highlight the problem

⁴⁰ R. Crockatt (1995) p.370

⁴¹ See F. Kratochwil 'The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-Realism as the Science of Realpolitik,' in *Review of International Studies* Volume 19 no. 1, January 1993 (p.63-4), and R. Ned Lebow 'The Long Peace, the End of the Cold War, and the Failure of Realism,' in *International Organisation* Volume 48 no.2, Spring 1994 p.250.

for Realist insights of explaining the impact of external (Western) pressure as an explanatory device that can explain Gorbachev's change in foreign policy orientation and domestic change. For example, external change accompanied internal political changes, and with the failure of the August 1991 coup and the subsequent outlawing of the CPSU, foreign policy changes took on a qualitatively new orientation. That is, it was after *internal* change in the norms and values that determined political outlook had changed did Gorbachev and the elite decide to remove the structural power position of the Communist Party from Soviet society.⁴²

It was not the external pressure of one side and the capitulation of the other that *caused* the changes of 1987 onwards, but that change was mutual, it occurred in both Moscow and Washington, and this explains the peculiar end to the Cold War. It was a recognition of the mutual interests in the avoidance of war, and the need to seek unilateral advantage and escape from the conditioning of either side's postwar national security policies that allowed for the accommodation manifest in the events after 1989:

'..because the US and the Soviet Union repudiated the notion of IR as a self-help system and changed the rules by which they operated, they transformed their relationship and, by extension the character of the international system.'⁴³

The underlying ontological premise of such an analysis and understanding is that the Cold War was about the separation of the Soviet bloc through Stalinism of a different set of constitutive political norms which determined international behaviour. Whereas American invitations to the Soviet Union and the countries of East-Central Europe was spurned and used as an ideological device in the mid-1940s; under Gorbachev, because of the crisis of political legitimacy of Communist regimes, American offers of membership of multilateral institutions and economic and financial assistance were welcomed in the late 1980s.⁴⁴The Cold War began and could only continue with the reproduction of different political norms that Stalinism and American Liberalism represented after the

⁴² R. Ned Lebow (1994) p.266.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p.276. See T. Risse-Kappen 'Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War,' in *International Organisation* Volume 48 no.2 Spring 1994 (p.184-214), where Risse-Kappen views the impact of alternative security paradigms representative of a global liberal international community, and how these impacted on the different domestic structures of the USSR, USA and the Federal Republic of Germany.

⁴⁴ R. Koslowski and F. Kratochwil in 'Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System,' in *International Organisation* Volume 48 no.2 Spring 1994..p.217-20 and F. Kratochwil (1993) .p.70-2.

Second World War. It was Gorbachev's initiatives in the 1980s that transformed the relations within and between the blocs and American responsiveness that ended the Cold War.⁴⁵

As mentioned earlier with the mellowing of 'superpower' relations manifested in détente the changes from 1989 onwards are seen as part of an historical continuum, which had been blocked by Soviet actions in 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia. The changes derived from the political legitimisation crisis of Communism, which was evident with developments in civil society in East-Central Europe, epitomised by the growth of *Solidarnosc* and Charter '77. It was the developments that saw a relaxation of domestic politics and the end of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' that fundamentally altered the relations within each socialist state, and was to alter the relations within the bloc formations, especially the Warsaw Pact. Once this was evident the West encouraged reform and supported Gorbachev, and in doing so the postwar political and security divide in Europe was overcome.⁴⁶

We can see that what were the central features of the Cold War for these theorists amounted to the domestic political constitutive norms and values of each bloc, and the role of individual political actors in dealing with the structural-security constraints of the Cold War. The actions of the West, containment, had a role in initiating the Cold War, but also the actions of the West, indeed what the West was, also helped to set the environment that allowed for Gorbachev's reforms.⁴⁷

Pluralist analysis provides a rich source of explanation for Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' in Soviet foreign policy, but it is far too narrow in locating the source of change, what that change involved and the actors involved to give us a full theory of the Cold War, and thus, adequately explain its end. The change in political norms is only half the story, and with the post-Cold War developments, it seems that it has been the social-economic changes that have been most potent in destroying any alternative to Western models of political and economic

⁴⁵ R. Koslowski and F. Kratochwil (1994) p.223; p.228: 'Just as the Cold War began in East-Central Europe with Stalin, so it ended there with Gorbachev revoking the "Brezhnev Doctrine"...Gorbachev's decision reconstituted the international system by changing the constitutive norms of bloc politics and thereby the rules governing superpower relations.'

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p.234; p.236-42.

⁴⁷ See D. Deudney and G. John Ikenberry 'The International Sources of Soviet Change' in *International Security* Volume 16 no.3, Winter 1991-2 (p.74-118); and 'Soviet Reform and the End of the Cold War: Explaining Large-Scale Historical Change,' in *Review of International Studies* Volume 17 no.3 1991 (p.225-

organisation. There is nowhere an appreciation of the success of capitalism and the *forced* capitalisation of the societies and economies of the former Soviet bloc. To suggest the intervention or role of the West and its institutions was only benign and was distinctly different from the rationale of 'Cold War think' is a little naive and inaccurate. The economies and societies of the former Soviet bloc have suffered, and are continuing to suffer as the remnants of socialism are uprooted and replaced by capitalist social relations in a process that represents an intensity of change, political and social that is usually associated with social revolution. That, for all intents and purposes is what is happening, the creation of new class structures within a new political and economic framework. This dislodging of the *social* past, creating unemployment, but competitive economies mapped out by capitalism has also helped destroy the delicate political coalitions in many of these states, providing fertile turf for the new breeds of ethno-extremists. Such developments have occurred with the end of the Cold War, because they represent what the Cold War was about. Pluralist theorists are right to point out political learning and the adoption of formal democratic structures, but they refuse to recognise the social content of constitutive norms in both East and West. If they did, they would instantly recognise the victory of one side and social system over the other in a scenario that could have been mapped out by that great Cold War ideologue John Foster-Dulles.

3. Historical Materialist Approaches to the Cold War

The Cold War provided Historical Materialism with more than just an intellectual and conceptual problem. The politics of the Cold War were never very far away from Marxist scholarship on the Cold War.⁴⁸ Obviously this derived from the participation of a state and social form that claimed it was the political manifestation of Marxism. Fortunately, this has not prevented Historical Materialism from having a rich and varied theorisation of the Cold War.⁴⁹ Though one is wary of sweeping generalisations, one can identify a general contribution to

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⁴⁸ See the debate between Fred Halliday and E.P. Thompson p.78-99 and p.100-109 in R. Blackburn (ed.) *After the Fall: The Failure of Communism and the Future of Socialism* (London: Verso, 1991) and the comments by Michael Cox in 'The Cold War in the age of Capitalist Decline,' *Critique* Volume 17, 1986 p.17-25.

⁴⁹ Indeed much of the Marxist inspired work on the Cold War derived from the official Soviet canon of Marxism-Leninism in such publications as *International Affairs*. Unfortunately much of this work only served to justify official Soviet positions, rather than developing a more substantive conceptual analysis of the USSR. For a comprehensive overview of Soviet IR, see M. Light *The Soviet Theory of International Relations, 1917-*

Cold War theory in a focus on relations that go beyond the political relations of the state. Historical Materialism has questioned to differing degrees, the explanatory power of the state and politics, and has instead looked to the constitutive social nature of the societies involved in the Cold War that ultimately, *determined* the political relations between the 'superpowers' and the other states involved in the Cold War. Class is seen to be an international actor with varying degrees of potency and importance for an understanding of the Cold War.

As suggested Historical Materialism wants to transcend the ontological status of the state and in a number of different ways, examine the social *totality* that encompasses the political in the fabric of a particular set of social relations. This assumption provides one of the most important conceptual breaks from traditional IR, and for the Cold War it suggests that it was about something more than great power conflict or the socialisation of a revolutionary state by the political norms of the system. It suggests that the Cold War was in one form or another, a form of *class conflict*. In identifying class and social conflict as being constitutive features of the Cold War, Marxist-informed theories provided a conceptual break by locating the axis of the postwar world history in a state-society relationship. And it is in this social relationship that Historical Materialism has a theory of change in the Cold war.

Broadly speaking Marxist-informed theory locates social conflict either *within*⁵⁰ the social space of each social system that contested the Cold War-liberal democracy and capitalism, and Communist one-party state and a socialised economy-or actually *between*⁵¹ the two social systems. In the case of the former the Cold War was seen as an external manifestation of the class contradictions and conflict within each bloc. In other words the Cold War was a form of externalised class conflict whereby international relations or the Cold War was used to

1982 (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1988).

⁵⁰ See Mary Kaldor *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); *The Baroque Arsenal*. (London: Abacus, 1983); 'Warfare and Capitalism,' in New Left Review (ed.) *Exterminism and Cold War*. (London: New Left Books, 1982); M. Kaldor et al (ed.) *The New Détente: Rethinking East-West Relations* (London: Verso, 1989); and Michael Cox 'Western Capitalism and the Cold War System,' in M. Shaw (ed.) *War, State and Society*. (London: Macmillan Press, 1984a); (1986); 'What Happened to the "Second" Cold War?' in *Review of International Studies* Volume 16, 1990a; 'From Détente to the "New Cold War": The Crisis of the Cold War System,' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* Volume 15, no.3 Winter 1984b; 'From Truman Doctrine to the Second Cold War. Superpower Détente: The Rise and Fall of the Cold War,' in *The Journal of Peace Research* Volume 27 no.1 February 1990b; 'Radical Theory and the New Cold War,' in M. Bowker (ed.) *From Cold War to Collapse: Theory and World Politics in the 1980s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁵¹ See Fred Halliday *The Making of the Second Cold War* Second Edition (London: Verso, 1986); *From Kabul to Managua: Soviet-American Relations in the 1980s* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); (1995).

legitimise the internal forms of social organisation.⁵² In the case of the latter, the focus on the internal was inverted (though not ignored), and instead sought to address what was seen as genuine social conflict at the international level. Capitalism had its own internal contradictions, as much as some of the internal conflicts within the socialist bloc. Nevertheless there were two distinct social systems that had much less in common than they were different and antagonistic. The Cold War was the expression of that social conflict, waged globally between different social forms that ultimately sought to represent different classes.⁵³

With respect to Soviet theory,⁵⁴ the internal dynamic that determined Soviet international relations during the Cold War was the ‘transition to socialism’ under the guidance of the CPSU. The internal goals of material-productive development conditioned the notion of peaceful co-existence and also détente, particularly when such relations facilitated Soviet material development objectives. International relations was also determined by the theory of capitalist crisis⁵⁵ and the expectation of long-term capitalist economic decline.⁵⁶ Soviet conceptualisation reflected the outcome of officially sanctioned debates within the Party-state, with conceptual development directly tied to political developments in the Cold War. Because of the lack of a fully self-reflective critical stance within Soviet theory, although one can find a number of useful concepts, for example the notion of the ‘correlation of forces’ to encompass something wider than the military-based ‘balance of power,’ it is difficult to disentangle theory from official Soviet positions. Thus, Soviet approaches will not be addressed directly in this chapter and thesis, but rather indirectly through the analysis of Soviet policy itself, which arguably provides the best focus for critical attention on Soviet theory. What follows is an overview of the conceptual issues that a number of (Western) Marxist-informed approaches use to understand the Cold War. One conceptual issue that Historical Materialism raises which has been identified with the work of Michael Cox concerns the nature and development of international capitalism,

⁵² See M. Cox (1984a) p.142 and M. Kaldor (1990) p. 5; 112. Whereas Cox focuses on the need for capitalism to have an external enemy, Kaldor focuses on the dualism of both systems needing an external threat.

⁵³ F. Halliday (1994a) p.181.

⁵⁴ For comprehensive overviews, see M. Light (1988) and A. Lynch *The Soviet Study of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁵⁵ Which was drawn directly from early Bolshevik debates, particularly as outlined in Lenin’s *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1934).

⁵⁶ Something that also influenced the influential Marxist critic of the USSR, Isaac Deutscher who believed that, in the long-term, Soviet-socialist forms of production would ‘out-produce’ the more ‘crisis-ridden’ capitalist forms. See *The Great Contest: Russia and the West* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

with respect to the postwar political and economic settlement under American hegemony, and the role of the Soviet Union in this development. The end of the Second World War provided particularly favourable circumstances for the imposition of an American dominated international capitalist order. American political and material dominance and the Soviet threat were the principal structural causes of a strengthened postwar capitalist order. Instead of challenging capitalism, the Soviet Union actually facilitated its reinvigoration and dominance in the postwar era:

‘We might argue that whereas after 1917 Russia upset the world system, after 1947 it facilitated its stabilisation.’⁵⁷

Because of the desperate state of the economies of Europe and the threat of Soviet power, the national contradictions that had plagued capitalism were put aside with American leadership.⁵⁸ The geopolitical and economic situation immediately after the end of World War Two provided for the dominance of two states and social systems in a divided Europe which soon spread to the rest of the world. As for the Cold War itself, the conflict between these two sides served to provide the main ideological tool, if not interdependence, for the dominance of each ruling class within each bloc of states, the Stalinist elite in the Soviet bloc and the American capitalist class in the West. Therefore, in what one might argue as a Trotskyist position, the Cold War displayed an appearance of external political and social conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union, but its *essence* was the maintenance of the dominant position of each ruling class within each bloc. Thus, it was concerned with stability and the maintenance of the status quo. The ‘Cold War System’ was the struggle that began at a particular apposite historical conjuncture at the end of the war, where up until its end two class formations attempted to maintain hegemony within their respective spheres through a mutual relationship of interdependence. The Cold War ended because neither the USA nor the USSR could maintain the system as it had evolved from 1947. The end of the Cold War was as much a need for the American ruling class as it was for the Soviet one.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ M. Cox in (1984a) p.143 and page, p.146: ‘The struggle against the worldwide communist threat provided America with the necessary ideological *raison d’être* to mobilise its people behind the great tasks which lay ahead, whilst legitimising its imperialism abroad.’
and in (1986) p. 36: ‘Without the Soviet Union, the rehabilitation of bourgeois rule on a world scale would have been impossible in the postwar period.’

⁵⁸ See M. Cox in (1984a) p.139; 142 and (1986) p.28.

⁵⁹ See M. Cox (1990a) p.170.

For Cox, what lay behind the facade of the Cold War conflict was the attempt by two ruling classes to maintain power within their respective spheres. And in trying to achieve this end each side needed the other. Such an analysis has many similarities with some Realist theory of the Cold War in terms of the manipulation of an external threat for internal political legitimacy.⁶⁰ Its difference from Realism derives from its analysis of the explicit relationship between class and political power. However, its understanding is rather one-sided with a focus on the Western capitalist states, primarily the United States. The Cold War came about because of the need for the American ruling class to secure global ascendancy over its weaker, and in 1945, desperate international rivals. Inter-capitalist class conflict is determinant for the events of 1945 and after, and not the conflict with the Soviet Union. In assuming this there is a marginalisation of the role and real social threat that the Soviet Union presented to the capitalist countries after the war. It is a case of how the internal situation in the dominant capitalist state, the USA dictated relations with its 'allies' to secure dominance in the world economy. In many respects the position of the Soviet Union is anomalous, because it was not a *real* threat by claiming to be an alternative to capitalism and actually increasing the social space removed from capitalism, but without it as a threat, there was no real pretext for American hegemony.

Although Cox does articulate a theory of the Soviet Union it is rather contradictory, in the sense that he does accept, though guardedly, the disequilibrium that Soviet involvement, especially after 1947, in world politics brought.⁶¹ Also Cox's theory of the Cold War is undermined by his own inclusion, again in a rather under emphasised way, of the nature of the Soviet socialist system. He admits that it was a distinct form of social relations but that is it. He does not consider its demonstrative effect, especially in the Third World and in the facilitation of revolution against Western imperialism. Thus, the USSR was only a limited international actor, and he tends to marginalise its role in the Third World, yet this sits uncomfortably with his concern to highlight American imperialism, which directly challenged and was challenged by Soviet interference. Cox's understanding, then, has a problem in explaining how and why the USSR and the USA were in conflict in the Third World, and why for example, the Soviets were

⁶⁰ See G. Kennan (1984) p.112.

⁶¹ See M. Cox in (1984a) p. 159.

willing to provoke the United States, as they did in Cuba in 1962 in pursuing their international objectives.

Cox's non-recognition of the antagonism between the two superpowers that manifested itself more ferociously in Third World conflict than anywhere else is a major gap which pushes his theory of a 'functional' Cold War towards what appears to be a conspiracy theory. Indeed his overemphasis on Europe itself exposes another major weakness, in his assumption that America manipulated or exaggerated the Soviet threat to ensure the global political and economic dominance of its capitalist class. It obviously did do this, but this does not have to lead us to the acceptance, as Cox suggests, of a lack of a genuine antagonism between East and West. It was the Western European states that asked for American intervention in Europe, it was not imposed. Churchill in his 'iron curtain speech' in Missouri in 1946 understood the perceived threat, political and military, from the Soviet Union, which identified the Soviet intimidation of Western Europe as the greatest threat to the successful re-imposition of liberal democracy and capitalism there. Therefore, although we can recognise contradictions within the Western capitalist states, and indeed American dominance was beneficial to the American ruling class, to suggest that these were qualitatively more potent than the bigger schism between capitalism and Soviet socialism is misleading.

Cox to his credit recognises this, but this does not alter the crux of his theory as outlined above. He does identify a contradiction in the relationship between capitalism and Soviet socialism. For him this remains the paradox and contradiction of the Cold War system.⁶² The separation of the Soviet Union from the capitalist world market and the international division of labour is a constant thorn in the side of capitalism. This is indeed true. But for Cox that is it. Its existence is sufficient to provide a source of real social tension, not only an appearance. However, the Soviet Union was not only outside of the capitalist system it actively sought to transcend and provide an historical alternative to it. In this it did, partially. Its proclaimed universalism did have an impact beyond the immediate Soviet bloc in the Third World where it actively challenged and at times helped to displace capitalist social relations.

⁶² See M. Cox (1984b) p.265 and in (1986) p.19

Mary Kaldor in many ways adopts a similar position to that of Cox in her focus on the internal conflict within each bloc in the Cold War, but has a more explicit conception of a state-society relationship. *Imaginary War*, Kaldor's principle theoretical contribution to Cold War theory reflects her concern with the social basis of state power in both East and West, and the impact of the militarisation of state and society.⁶³ The Cold War or 'the East-West conflict' as Kaldor more usually calls it, was an outcome of the Second World War, in the sense that war, or its preparation and image production, was the central defining characteristic of the postwar political order until 1989. Kaldor describes this period or political order as 'imaginary war.'⁶⁴ She suggests like Cox, that this atmosphere of tension and hostility was something exaggerated and although she recognises that there were tensions between each bloc:

'The elements of conflict, however, were outweighed by the complementarity of the two systems both needed the other in order to regulate domestic and interstate relations within both systems.'⁶⁵

The 'imaginary war' the formation of military alliances after the Second World War and the integration of states into political and economic formations, what she calls 'Stalinism' and 'Atlantacism'⁶⁶ were attempts made by each ruling class to legitimise the particular form of social relations and reproduction of state power within each bloc.⁶⁷ This being the case Kaldor focuses on the contradictions and conflicts within each social formation. Like Cox she disputes the real threat that each posed to the other. Indeed, if there was a threat to each social system it derived from internal tendencies and contradictions. In the case of Stalinism:

'The West represented an appealing alternative to Stalinism, though the main challenge to Stalinism came from revisionist Communists.'⁶⁸

Similarly, Stalinism never threatened to undermine capitalism and liberal democracy in the West. It was the critics of the postwar compromise between capitalism and social democracy based on a militarised alliance that was the greatest threat to the social system in the West, most exemplified by peace campaigners and the radical left. Implicit in this analysis is something of a

⁶³ See M. Kaldor (1983); and (1982) p.261-87.

⁶⁴ (1990) p.3

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p.112 also see p.3-6, and p.104-16

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p.5

⁶⁷ Underpinning this understanding was the theory of a 'permanent arms economy' associated with, among others, Michael Kidron *Western Capitalism Since the War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970).

⁶⁸ M. Kaldor (1990) p.112

mutuality of ideas and hopes for the replacement of the ideology of 'imaginary war.' Kaldor's analysis is imbued with a sense of idealism which is missing from Cox's analysis, an idealism that is placed upon the radical critics of each social system as manifested in the peace campaigners and the outgrowth of a semi-autonomous 'civil society' from the 1970s, exemplified by the dissident movements of Charter'77 and *Solidarnosc* in the Soviet bloc.

What linked the social developments and contradictions within each bloc to produce the emergence of social forces that had a common thread, that was anti-militarist, pluralist-democratic and anti-bloc politics with a faith in a radical civil society, were the contradictions in the reproduction of state power within each bloc. The reproduction of state power was determined according to Kaldor, not from the autonomous realm of politics *à la* Realism, but from the organisation of the economy. What characterised the postwar organisation of society was an industrial base of mass production and organisational uniformity. 'Statism' is how Kaldor describes the postwar world, and the separate blocs that emerged after the war were examples of this phenomenon to greater or lesser degrees. Under Stalinism the society and state form came closest to a militarised formation and this ultimately served to undermine the legitimacy of the social system in the East. The Cold War was thus a period of the struggle to reform an unreformable system. Each bout of reform leading to economic and subsequently political liberalisation (the German Democratic Republic in 1953, Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland throughout the 1970-80s) which all threatened the social basis of state power.⁶⁹

Atlantacism was another manifestation of 'statism', but instead of a contradiction based on economic reform and political repression, the conflict was much more limited to the economic sphere between private property and the market against the role of the state in the management of the capitalist economy. Up until the early 1970s the compromise between social democracy and capitalism lasted, but by the early 1970s there was a crisis of the state in the West. The consensus that the postwar capitalist order had been constructed under American hegemony came apart. Inter-capitalist conflict ensued, as the USA began to lose its

⁶⁹ *Ibid* pages. 55-69.

political and economic dominance marked by the debacle in Vietnam and the end of the convertibility of the US dollar.

Like the problems that developed from the warming of relations between the two antagonistic blocs that loosened the coercive basis of state power in the East, détente in the West served to allow the political expression of marginalised tendencies there who were critical of the social system and the Western military alliance. The period of détente coincided with the break down of structures that dominated the postwar order in East and West. The failure of détente to reform and maintain state power in each bloc inevitably led to a return to the confrontation of the Cold War.⁷⁰ The 'New Cold War' saw the return of a number of features that had characterised events within and between societies in the late 1940s, which saw the 'beginning' of the Cold War. These included an increasing hostility between the two sides manifested in rearmament, and the ending of arms talks that had become customary in East-West relations since the early 1970s. Finally, the language of belligerence and confrontation replaced that of accommodation and reciprocity.

However, for Kaldor it was the internal developments that were most significant. The swing to the Conservative right highlighted by the populist programmes of Reagan and Thatcher served to combine the external with the internal. A reconsolidation of internal state power was combined with the flexing of Western military muscle for the first time since Vietnam.⁷¹ In the Soviet bloc this was mirrored with the clamp down on dissidents and a return to traditional repressive measures to maintain internal order. However, such moves to shore up the remaining features of the postwar order(s) within each bloc's social system proved in the long term futile with the events of 1989 and after. As 1989-91 showed, the Communist or Stalinist project collapsed from within due to its own internal contradictions. In the West the post-Cold War order has undermined the political-economic project that was coming apart in the 1970s with the future still being constructed. What remains beyond doubt is that the Atlantacist compromise has collapsed mainly because 'the cement that was holding the bricks together,' the Soviet threat of the 'imaginary war' has disappeared from the surface of international relations.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* pages 119-28.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.154-79

Kaldor's appreciation of the Cold War in many areas brings to the fore concepts and concerns that dominate Cox's work. However, we can discern something quite particular in the explanation of a theory of the Cold War from *The Imaginary War*. One difference concerns the role of political agency. Cox's class analysis focuses on the political agency of the state as an articulation of class power, he does not consider the agency of class within civil society as having a significant determining effect on the conduct of the Cold War and its end. Kaldor has sought to locate class as a vehicle for political change within the emergence of what she calls a 'second society'⁷² in both East and West. The dominant currents in the 1980s within the civil society of each bloc sought to transcend the conflict by critiquing and ultimately overcoming the social relations that each bloc was based upon, what many identified as a 'Third Way' or a coalescing of a radical alternative. Therefore Kaldor has given great emphasis to the role of the social movements in both East and West in the ending of the Cold War. This location of political agency in the form of the peace movement in the West and the dissident movements in the East however, has proven to be a little naive. Although one should not doubt the role of civil society in the ending of the Cold War, the focus on the metamorphosis of an autonomous sphere is exaggerated. First of all it was state action, principally the actions of Gorbachev that removed the external veto on internal change. It was only within this political framework that saw an impact of social movements. Although social movements may have accelerated change in the East they did not cause it, and even in this regard, by the late 1980s the peace movements in the West had well passed their point of being able to mobilise mass public-political support. It was states who were the main actors, indeed as carriers of particular social relations and class interests, but the impact of the autonomous sphere of civil society's social movements soon dissipated with the removal of the obvious visible vestiges of a particular authoritarian rule.⁷³ But this only happened in the East. There was no corresponding change in the West.

Because Kaldor's argument relies on an implication of symmetry in the Cold War between the contradictions within each system she overlooks the gross asymmetry that was manifest with the events after 1989. The Soviet bloc quickly disappeared as a distinct and different set of social relations and was quickly

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.236

⁷³ See Fred Halliday (1994b) p.49-66.

moved to be replaced by a set of social relations *imported* from the West; American popular culture, with Western European or Christian Democratic capitalism. This leads on to another problem with her analysis of the Cold War conflict. Like Cox, it underplays the real social and political conflict between two different social systems. Rather than as she suggests, the existence of a different social system providing the legitimacy for the imposition of another social system (capitalism), there was real social conflict between the two. We can identify another asymmetry here as Kaldor does,⁷⁴ but the asymmetry was not only political it was in the social-economic sphere too. By an overemphasis on the Cold War in Europe as Cox does, Kaldor does not give due weight to other parts of the world where the social conflict was much more evenly based and where, throughout the postwar period there were victories and defeats for both sides in their attempts to internationalise their social forms.

Both Cox and Kaldor in their analyses give disproportionate weight to the internal evidence of social conflict. In doing so they both marginalise the impact of social and political conflict which dominated the non-European theatres of the world for most of the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War they fail to see that real social change was inevitable, the re-imposition of capitalist social relations on the societies of the Soviet bloc and elsewhere. By claiming that internal conflict within each bloc provided the dominant explanation of the Cold War, they fail to appreciate the international impact of social revolution that *sui generis* the Bolshevik revolutionary project caused. It was not just different degrees of 'statism' that Kaldor implies, it was an attempt at the removal of a society, and later other societies from the economic sphere of capitalist social relations mediated by states. It sought to replace that particular social form and the Cold War was about this attempt and its ultimate failure.

Fred Halliday departs from the work of Cox and Kaldor by focusing on what he regards as the international social conflict mediated by the states of each bloc and social system. Although Halliday does not ignore the role of internal conflict within each bloc as being a participatory factor in the Cold War conflict,⁷⁵ it is not sufficient to explain the history of the Cold War. Halliday seeks to locate

⁷⁴ M. Kaldor (1990) p.108: '...there was an asymmetry between East and West, for Western democracy undoubtedly exercised a greater pull for people in East-Central Europe, than Soviet Socialism did for people in the West.'

⁷⁵ F. Halliday (1994a) p.85

an understanding of the Cold War away from internal conflicts alone and instead focus on the international from two perspectives. One is the determining logic of international military power. This is mainly a concern to highlight how the arms race (particularly in nuclear weapons and strategic competition) acted in parallel, and qualified the second defining feature of the Cold War. The second point is the relationship between how internal societal norms were reflected in the international relations of each 'superpower' particularly in the Third World. Thus, his central point is the conviction that the Cold War was about a conflict of two different social systems. And it was in this conflict represented by the social systems of the two 'superpowers' that provided for global social conflict:

'...the very social interests embodied in the leading capitalist and communist states are present, in a fluid and conflicting manner in the Third World; the result is that the clash of the two blocs is constantly reanimated and sustained by developments in these other states.'⁷⁶

Here we have one of a number of differences with the other Marxist-engaged theories discussed. Halliday gives much greater focus to the involvement of the 'superpowers' in the Third World, which for him provides the principle reason for the intensity of the Cold War and the collapse of détente in the late 1970s.⁷⁷ Whereas on the social, military and ideological front in the crucible of the Cold War-Europe-things remained relatively stable until the upheavals after 1989, it was in the peripheral areas of the old imperial hinterlands that became the Third World where the Cold War conflict was far from imagined and was at times particularly ferocious. The content of Western and Soviet bloc involvement in the Third World lies at the core of an understanding of what the Cold War was about, and how this was conditioned by the arms race and military power. For Halliday superpower intervention in the Third World reflected the competition between the two different social systems that the USA and the USSR came to embody. However, Halliday qualifies this insistence on the impact of American capitalism and Soviet socialism in the world politics by stressing the regulating logic of the arms race and strategic conflict on this. Thus, Halliday suggests that international, at least in the forms of the arms race and strategic conflict, was autonomous of the internal constitutive features of each social system.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ F. Halliday (1986) p.33

⁷⁷ See F. Halliday (1994a) p.133-4.

⁷⁸ See (1986) p.30-6.

Halliday suggests that international relations needs to be understood from the point of view of the constitutive norms and values that determine the social form of particular states. He seeks to provide an alternative conceptualisation of 'international society' from that put forward by the English School. In this understanding the internal norms (political, social and economic), are shared by different societies, which are promoted by inter-state competition. Thus, international society is a form of homogeneity where the internal norms of domestic organisation are framed within similar conceptual parameters.⁷⁹With respect to the evolution of the states system, this homogeneous grouping of states developed on the basis of an economy based on the dominance of private property or capitalism and representative government or liberal democracy. The essence of Halliday's argument revolves around:

'..how, as a result of international pressures, states are compelled more and more to conform to each other in their internal arrangements.'⁸⁰

Ergo, the emergence of an international society of states is co-terminous with the processes of 'homogenisation' where the dominant states and societies of the international system (the West) have, through inter-state and societal competition destroyed or undermined alternative social and political forms based on different forms of domestic legitimacy and organisation.⁸¹In many respects Halliday's theory of IR parallels Fukuyama who Halliday cites approvingly,⁸²in that he regards the Fascist experiments of the inter-war period and later in the military dictatorships of the Mediterranean and Latin America, as failing to be viable alternative forms of social and political organisation *contra* liberal democracy and capitalism.

The Cold War or the international conflict between two distinct forms of social and political organisation fell into this conceptualisation. The description for this conflict is 'heterogeneity'. This denoted an international system made up of differing and competing forms of social and political organisation. The Cold War was a conflict based on the heterogeneity of the international system between two distinct social and political forms, Soviet socialism and liberal capitalism

⁷⁹ See F. Halliday (1994a) p.94-5

⁸⁰ *Ibid* ..p.95

⁸¹ Halliday cites the impact of Western civilisation, (another term for Capitalist property relations and forms of limited and representative government) and traditional inter-state conflict for the erosion of the Manchu and Ottoman empires and the impetus this provided for radical reform in Japan in the 1860s, known as the 'Meiji Restoration.' See *ibid* p.170-1.

represented in and by the dominant state forms of the USA and the USSR respectively.⁸³ What made for conflict was not only the existence of two distinct social forms, but their claims and indeed their actual universalising dynamic.⁸⁴ Thus, the latter, born of revolution was premised on an ideology and political outlook that defined itself as transcendent to the social form it had overthrown, capitalism. From 1917 the Cold War began because of the heterogeneity that Bolshevism implied in the international system. However, its pervasiveness was stalled by the dominance of the inter-capitalist conflict that resolved itself with the end of the Second World War. After 1945 there were only two social-political forms that claimed with any degree of validity to have universal aspirations-socialism and capitalism-and the postwar era was about the contest to secure the successful spread of each system through the mechanism of inter-state and societal competition.⁸⁵ From this understanding of the Cold War as 'heterogeneity' Halliday divorces himself from Kaldor and Cox by recognising that the Cold War could only end with the ascendancy of one system over the other, that is to 'socialise' or 'homogenise' the rival system,⁸⁶ which is how the Cold War ended. Halliday is correct to stress this, despite the qualifications of the social and material cost of ascendancy to the dominant capitalist state, the USA. It was not some sort of joint arrangement between both ruling classes as Cox implies or the triumph of radical social movements in the East *and* West as Kaldor suggests, rather the victory of the particular norms and values, political, social and economic, reflected in the domestic forms of state and societal organisation of the West.

⁸² *Ibid.* .. p.116-119

⁸³ Halliday bases much of his analysis on the actual ideological and political programmes of the 'superpowers' and their claims to represent 'freedom' as in the case of the USA and 'equality' and 'proletarian solidarity' in the case of the USSR. For something of this see NSC'68 published in *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1950* (Washington D.C: Government Printing Office, 1977) p.252: 'Our overall policy at the present time may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish ...This broad intention embraces two subsidiary policies. One is a policy, which we would probably pursue even if there were no Soviet threat. It is a policy of attempting to develop a healthy international community. The other is the policy of "containing" the Soviet System.' Here we see American Cold War foreign policy explicitly identifying with American internal values, which we could identify as liberal democracy and a capitalist economy.

⁸⁴ F. Halliday (1994a) p.174-5. However, this is also an area that is problematic, in the sense that though we can agree on some universalising dynamic; what that dynamic is and how it operates is open to debate, especially with respect to the social form that proved to be an historical failure, Soviet socialism.

⁸⁵ Halliday identifies this conflict of heterogeneity being manifest in traditional forms of inter-state conflict, such as war, and in the spheres of ideology and economics. However, for his understanding of the Cold War in particular (it was military power-conflict that destroyed Fascism, not politics or ideology), Halliday cites the overall political and social norms within a society that the other forms of conflict operate within, and that it was in the realm of the competition between social and political values and norms that the Cold War was actually decided. See *Ibid.* ..p.97; 170.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* .. p.175.

There is much of substance and explanatory power in Halliday's analysis of the Cold War. In taking seriously the social constituencies of each bloc and the interaction between state and society, Halliday transcends the orthodox straightjacket and forms a particular historical sociology of the Cold War. His analysis is informed as mentioned earlier by a broader appreciation of what constitutes international relations than most other theorists of the Cold War. His assertion that one side won, and that we can only understand post-Cold War developments through the expansion of a distinct political and social form of international society is one of the better explanations offered.

In taking seriously, ideology and the particular social and political forms of the state, Halliday provides a broader understanding, but in doing so over-generalises the distinctions between the two social systems of the Cold War. Capitalism and communism were and are not monolithic entities. To a degree Halliday recognises this, but he cannot take it so far because it threatens to undermine his concept of two distinct systems or heterogeneity. Heterogeneity has always existed within the international relations between states, and despite Halliday's claims of 'homogenisation' this is still the case. The states that make up the world are still characterised by social-economic and political diversity. Capitalism may be the only global system, but this has been the case for most of this century, even during the height of Soviet power, whenever one decides to measure it. Soviet socialism may have disappeared from political discourse, but the differentiation between political forms, *internally*, where Halliday locates them, is just as real. In the organisation of social relations within societies, things have altered with the end of the Cold War, but this does not provide an overall explanation as Halliday claims, because he does not separate the political from the economic. The West as a system, throughout the Cold War, was based on two constituent elements-capitalism and democracy, whereas the 'threat' of communism, was based upon the twin elements of dictatorship and a state controlled or a socialised economy. Halliday does not distinguish between the two and the impact of each. However, we can distinguish between the political and the economic. In the sphere of politics within the core socialist states of the CMEA, pluralist democracy, despite the occasional episodes of liberalisation, never amounted to an acceptance of pluralism. In the sphere of the economy however,

the argument is much more problematic, and Halliday does not address this issue. Throughout the history of the USSR and the 'socialist bloc', economic reform and performance was always of central concern to the political leadership. This concern and the debates that it generated were framed in parameters of comparison to the performance of the capitalist states. 1989 and after was the logical conclusion of previous developments and attempts to reform something that proved unreformable. Consequently, it is difficult to see the 'socialist' states as being a systemic alternative, they were never a *systemic* alternative to capitalism.

This brings me on to another point that Halliday's analysis raises. His concern with the Third World is of great importance to our understanding of the Cold War. But his analysis does not distinguish sufficiently, the differences between the Cold War conflict there and in Europe. It was in the Third World where there was real competition between the different models of social and economic organisation, but even here, to talk of manifestations of the features of two distinct systems is problematic. Revolution in the Third World, the historical vehicle of radical social change was not always the product of the expansion of the Soviet system. No matter how we picture the revolutions, from China to Angola and Iran, they were not purely the product of the spread of the particular forms of Soviet social organisation. This only happened in East-Central Europe through the vehicle of Soviet occupation and *direct* involvement in the internal organisation of these states. This never happened elsewhere, and although we can count Soviet assistance to these countries as being of great importance in both the actual revolutionary struggle and revolutionary consolidation, these states and societies never replicated *tout court* the Soviet experience. This has been recognised even within Soviet scholarship on the Third World and the problem of defining these states as socialist, even to the point of actually encouraging capitalist development against the wishes of local socialists.⁸⁷ This obviously undercuts any theory of a global systemic conflict. There was a social conflict, but it is difficult to see developments within the Third World as providing examples of a systemic expansion of the Soviet model.

⁸⁷ See J. Hough *The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985); E. Valkenier *The Soviet Union and the Third World: An Economic Bind* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983).

The final issue that stands out in Halliday's analysis is his concern to locate an autonomy at the international level for military power, as reflected in the (nuclear) arms race and strategic competition. Although he is correct to identify these currencies as helping to determine the international relations of the Cold War, he seems to give them an autonomy which sits uncomfortably with his notion of 'inter (social) systemic conflict' as defining of the Cold War. This qualification in Halliday's approach serves to loosen the conceptual ballast in his theory, by locating an explanation at both the inter-state or international level of military and strategic power, and the domestic level in the international expansion of specific political and economic norms.

This literature survey of the theorisation of the Cold War has discussed a number of various sources, and different intellectual and political traditions. In doing so it has highlighted the principal conceptual tools each uses to explain the Cold War. From this survey we can see that the Cold War provides a major conceptual *problematique* for IR scholarship. This is particularly the case with respect to how internal constitutive values and organisational forms conditioned the international relations of each 'superpower,' and how far we can distinguish the internal from the external as providing the source of explanation in the Cold War. However, with the literature survey in mind we can say a number of things that relate to a definition or understanding about what the Cold War was. First, the crux of the Cold War saw a conflict located in the interaction between state and society at the international level. That is the social forces contained within states were the principal agents of the Cold War. It was in these conflictual relationships located within different forms of political and economic organisation that an understanding of the Cold War is to be found. Secondly, the principal source of conflict within state-society relations manifested itself in social revolution. It was here that the most dangerous ruptures of this period in world history were to be found. The contest, involving the 'superpowers,' but also forces within the Third World saw the challenge of revolution against a particular internal *and* international social order, and attempts to maintain that order. Finally, the Cold War was characterised by the dominance of specific currencies of international relations between 'states' in the form of military power and military conflict. The role of nuclear weapons and the strategic arms race was of central importance both

in international and internal relations, and this needs to be understood if we are to conceptualise the Cold War.

With the above in mind, we have a general conceptual understanding of the Cold War. This being the case the rest of the thesis will be based on theoretical discussions of the state, as a form of political rule and what we mean by 'politics' in the Cold War; the role of military power and conflict as the principal currency of the international relations of the 'superpowers' during the Cold War; and the role of social revolution as a central dynamic in the Cold War that engaged the 'superpowers.' The theoretical analysis will be followed in the final two chapters where a more historically informed approach will attempt to substantiate some of the theoretical positions put forward.

Part One: Theory

Chapter Three

The Politics of the State in the Cold War

The state and inter-state conflict have been at the heart of an understanding of the Cold War. As mentioned in chapter two this has been mainly associated, particularly in stressing inter-state conflict between the 'superpowers,' with Realist theory. However, it is my contention that the discussion of the state and the nature of the state in most Cold War literature has taken an all too problematic conceptualisation, which lacks sociological content and adequate historicisation. What I mean, and this will become clearer below in the substantive argument of this chapter, is that we need to discuss exactly what we mean by the state if we are to properly understand the historical specificity of the Cold War in IR.

The Cold War saw the globalisation of the 'state' through the transformation of the international system, as a universalised political form. This was in legal-diplomatic terms only. Although the state became globalised, what this actually witnessed was the emergence of distinct forms of political community that have representation as states in international relations, but whose content has varied greatly. What this means is that in intellectual and political terms the notion of the state must be contested. This contestation relates to the process of the emergence of new 'states' in the international system and their effect on that system, and how they have related to the pre-existing forms of state. However, it does not relate only to the proliferation of states, but also the changing nature, both domestic and international, of the dominant states in the international system.

The state is not only an abstract concept, and if we conceive of it only in the abstract we end up with a rather empty political category. Although we can identify attributes of a 'state' or more historically accurate, political rule in the abstract, we need to investigate the peculiarities of states or political forms if we are to provide any historical explanation of them. Thus, the state obviously played a significant role in the international relations of the Cold War- something that was specific to the historical and social content, which it existed within. The state was an historical agent, which through the processes of historical development changed. Through its actions it changed the situation, both internally and internationally,

which served to facilitate a change in the nature of itself. The state helped change the politics of the international, and was itself changed by it. This was what the Cold War was about, and it is this that this chapter seeks to investigate.

This chapter will provide a critical overview of the main assumptions behind the Realist understanding of the state, and how this dictates a specific and very limited appreciation of the Cold War. The second half of the chapter will offer an alternative conceptualisation of the state in the Cold War. This will be based on an historical inquiry into the origins of the modern state through an analysis of the relationship between the form of political rule and the organisation of the economy, and how this relationship is mediated by the conflicts within the social relations of production. This will show that the state as a political form, and the currency of politics associated with the state is directly related to the social relations of production. Moreover, the meaning of 'politics' is opened up and contested through the challenges to the state form. This will be highlighted with the contrasting of the politics and forms of international relations of the USSR and the USA respectively. What this will reveal is that politics is not limited to the political form, and even a comparison of political forms suggest the need to recognise the different forms of international relations of the 'superpowers.'

1. Realism, the State and the Cold War in International Relations Theory

Realism as a theory of International Relations is mainly concerned with a focus on the state and the political relations between states. Both the units of international relations and the currency of those relations are identified with politics, and more specifically the politics of power.¹ Although one can find distinct cleavages within the Realist corpus, the focus on the state pervades all Realist work.

What makes Realists distinct is not only in their focus on the state, as either the unit in a system characterised by anarchy,² or the political-organisational manifestation of a specific human nature,³ but also their conception of power. Indeed, it is their conception of power, and its relation to their understanding of the state that is *the* distinguishing feature of Realism. This is important because

¹ H. Morgenthau (1948) p.5-12; 22; 25-35. Although Waltz does not use Morgenthau's understanding of power, at least explicitly, his concern with security, its military definition and projection in a 'self help' system obviously relates to power or more explicitly for Waltz, the balance of power. See Waltz's discussion of the balance of power on p.102-28; and the military definition of power on p.161-93 in (1979) and (1959) p.159.

² See K. Waltz (1959) and (1979).

³ See H. Morgenthau (1948).

Realism seems to collapse the notion of power with the state. Thus, when Realists talk about the balance of power they are not talking about power in general, but rather power as it is institutionally expressed within the organisational form of the state. Power as the state is what characterises Realism. Realism does not separate power and thus politics from the state, and because of this it ends up reifying the state as the sole agent and focus of power. Because of this, Realism fails to investigate the form and substance of 'power' and how such political configurations are reproduced within the state. This is particularly so with respect to the Cold War. Although they did not ignore the domestic, the social or ideological content of internal politics was a 'surface froth' rather than the 'matter' of international relations.⁴

Because of their notion of what power is, whether Realists seek an understanding from the structural properties of the international system or the bases of human nature within the state, they end up with an ontology that is quite ahistorical.⁵ This being the case Realists have an understanding of international politics as operating according to a logic of power politics⁶ and the systemic limits to political action.⁷ Following this logic of equating (coercive-military) power with the state, international politics becomes reduced to the working out of the balance of power. Other currencies of power,⁸ particularly at the domestic level are either detached or ignored from international politics. It is not only the dubious separation of the domestic sources of power from international politics but also the tautology of the balance of power as international politics that leads Rosenberg to suggest:

'..if power in a states system is ultimately military power, and the statesmen is 'doing politics' only when attending to security-related issues, then the hypothesis that the statesmen thinks and acts in terms of interest defined as power becomes unfalsifiable.'⁹

⁴ Kissinger criticised American foreign policy from the position of its inconsistent and flawed attempts to project American domestic ideals onto international relations, what he labels 'Wilsonianism.' However, he suggested that not only was this morally problematic but also unscientific. See (1994) *passim*. Gaddis in his later work intimates to the importance of domestic ideals as a guide for foreign policy, but continues to stress the 'essential relevance of nuclear weapons' as a structural device that insured domestic change. See (1992a) p.105-18. Kennan always stressed the need for American foreign policy to be true to the domestic ideals of the United States, but this was always framed in reference to the state (1984) p.126-8.

⁵ What this means is that the Cold War is treated as an episode within a broader story of political power, and how states of all social and political persuasions are forced to conform to, because of the organising principles of the international system. See J. Lewis Gaddis (1992a) p.45; (1987) p.217; H. Kissinger (1994) p.426.

⁶ See H. Morgenthau (1948) p. 25-29.

⁷ See K. Waltz (1959) p.160; 238, 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory,' in C. Kegley Jnr. (ed.) *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995) p.75; 79-80 and (1979) p.39; 58; 66 and *passim*.

⁸ Most importantly power derived from economic ownership that is not reducible to the state.

⁹ (1994) p.19.

Politics as the balance of power and the state are synonymous. The 'events' or issues that relate to international relations are to be found in the decisions and consequences of the decisions of state policy. The ontological fault line here most obviously lies in the reification of the ontological status of the state which serves to 'screen out' the state-society (economy) relationship. To quote Rosenberg again:

'.. general weakness of the Realist descriptive method, which can perceive that the modern state seeks to mobilise the economy, but not that the economy is also part of a transnational whole which produces important political effects independently of the agency of the state.'¹⁰

This understanding of politics is obviously very limited. It screens out other actors, it screens out other obvious definitions or logics of politics, and it treats the political actors (states) as absolute and autonomous entities. Another problem is that it reduces all change or actions to the political. This is not a problem with the identification of the 'political' but becomes one with the rather narrow understanding of the political in Realism.¹¹ Power is the political. In seeking to explain everything through the interests of power, we end up obscuring or tarnishing everything with the brush of power politics, which is only recognised in its appearance of military and strategic competition. Politics is taken as a recognised uncontested categorisation,¹² a concern that is separate from economics and 'normative' content. However, the 'politics' of Realism is extremely problematical because it fails to actually discuss what politics is in IR.

For Realists the state, or the nature of the state is something that is fixed in the realm of international relations. Quintessentially the state is the state, as it has always been. A state in international relations is a means of organising a people in a limited territorial entity based on the internal supreme political authority of sovereignty, and externally the physical ability to preserve that internal authority from external threats. For all intents and purposes the state in IR then is an agent of political violence, a shell for controlling and directing political violence against other states.¹³ In this respect the 'state' or political community of classical Greek civilisation is no different to the state of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. In

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p.13.

¹¹ For a critique of this see *Ibid* p. 11-12; 18-19.

¹² *Ibid.* p.4- 6.

¹³ For an historical sociology of the modern state that dwells on this historical development, the state as an institution for war see M. Mann *States, War and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) and C. Tilly

essence they are the same.¹⁴ They have the same functions, they confront the same internal and external limitations. The only things that have changed, historically, are the means, and how the means to achieve the goals end up inflecting or determining the system/structure in which these states exist in.

International Relations becomes a discussion of the state rather than states. Such an ontology serves to obscure the real social and empirical content of the state. This is derived from the abstraction of the state as a social/political category that has universal and transhistorical application. However, for Realists this abstraction becomes, in their theory, a reality. The abstract state is treated as a real state. This being the case, the actual content or historical specificity of a state, and the differences between states are not discussed. Because the empirical detail or real essence and nature of the state as a product and subject of history is ignored, ultimately, Realism ends up giving subjectivity to something that only exists in an abstract form. Things, or more accurately *concepts* only become real (ie. pregnant with agency and a part of history) when they are discussed in their specific historical and social context, or totality.¹⁵ Even if we consider the Realist ontology of political-military relations this still leaves out the consideration of the exact nature and currency of these relations. For example, how are these relations constituted? How do they relate to the wider social and material production within that social order? The application or threat of political violence in international relations is something that is taken to mean universally the same. All forms of war or applications of force operate according to the same logic regardless of the state actor involved.

The distribution of power during the Cold War was obviously a major focus for Realism. It was located in a system organised around, what Realists labeled 'bipolarity.' There were two poles of power in world politics that became manifest during the Second World War, identified with the USA and the Soviet

Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990 (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

¹⁴ See H. Morgenthau (1948) p.5; 8; K. Waltz (1979) p.66; and (1959) p. 80-123.

¹⁵ Marx made this a major point of his work. In *The Holy Family*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956) p.78-83 with Engels he attacked the ideal-abstraction of particular forms that the Young Hegelians were guilty of in their philosophical speculations. He was to repeat this critique of the reification of abstract concepts in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1936), in particular p.173, 'In each historical period, property has developed differently and under a set of entirely different social relations. Thus to define bourgeois property is nothing else than to give an exposition of all social relations of bourgeois production. To try to give a definition of property as of an independent relation, a category apart, an *abstract and eternal* idea, can be nothing but an illusion of metaphysics or jurisprudence' (original emphasis). Marx's focus here was property, but his analysis applies equally to the concept of the state, as an eternal given within Realism. For a more elaborate discussion of this in Marx's work see Derek Sayer *The Violence of Abstraction: The Analytical Foundations of Historical Materialism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) in particular p.53-63.

Union. Thus, in this dimension of Realism the Cold War was the term used to describe the particular organised form of political power relations in the postwar period, an international system dominated by the hierarchy organised around the USA and the Soviet Union. The USA with its nuclear monopoly, dynamic economy and sophisticated military machine, and the USSR with a massive army occupying half of continental Europe and alongside its own continental land-mass, a sizable portion of the globe.

The Cold War began with the expansion of political influence into the centre of world politics (Europe) after World War Two into the political vacuum left by the defeat of the axis powers and the weakness of the other traditional European Great Powers.¹⁶ Thus, the end of war saw a power vacuum in world politics which was filled by the Soviet Union and the USA, the two dominant states in the international system. But why did this 'condominium' of power lead to a political conflict? On one level Realism explains international conflict as inevitable and enduring because of the absence of a universal authority in international relations. According to this perspective all states are in some form of conflict with each other. However, in more explicit terms, conflict and competition for power relates to the operation of the mechanism of the balance of power. The international relations of states are conducted according to the logic of the balance of power where states act/react according to the actions of others where they try and balance or gain political/strategic advantage over others. Therefore the political vacuum in Europe after 1945 had to be filled and was, and it was the actions of those that filled this political vacuum, the 'superpowers' that began in Europe and soon spread to other areas of the world. But what is the balance of power in this respect? It provides the conceptual and practical tool for the actions of states according to 'zero-sum' assumptions, (ie. the expansion or increase in objective political power by one state is seen as a loss of power for another state). Thus the actions of one state in furthering its political power/influence leads to a response from another. This, simply put, provides the basis for the dynamic of the Cold War. The pursuit of political opportunity *qua* expansion of political power and influence is the enduring logic of the states-system, and the Cold War is but one episode in this, a distinct episode because it was framed within the structural context of two dominant states.

¹⁶ See H. Kissinger (1994) p. 424-6; J. Lewis Gaddis (1982) p.4; (1987) p.49; A. Lynch (1992) p.15-16.

In its appearance the Cold War seemed to offer a clear example of the operation of the logic of power politics. If anything the bipolar configuration of postwar world politics based on the division of the world into East and West underlined this. The postwar era saw the competition for political power through forms of political and territorial expansion, the application of military force, and the membership of alliances and so forth. However, this explanation though elegant, is both historically and ontologically flawed, and serves to obscure if not delete the real politics and history of the international relations of the Cold War.

Even on its own terms, as an explanation of the political relations between states, Realism reduces the Cold War to the logic of anarchy/self-help. Yet it cannot explain why some states were hostile to others whilst other states were in alliance with others, according to shared internal characteristics.¹⁷ This is probably the gravest of ontological oversights, the lack of analysis of how the domestic and international relate to each other, which serves to inflect when it does not determine the politics of the state in international relations. This is most clearly shown by the presence of particular states that have overthrown or fundamentally restructured both their internal and external relations in the same process, through revolution that had a different logic of politics. This to some extent has been addressed by the English School, which I turn to next.

The Realism associated with the theorists of 'International Society' or the English School principally related to the work of Hedley Bull attempt to offer an alternative to the positions of Morgenthau and Waltz. Bull in particular offers an alternative understanding of what constitutes the international.¹⁸ What is constitutive of the international are the specific political relations between distinct political entities according to a logic derived from a particular normative idea, based on the independence of sovereign states. Thus, although Bull is conscious of the structural limits of the system of anarchy this is not *constitutive* of the society, rather the society is based on values and norms that are found, ultimately, in the members of the society, sovereign states, and how they interact with each other. Thus, the 'self-help' system of Waltz is overcome by a mutual understanding of 'society' and the political order that follows from this.¹⁹ It

¹⁷ See F. Halliday (1986) p. 41.

¹⁸ See (1977) p.51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.8; 24-51.

focuses on the characteristics of states stressing the commonalities of how states act in international relations. Although clearly stating that power and its applications are the ultimate basis of order in international society,²⁰ Bull attempts to historicise the notion of power and how power is mediated. This occurs through particular political values that are constitutive of the states that make up the international society, and thus inflect the system as a whole with a particular political persuasion. These commonalities are in essence the rules and institutions of international relations that 'order the anarchy' that prevails in a political system with no supreme authority.²¹ Whereas for the other variant of Realism, politics is determined by the system-wide features of 'anarchy,' in the English school politics is determined by the political values and organisational forms that go with particular attributes of power. Power thus becomes inflected with values beyond 'power' itself.

Though having an understanding of IR that has a state-centric ontology, the English School seeks to infuse the notion of the state with a particular kind of normative or political-cultural-legal content.²² Although the state is the dominant actor in IR, it is a historical subject that is imbued with a peculiar 'modern' content²³ that makes it so important and distinct.²⁴ The state is sovereign, and in being sovereign is imbued with an empirical content that leads it to act in particular ways in IR. This content derives from its membership of an international society. Such a society is inclusive of only certain political forms. This type of political form, the modern sovereign state is the product of a particular historical-social process (modernity). What is important, and what makes the English School different to other forms of Realism is not the concept of an 'international society' rather than a system of states. But the fact that the political relations between the members of this society are not only regulated by themselves but by particular modern institutions that grew out and emerged from the international expansion of this political form from 16th century Europe. Thus, the history of international

²⁰ See Bull's discussion of the place of the 'Balance of Power' in international society *Ibid.* p.101-26.

²¹ The Cold War therefore was not treated as a broadly distinct period, but rather in terms of the peculiar nature of the postwar international order. The Soviet Union had certain tensions with international society, but it was essentially a member of that society.

²² *Ibid.* p.16; 33-4.

²³ Thus, the state is based on a particular model of domestic and international legitimacy. In terms of the former this reflected the just expression of a political community usually understood as a nation, and in terms of the latter, recognition of sovereign independence by other states. These criteria are not mutually exclusive.

²⁴ For an interesting discussion of this process, focusing on the modern concept of 'territoriality,' see J.G. Ruggie 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations' in *International Organisation* Winter 1993, Volume 47 no.1 p.139-74.

relations is that of the successful expansion of a particular kind of political form, the sovereign state. The sovereign state is regarded as a political and legal entity recognised in international law, and politically in the form of the modern state.

Power politics and war, although recognised within the 'anarchy problematique' are not the only currency or even basis of that currency. The currency or objective of the international society and its members (states) is the preservation of order; a political order based on sovereign states.²⁵ The instruments of war, international law, diplomacy, the balance of power, and the role of the Great Powers all fit into the logic of the maintenance of a particular kind of political order. Thus, power is not a means and ends in itself; it is tempered by the need to preserve order among states. Thus, international relations is about the maintenance of specific forms of international order derived from the sovereign state, and certain forms of state are more orientated towards the norms of international society than others. What this means is that IR is based on a specific understanding of the international and the political. Power has a normative element in terms of the preserving of the international society, which is a unit of collective good. The 'self-help' of Waltz and the 'power-maximisation' of Morgenthau are tempered by Bull's concern to stress the need for orderly relations between states, based on a common and collective notion of society which is both inclusive and exclusive.

The English school attempts to historicise the concept of the modern state through its discussion of the expansion of the political form of the sovereign state. However, this historicisation is still problematic. The problem lies mainly with the limits of the discussion in that the 'English Realists' only explain the expansion of the state as a political-legal-territorial construct. International society theorists fail to adequately theorise the penetration of these ideas and their political forms on the rest of the world. They can explain the expansion of the legal-territorial form, (ie. what appears to be the state in international relations), as it appears on the map and in the membership of the United Nations. But they do not fully explain the permeation of these political forms as it actually happened. The political forms in question, the notion of a sovereign state with a rule of law, based on certain conceptions of right, freedom and citizenship are not separate nor abstract from the wider social processes within which they were embedded. Just as these political

²⁵ See H. Bull (1977) p.8; 13-20.

forms and concepts of rights, relating to a specific concept of the individual, developed out of specific historical social conflicts in Europe, so the expansion of these forms to other parts of the world saw conflicts and attempts to resist their adoption, and attempts to offer alternatives to them. The form of the modern state emerged alongside capitalist social relations. The modern state is then, a capitalist state in the sense that, as a political form it has a specific social and political relationship with individuals and society,²⁶ distinct both to pre-capitalist political forms, derived from feudalism and also non-capitalist political forms that emerged out of the Cold War. The modern state is a product of a social conflict whereby the economy or the reproduction of social life through human interaction with nature was separated from direct forms of political authority²⁷ that were present under feudalism in Europe. The appropriation of the surplus of direct producers was achieved through a purely economic mechanism, the capitalist social relation, rather than from forms of direct political authority in the form of the feudal lord or seigniorial authority.²⁸ The modern state although institutionally separate from this process of the extraction of surplus value is not actually separate. Although, the modern era has seen the 'privatisation' or emergence of the 'relative autonomy' of the economy, it is still related to the political form of authority in the modern state.²⁹

Following this is their actual narrative of the expansion of the modern state form of international society to other parts of the world. This discussion does not

²⁶ See the work of John Holloway and Sol Picciotto 'Capital, Crisis and the State,' in S. Clarke (ed.) *The State Debate* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991) p.109-41 for an extended discussion of the nature of the capitalist state. Thus, the state in capitalist society should not be conceived as something separate from the what appears as purely economic relationships between capital and labour in production. The state has a peculiar and distinct historical presence under capitalism, and should not be conceived as something that is autonomous. The state only exists as a relation, of the extraction of surplus value. As Marx stated: '... The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled... Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of economic community which grows up out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form.' *Capital Volume Three* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981) p.791.

²⁷ See K. Marx: '... the establishment of the political state and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals - whose relations with one another depend on law, just as relations of men in the system of guilds and estates depended on privilege - is accompanied by one and the same act..' (Original emphasis) 'On the Jewish Question' (1843) in Marx and Engels *Collected Works Volume Three* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975) p.167 and: 'The political constitution as such is brought into being only where the private spheres have won an independent existence. Where trade and landed property are not yet free and have not yet become independent, the political constitution too does not yet exist... The abstraction of the state as such belongs only to modern times, because the abstraction of private life belongs only to modern times. The abstraction of the political state is a modern product.' (Original emphasis) 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' (1843) in Marx and Engels (1975) p.32

²⁸ Karl Marx *Capital Volume One* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976b) p. 713-6: 'The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it.... The economic structure of capitalistic society has grown out of the economic structure of feudal society. The dissolution of the latter set free the elements of the former... The immediate producer, the labourer could only dispose of his own person after he had ceased to be attached to the soil and ceased to be the slave, serf, or bondman of another. To become a free seller of labour-power, who carries the commodity wherever he finds a market, he must have escaped from the regime of the guilds'.

²⁹ 'The real state is an essential dimension of capitalism's class relations, the combination of one class over against another.. Its ideal appearance is of an illusory community, which took on an independent existence.' Karl Marx 'The German Ideology' (1846) quoted in D. Sayer (1987) p.111

adequately locate the distinct nature of the currency of the politics of this expansion and the types of resistance this expansion was to confront. This is important because although by the 1960s most of the map of the world was made up of the patchwork of states, (ie. legal recognition as such, and membership of the United Nations), many of these political forms were not states like those states of advanced capitalism. The unfolding out of modernity that had been achieved some time before by these states had not, and for many, has still not been fully achieved. Thus, an adequate conception of state formation is absent from English school history. It is not enough to say that we have an international society of sovereign states just because colonies became independent and secured representation at the UN. This is even more problematic if we consider the fact that a number of 'states' actually transformed their internal/external constitutive forms through social revolution. These entities had diplomatic representation but were they states ? It is not enough to ascribe modern statehood to these states, because the concept of the modern state is bound up with the unfolding of capitalist modernity. Clearly many of these states were not capitalist, they could be more accurately defined by pre-or non-capitalist forms of appropriation or they were actually 'states' that have reconstituted themselves by overthrowing capitalist social relations through social revolution.

The state appears separate, and the English School like Realism in general takes this as in fact the case. However, the process of the development of capitalism involved the political power of the state, as a means to quash attempts at preventing the separation of the direct producers from their means of production. The state acted to assist 'primitive accumulation' through enclosures and other political acts that had social and economic consequences that resulted in the foundations being laid for capitalist social relations.³⁰ The state is the political appearance of capitalism. Though it appears separate it, is heavily tainted by the unfolding logic of the emergence and penetration of capitalist social relations. The modern state, in terms of the sovereign state as described by international society scholars is then, a capitalist state. However, they do not recognise this. The state is only different in its form of political rule, not in terms of how this form of political rule relates to actual social content.

³⁰ K. Marx (1976b) , Part Eight: '.. the use of state power is an essential element of the so-called primitive accumulation.. whose methods all employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organised force of society.' p.737;751.

What Armstrong³¹ recognises is that there is a domestic-international political linkage, a dynamic that helps to explain the evolution of the institutions and practices of international society. However, this does not mean that international society theorists accept that all revolutions in one degree or another subvert the norms and institutions of that international order. They do not. Indeed, for all them, all revolutions are socialised.³² That is, they are forced to conform on the one hand to the organising principles of the international order, that all Realists are agreed on, the sovereign state, and also that the revolutionary state will always conform to the rules and practices that membership of the international society/order requires. These rules or conventions of statecraft are well documented. They include diplomacy and the international machinery that services this form of inter-state relations and the legal boundaries of international law.

For example in Bull's most cited text, *The Anarchical Society* he fails to recognise the importance of domestic constitutive values as having an impact on the Cold War. He makes it clear that the Soviet Union participated as a sovereign state in the five 'institutions' of international society.³³ The USSR was reflective of the broader 'revolt against the West.' Yet, for Bull this was *within* the confines of the institutions of international society, indeed, much of this revolt adopted and applied the language and norms associated with international society to justify revolt. Thus, because of the use of pre-existing norms (ie. the demand for what already existed, at least in theory from national self-determination to legal protection) Bull and others suggested that the Soviet Union was like any other state in its *international* relations.³⁴ In this respect then, Bull appears to reduce power and politics to the organ and logic of the state like Waltz and Morgenthau.

The politics of the state in this tradition of Realism is given a political/normative content that derives from the historical development of the political relations between the members of the international society. Because of its historical development, in particular the postwar developments that saw a near tripling in the number of sovereign states (with a wide and conflicting variety of

³¹ (1991).

³² D. Armstrong (1991) p. 302-3; H. Bull (1977) p.311-15; and 'The Revolt Against the West,' in H. Bull & A. Watson (ed.) (1985) p.217-28.

³³ War (or its control), the balance of power, diplomacy, international law and the responsibilities of being a Great Power.

³⁴ This was most notably for Bull with respect to the co-operation and mutual interests of the 'superpowers' in their management of nuclear rivalry and non-proliferation. Thus nuclear weapons brought them closer together. See *Hedley Bull on Arms Control* Selected & Introduced by R. O'Neil & D. Schwartz (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987) p.72-75; 197; J. Lewis Gaddis (1992b) p.30; (1992a) p.106-7.

internal constitutive political norms), international society's concept of order has developed and taken on a number of normative dimensions that reflect the changing nature of international relations.³⁵ The Soviet Union and the Cold War are but one episode in this history. However, although this makes for a much more open and illuminating potential research programme for Realism, it still suffers from some of Realism's major flaws. International society continues to have a limited ontology of politics that stems from the separation of the political from the economic, which ends up ignoring one of the major aspects of domestic politics. In particular this relates to capitalism, an internal aspect of a society's constitutive definition, but also which is part of an international system that does not stop at the territorial limits of a state. These issues will be discussed more substantively in the following sections of the chapter. The following section will develop some of the issues discussed above with a more explicit reference to the Cold War.

2. Reconstructing a Politics of the State in the Cold War

This section of the chapter will attempt to go beyond the Realist notion of the state in the Cold War by building on the foundations provided by the critique of Realism, and will seek to provide an Historical Materialist conceptualisation of the state in the Cold War. This will be achieved by renegotiating the boundaries and terrain of politics. In a precursor to what follows, politics *qua* the state will be reconstituted in terms of social relations. What this means, is that the separation of politics (the state) and economics (production, distribution and exchange) will be replaced by the conceptualisation of politics as 'the unity in the separation'³⁶ of the political/public sphere of the state and the private/economic sphere of production.

Such a conceptualisation of politics is drawn from the work of Marx and Engels; a conceptualisation that begins with the politics of 'humanity's interaction with nature,' that is the material and social relations of production which lie at the heart of any understanding of human/social relations. For people to make history they need to be able to produce. This is the first act of any society:

³⁵ See D. Armstrong (1991) p.7; R. J. Vincent 'Order in International Politics' in J. Miller & R. J. Vincent (ed.) *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) p.38-64; and P. Lyons 'New States and International Order,' in A. James (ed.) *The Bases of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) p.24-59.

³⁶ Ellen Meiksins Wood's discussion of the 'separation of the political and economic in capitalism' provides an excellent account of the historical specificity of capitalism, but also delivers a devastating broadside against those Marxists who have reproduced this separation and thus implicitly adopted bourgeois categories. See p.19-48 in (1995).

‘.. the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history... is the premise... that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to make history... the production of material life itself... is.. a fundamental condition of all history..’³⁷

The act of production is a material and social act to the point that the individuals cooperating in production are in themselves a productive force. What this means is that production is a social activity that does not concern only what is usually identified with the ‘material base’ of a society.³⁸ Following this is the fact that both the nature of production and the social relations corresponding with this change. Thus, production is an evolutionary form, and it is the evolution, through struggle, that is the basic explanatory feature of all human societies.³⁹ And we are to understand these changes as deriving from social relations of production.

The state or the public-political sphere that appears as separate or autonomous, is seen as an historical and social phenomenon, which cannot be treated, analytically or otherwise, separately from the social relations that stem from humanity’s interaction with nature. This is the basis of the production and reproduction of social life. If one follows such a method, what does this entail for the Cold War ? First, it entails a discussion of the state as a ‘non-static political-spatial form.’ What this means is that we need to see the state not in the ahistorical and static terms of Realism nor in the hyperbolically-charged terms of some liberals and transnationalists who talk of the ‘death of the state,’ but rather as a particular and evolving social-historical form that has centralised political class power. The history of international relations, no less typified by the history of the Cold War is one of the changing, evolving and conflicting development of the state.⁴⁰

The state is only a state in terms of history, in terms of politics. The Cold War more than any period of world history reflects this. This brings me on to the

³⁷ K. Marx & F. Engels *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968) p.39

³⁸ Marx makes this clear in *Theories of Surplus Value Part One* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963) p.288: ‘... it can in fact be shown that *all* human relations and functions, however and in whatever form they may appear, influence material production and have a more or less decisive influence upon it.’ Derek Sayer has attacked the ‘orthodox’ understanding of Marx’s work on this point, by attacking those Marxists who have sought to limit the notion of productive forces to ‘material things,’ by making a clear distinction over what constitutes the material base and the ideological/political superstructure. See (1987) p.15-49.

³⁹ P. Corrigan et al ‘The State as a Relation of Production,’ in P. Corrigan (ed.) *Capitalism, State Formation and Marxist Theory: Historical Investigations* (London: Quartet Books, 1980) p.10.

⁴⁰ Therefore to talk of the state in *a priori* terms can be problematic. Instead, a Marxist formula would attempt to leave the state empirically open-ended and not preclude discussion of the state with definite, transhistorical features. Rather, we should see the state as ‘empirically open-ended’: ‘The state is thus... the entire repertoire of activities by means of which a ruling class endeavours to secure its collective conditions of production. This concept (like those of the productive forces and relations of production)... is an empirically open-ended one. What defines the state is not any set of concrete institutions. These in fact vary historically, state forms being constructed continuously in the course of class struggle. The state is defined by a (productive) *function*: it is this, and this alone, that enables us empirically to identify in any particular context a particular institutional arrangement as the “state” (original emphasis). P. Corrigan et al *Socialist Construction and Marxist Theory: Bolshevism and Its Critique* (London: Macmillan, 1978a) p.9.

second point, and that is the need to address and discuss the politics and/or political logic of different types of 'state' and, between these two issues, is the need to trace the historical development of the state in both domestic and international terms as part of a social totality, which is only reducible to the expansion of capitalism and the international social conflicts wrought in the wake of this expansion. It is these conflicts located both within the territorial confines of the state, but also beyond and between territorial states that have involved the state and transformed it, and in so doing have altered the social relations that realise a particular type of state form.

The 'hard,' 'outer' shell of the Realist state obviously plays a part in this history, but not in the terms set out by Realists. The currencies of nuclear weapons, conventional forces and other forms of the state, are present, but only in a social context.⁴¹ The prosecution of organised political violence by the state is not separable from the strategies of the social reproduction of that state. Thus, the state in these terms, and its military or political expansion, in Realist terms is transformed to reflect the actual social characteristics of states. The state is not seen as reacting according to the laws of anarchy that appear to ensure a uniformity of political outcomes *à la* Waltz, but rather, the state reflects domestic and international class conflict derived from the contradictions of the expansion and consolidation of capitalist social relations and the peculiar types of political-state forms that such a process and conflict throws up.

2.1 Capitalism and the State as a Contested Political Form

In the Realist account of politics, the state is seen as a given, a natural form that is part of the conscious make-up of contemporary, and more importantly historical civilisation. What matters in their discussion of the state is the legal-territorial concern with political authority based on the monopolisation of physical violence, alone. This is obviously important in recognising the emergence of the state, but cut adrift from the social relations between people, it parcels out politics to a public sphere, which is removed from the privatised or (relatively) autonomous realm of the economy. Once this occurs, politics and history become enshrined in the

⁴¹ To treat these forms of political power in their own terms, detached from anything apart from the 'logic of anarchy' exposes the poverty of what constitutes 'International Theory.' The case should be instead to treat these forms of politics within the wider world with which they exist within and are shaped by. For example nuclear weapons are constantly discussed purely in terms of the operation of deterrence. A much richer understanding of the historical notion of these forms of politics could be derived from specifying the historical uses of such weapons. See for example, on this point D. Ellsberg 'Introduction: Call to Mutiny,' in E. P. Thompson & D. Smith (ed.) *Protest and Survive* (New York: Monthly

separate public authority of the state, which relegates the actual history of people to the private sphere. The history of social struggles involving classes is airbrushed from the historical record.

The state is not embodied with human content or agency; rather, it is purely an organisational form of power.⁴² What is obviously missing in this account of the state, and its emergence is the fact that the actual historical presence of the state within a society is a product of a particular social-historical process, which can only be associated with the unfolding of the logic of a capitalist modernity. If this is the case, then the state that Realism talks about is a capitalist state. For Realism, the state is a category or an ideal-type, in the sense of the state being a general political form endowed with general organisational attributes that make it act in a general way. What this means is that the state is treated as an historical subject, when according to analysis of what the state actually is, it is an abstract general category, (ie. an organisational form which enforces a form of rule through its monopoly of physical violence). On this reading we are not dealing with anything that in reality exists, but in something that only exists in reality as an abstraction.

The alternative to this from an Historical Materialist perspective is to treat the state, as an existing social and historical form.⁴³ What this means is that we must obviously have abstract categories and criteria for talking about something, concepts that furnish meaning to a theory, but that we must apply these concepts and ultimately realise them through an historical and specific understanding of types of state or forms of political rule. This is an historical investigation and it implies change and agency. Ergo, Historical Materialism is not concerned with a general theory of history or society but rather about:

‘.. definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production.’⁴⁴

Review Press, 1981) p.i-vi.

⁴² What this means is that the state is de-socialised and de-historicised. Instead of seeing the state as contingent institutional form, which *can* be changed or abolished, because of the states system, all forms of ‘political rule/administration’ become states, despite the fact that we can identify, empirically, that ‘states’ come in myriad forms reflecting different histories and social forces.

⁴³ Marx was clear on this. His project and focus of historical and critical investigation, was not society, but rather a particular society, capitalism, and the existing categories and forms associated with such a society. This being the case. He was not concerned with abstract notions of society in general, but developing the conceptual tools and apparatus of a specific form of society to change it. See ‘K. Marx Letter to Lassalle February 22, 1858,’ in D. Sayer (ed.) *Readings From Karl Marx* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.50.

⁴⁴ K. Marx & F. Engels (1968) p.36.

Therefore the notion of the state in IR needs to be seen in 'processional' terms, as something that has emerged because of the presence and operation of particular kinds of agency, and something that has been subject to change as well as initiating change. The history of the state is thus contingent and alive. The state from this perspective is not reducible to 'politics' as conventionally understood, and it is not reducible to an idealised form separate from society or the social relations between people. Rather, the state should be seen as a 'processional form,' an institutional mechanism associated with the emergence of capitalist social relations that saw an apparent separation of the public power/authority and material production with the dissolution of feudal forms of political rule that incorporated the direct, political extraction of the surplus of the direct producers. Whereas feudal politics incorporated public authority and political rule with material production, the emergence of capitalist social relations saw the beginning of a separation between the form of political rule and the indirect, economic forms of surplus extraction from the direct producers.⁴⁵

However, although the state, as it emerged as a separate and public source of authority that was able to incorporate aspects of social struggle through the expansion of the franchise making people in society 'politically' equal; the state as politics could not incorporate a politics derived from the social relations of production. The production and reproduction of the materials and ideas of social life were privatised. Appearing separate, however, the form of political rule and the means of appropriation have been coupled together, in the sense that although they appear separate, and because there is a real difference between capitalist social relations and forms of surplus extraction from pre, and non-capitalists forms, they cannot be comprehended separately. Without the capitalist state there would be no capitalism, without capitalism there would be no capitalist form of political rule.⁴⁶

The state through law, and its strategic deployment of political power and coercion, acts as a relation of capitalist production.⁴⁷In this sense then the state, and thus the politics identified with the state or the public sphere is not limited to the traditional understanding of politics associated with liberal conceptions. Rather, politics must include the state, but not as a separate sphere of authority, but as it

⁴⁵ See E. Meiksins Wood (1995) p.36-44.

⁴⁶ See P. Corrigan et al in P. Corrigan (ed.) (1980) p.11 and J. Holloway & S. Piccitto (ed.) *State and Capital: A Marxist Debate* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978) p.2; 7; 16.

⁴⁷ See E. Meiksins Wood (1995) p.59-67 and D. Sayer (1987) p.52-3; 89-98.

relates to the 'production and reproduction of social life,' (ie. capitalist social relations). Politics is thus about how the state helps shape, and is itself shaped by the ongoing conflicts and contradictions associated with the preservation and expansion of capitalist social relations, both within the limits of territorial states, and at the international level between states, and within the capitalist social relations that traverse the territorial boundaries of states.

On two levels we can see that the state is a *contested* form of political rule. On one level the state is a contested political form in terms of its role as a relation of capitalist production. The form of the state is bound up with its relationship with capital, in the sense that it acts both as a guarantor of capitalist social relations, and acts within those social relations through forms of law-making, and other aspects normally associated with the non-coercive or welfare state. On another level the state is contested not within the social relations of capitalism, but as an objective for the overthrow of the specifically capitalist form of political rule. Thus, the social struggles within capitalism between those who sell their labour and those individuals and institutions that exist on the basis of the appropriation of that labour do not always stop at the door of the work place. Historically this has been the case; social struggle has been perceived and practiced purely in economic terms, (ie. at the apparent source of the inequality). However, for a frontal assault on the social relations themselves the social struggle of the proletariat must go beyond the economic source and seek the overthrow of the political power behind the form of exploitation. Therefore the state has been historically contested as a specific form of political rule through social revolution which seeks to overthrow the state and transform the form of political rule by reconstituting the state (and society). Thus, the reconstitution of the state sees a direct transformation of the social relations previously existing.

Seeing the state as an essentially contested political form opens up the state both to further intellectual inquiry, but also political strategies for its transformation. It suggests that the state is a historically recent form of political rule in global terms, even to the point where the state as a capitalist state is still not a fully global form. This, in one sense, is the history of modernity in its capitalist incarnation, the struggles both within developing or existing capitalist states, and between capitalist forms of rule as they have internationally expanded through the classical stages of

imperialism associated with the European great powers, and the 'colonial experience' to the more recent forms of political rule that do not have an obviously political form. What this last point entails is that capitalism, to maintain itself and expand, changes in form.

The international history of this political form reflected the changing nature of capitalist social relations. By the end of the Second World War, capitalist social relations within most of the colonial area and within the 'informal' colonies or those areas subject to only American and European 'economic' penetration, had forms of political rule, that were beginning to facilitate the 'self-valorization' of capital. What this meant, was that a direct, formal imperialist presence within the colonial social formation was not required to sustain the presence and expansion of capitalist social relations. This is not to argue that these social formations were capitalist (ie. dominated by generalised commodity production by private producers for the market), but that the formal colonial experience and the 'informal' or non-political capitalist penetration of many formerly 'independent' states, saw the development through social struggle of political forms of rule that facilitated the emergence and expansion of capitalist social relations of production. Struggle, and *class* struggle provides the explanatory formula for an understanding of these developments. The development of the bourgeois form of rule, that was an international as much as an internal process, the Cold War, and American involvement being formative. The postwar era provided the political-institutional forms for the globalisation of capitalism as a world system. Up to this point, the world was *not* capitalist in system terms. Rather, capital, through imperialism, and the occupation and penetration of non-capitalist/pre-capitalist social forms through types of physical conquest, was dependent on the physical presence of capital as an armed force to subdue indigenous group hostility. With pacification came the emergence and creation of political institutions derived from the capital relation, what are inappropriately described as states, were in fact forms of political rule that became states, but through class conflict. This process was 'finalised' or reached a stage of qualitative transition with de-colonisation and the incorporation of waves of new 'states' into international society. This was the *realisation* of the colonial project. Capital, ultimately, did not need a direct political, physical presence to maintain itself through 'self-valorization.' The

colonial 'exchange of non-equivalents' mediated by direct forms of appropriation, based on coercion had become the rule of the 'exchange of equivalents' the rule of *commodity* production.

Capitalism thus expanded with the proliferation of the state form, in particular after the Second World War. With the emergence of proto-capitalist state forms in the colonies and the US attempts to open up the international economy, capitalism could valorize itself and the projects of American capital could be realised without the need for direct forms of political control. The colonies became politically 'independent,' but they were also tied to the expanding international capitalist system that allowed increasingly freer movement of capital, and the ability of capitalist social relations to penetrate the former colonial areas without the need for direct forms of imperial control. This is not to suggest that this was a smooth, inevitable process, which many caricatures of Marxism suggest. This is not teleological, but rather highlights the fact of the Cold War as struggle within and between capitalist social forms. The revolutionary changes and conflicts in the former colonial and Third World reflected this history as a processional historical development based around social conflict.

This point applies equally to the advanced capitalist states. Prior to American hegemony international capitalism was based around British dominance through its imperial system. The other capitalist states mirrored this through the need for direct-political, state involvement in strategies of surplus extraction most visibly under Fascist regimes. American capitalist predominance revolutionised the international relations of capital, by providing, through Bretton Woods and a dominant American economy, indirect or visibly, non-imperialist forms of capitalist expansion. Capitalist social relations could expand through their own self-valorization, rather than through the functional use of war and colonial conquest, because of the American international dollar economy helped by the proliferation of 'independent' states who did not need to be occupied to be capitalist. This is not to suggest that there was no use of force or projections of direct American capitalist state power in the postwar era, there patently were. The Bretton Woods system of international capitalism like the rule of capital in any social formation ultimately rests on the monopolisation of class power in the form of the state and its ability to use force. This happened in numerous occasions during the Cold War. When the

expansion of the rule of capital was being contested or abolished, the US acted through military force to either prevent or overthrow such projects. However, the era of systematic direct political control as a means to expand capitalism was replaced by more indirect or 'privatised' forms.

Thus, the state emerged as a global or at least potentially global form of limited political rule through the expansion of capitalism, and how this process, subverted, destroyed and incorporated aspects of previously existing and non-capitalist forms of rule. These can only be explained in terms of social-class struggle concerning how the forms of political rule within a society were related to, or fused with, forms of social relations of production. The contestation of forms of political rule, which the state is but one and the most important (because of its global pretensions and possibilities as a phenomenon associated with capitalism), provided the backdrop for international relations and the Cold War.

The history of the state as a form of political rule is not separable from the international. That is, international relations determined the domestic configuration of capitalist social relations and was in turn determined by them. They were not separable. The state cannot be detached from its position embedded within a particular social context that is not limited to the territorial boundaries of the state. The state as a contested form of political rule is also contested in international terms. Again this works both ways. The state facilitates forms of international relations connected with specific forms of political rule, and is partly shaped by international forces. We have an inter-relationship between the domestic and international spheres, which shapes the form of the state, and which the state partly shapes as well.⁴⁸ The contestation derives from the conflict between different forms of political rule.

Thus, capitalist states as forms of political rule are characterised by particular forms of international relations. This obviously leads to a different type of international relations between these forms of political rule as we can identify the similarities within a society relating to political rule, concerning the nature of the

⁴⁸ Thus the state is deeply imbricated in strategies of accumulation. It provides the basic resources for capitalist production, both directly through education, welfare provision and other technical 'functions.' Through this, the state can initiate changes that will influence particular fractions of capital, which ultimately will serve to alter the nature of capitalist production within a given social formation. The 1979-83 Thatcher administration is an obvious example of such state initiatives and the impact it had on British capital. However, we cannot remove these developments from international changes, in particular the profitability of sections of British capital, which were significantly damaged by the increase in intensity of class conflict in the 1970s. In many respects the Conservative class project reflected this concern to attack collectivist institutions and organised labour power. See J. Holloway & S. Picciotto (ed.) (1978) p. 13-25, for a

state, and how this relates to the other institutions within society. What characterises relations between capitalist states is the currency of capitalist social relations which are 'relatively autonomous' from the relations derived from the form of political rule. What this means is that the relations between these states rests on social relations derived from capitalism. In this sense the relations between these types of states relate to contradictions and conflicts fundamentally concerned not with the state as such or forms of political rule, but rather, with the nature and dynamic of capitalist social relations. Conflict in political terms, as described by Realists, does not have a currency; instead, politics only 'appears' when these conflicts and contradictions related to social relations interfere with the political rule of the state.

Thus, the international relations of capitalist states are qualitatively different to those between non-capitalist 'states,' and capitalist and non-capitalist 'states.' This is quite clear, even with more orthodox interpretations of international relations. In terms of the international society approach the relations between Christendom and the Islamic world were different from intra-Christian relations.⁴⁹ However, in terms of an international society, (ie. a global system represented by sovereign nation-states as the form of political rule) we can go beyond the distinctions recognised by orthodox approaches to IR, and conceive of the relations between political forms as being derived from their social relations. What this means is that the political form, in terms of the nature of the state (political rule within a given society/territorial entity), is only explicable in terms of how this political form reflects and is part of the social relations of production. Thus, during the Cold War international relations was not about the political relations between states, but about the forms of political relations between different forms of political rule which reflected differing ways of organising social life, based on different ways of organising a society's reproduction of social life through its interaction with nature.

One of the most important ways that societies reconstituted themselves, and altered their ways of organising of social life was through social revolution. It was these developments in the Cold War that provided the dynamic of the political relations of the Cold War that the United States and the Soviet Union were part of. It is to the politics of the social revolutionary state, as a form of political rule in the

more detailed discussion.

⁴⁹ See H. Bull & A. Watson (ed.) (1985) p.1-9.

Cold War, and the conflict, which stemmed from this with capitalist forms of political rule that the source of the explanation of the Cold War is to be found.

2.2 The 'Revolutionary' State as an Alternative Form of International Politics

Revolutions have provided the discipline of IR with its most visible case of both the contestation of the state as a form of political rule, and its transformation through a reconstitution of social relations. Although on one level these forms of political rule assume the form of the state, they are qualitatively different, and realise an alternative form of political rule derived from a different set of social relations. Thus, in these political entities the form of political rule, and following this international relations is different to that of the state as previously understood. However, as in the case of capitalism, revolutionary social formations reflected the contradictions of particular forms of struggle both internal and international that related to the pressures within each social formation.⁵⁰ As in the case of capitalist social formations, revolutionary social formations were determined by the outcome of struggles related to the social relations of production.⁵¹

Thus, Stalin's determination to deal with the 'peasant problem' reflected the conflict of different production and thus class projects in the countryside. The forced collectivisation of agriculture after 1928, and the brutal way it was implemented reflected a particularly brutal form of class conflict that saw the destruction of the Kulak class. In this case both the international and internal sources of conflict were present. Internally, the Soviet Union faced food shortages and the conflict in the countryside over the role of private property and the distribution of peasant surplus produce to urban areas. This was problematic for the Bolsheviks in terms of their project of socialising the means of production and abolishing private property, but became increasingly acute with respect to the perceived need to modernise and industrialise. This need, which Stalin was clearly aware of, related to the international threats to the Soviet Union, which derived historically from Russia being a victim of its own social and industrial backwardness.⁵² It was not only the international pressure that was to force the

⁵⁰ Thus, revolutions do not abolish the social tensions within a social formation, if anything they intensify them, as particular classes are appropriated, through class conflict, and the conflicting social projects of the different classes involved in the revolution compete for political leadership.

⁵¹ 'The outcome (of revolution) depends upon further struggle; the struggle to build the socialist mode of production, socialist construction, which is necessarily a class struggle.' P. Corrigan et al (1978a) p.38

⁵² See Stalin's speech 'The Year of the Great Breakthrough' November 1939 in E. H. Carr *The Russian Revolution From*

Soviet Union to pursue a strategy of rapid and intense (and costly, in human and social terms) industrialisation and modernisation. It also originated from the project that the Bolsheviks had based their revolution on; to make Russia, the Soviet Union socialist. For the Bolsheviks this required the development of the Soviet Union's productive forces *above all else*. As they stood after 1917, and with a backward agricultural sector and distorted, fractured industrial base, the productive forces could not, according to the Bolsheviks sustain or support socialism. The productive base of the social formation required development, thus allowing the realising of socialism as perceived to be a social formation founded on a productive base superior to that of capitalism.⁵³ On this reading the project of the Soviet Union was identified with the surpassing of the existing capitalist social formations⁵⁴ in terms of production. Such a project inevitably led to forms of political coercion to develop the productive forces. Although property was socialised, and the rule of capital had been abolished, the social relations that came to the fore under the Bolsheviks reflected the contradictory nature of being socialist in the terms already described, but also reflecting a project that required the state to enforce particular coercive, quasi-capitalist techniques to ensure a rapid development of the Soviet Union's productive base. As Engels stated:

‘.. it remains the case that to socialise the means of production does not *ipso facto* do away with all the social relations upon which capitalism rests; its division of labour... may well remain intact...’⁵⁵

This explains the analysis of the Soviet Union and Stalinism in particular as a ‘revolution from above.’ The Party-state through its control of the coercive apparatus and its domination of society ensured the top-down implementation of modernisation whilst preserving some of the socialist gains of the revolution.⁵⁶ Although coercive techniques were used to ensure increases and expansions in production, these methods and instruments did not amount to a form of capitalism

Lenin to Stalin (1917-29) (London: Macmillan, 1979) p.170-1.

⁵³ See P. Corrigan et al (1978a) p.24-50 for an excellent survey of how modernisation or ‘capitalist tendencies’ based on a development project defined in terms of materially outproducing capitalism, by ‘catching-up and overtaking’ dominated Bolshevism and the Soviet model.

⁵⁴ Khrushchev's often mis-quoted speech at the UN in 1960, specifically the ‘... we will bury you...’ remarks referred to his belief that the Soviet Union would out produce the USA and thus ‘bury capitalism to history’. See the work of Isaac Deutscher for an illuminating discussion of these themes of modernisation and development in Bolshevism, in particular *Ironies of History: Essays on Contemporary Communism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

⁵⁵ F. Engels cited in P. Corrigan et al (1978a) p.39.

⁵⁶ Thus, for the Bolsheviks, Lenin as much as Stalin, the state was conceived as the major agency of socialist construction: ‘in both its production and political facets. It was both the motor of construction and the instrument of class struggle developing the forces and revolutionising the relations of production through its fiscal and planning machinery, whilst securing the political conditions for this stratagem through its repressive and ideological apparatuses.’ *Ibid* p.44.

or 'state capitalism' in the Soviet Union. However, they did lead to the development of forms of alienation that were similar to those found under capitalist social relations due to the presence of particular methods employed.⁵⁷

The Soviet Union, as a social formation, saw a relationship between the political form and production where the former was seen as an instrument of revolutionary praxis. Because the state was led and dominated by the Party it sought to determine the production strategy on behalf of working people, because it claimed to be a state of the working class. In effect, however, the relationship between the Party-state and the social relations of production (ie. the relations of the working people) was characterised by tensions and alienation, which derived from the fact that the direct producers did not politically control their own social relations, and thus their own collective (and individual) social realisation. The politics that stemmed from such arrangements was premised on this political divorce between the direct producers and the alienated political power of the Party-state. It was this tension that provides the key to the understanding of the Soviet Union and other revolutionary social formations. The fact that because of its aspiration to modernise and accelerate the development of the productive forces the Soviet state was never able to *fully* reconstitute social relations of production, and thus political rule became divorced from many aspects of the social relations of production.⁵⁸

The Soviet Union like most of the other revolutionary social formations, which in many respects adopted aspects of the 'Soviet model,' was characterised throughout its existence with this tension located in its contradictory and tension-induced form of social relations. Because of the Bolshevik determination to modernise and 'out produce' capitalism, the Soviet Union located itself in a frame of reference that identified with capitalism, as the *material* object of its project. The history of the Soviet Union, which climaxed with the *perestroika* of Gorbachev, reflected this tension, and the dominance of a theoretical and practical paradigm based on the belief that socialism would be realised with the fullest development of its productive forces. The Soviet Union, as a social formation, and as a mode of

⁵⁷ *Ibid* p. 42-3.

⁵⁸ In a number of respects, the Soviet model incorporated a number of inegalitarian, quasi-capitalist traits. For example, labour power, most obviously under Stalin, was commandeered as an instrument of the plan by the Party-state, with little or no input from the workers. This tendency developed into a fetish of productivity, notably the Stakhanovite system that attempted to foster labour productivity through a hierarchy of wage differentials. See C. Lefort *The Political Forms of Modern Society* Edited & introduced by J. Thompson (Oxford: Polity Press, 1986) p.70-8; and I. Deutscher *The*

production was trapped in the shadow of capital. Its productive strategy in effect attempted to emulate or use techniques, forms of technology and foreign expertise, with which to 'perfect' socialism. Social relations, (ie. the political and social relations of the direct producers at the source of production) were not recognised as in themselves being a productive force. Instead, in practice labour was treated as just another instrument of production,⁵⁹ rather than as the means with which to revolutionise the social relations of production.

The consequences of this for the Soviet type of social formation became apparent with developments in the late 1980s in the Soviet bloc. *Solidarnosc* in Poland is exemplary here. This social-class movement was a product of a history of class-based struggle within Poland between the workers and the political authorities, the institutions that claimed to be the political expressions of class rule. From the 1950s onwards, crystallising in 1980-1, the Polish working class confronted the political institutions on material *qua* political questions. The outbreaks of social unrest directly related to the ability of the 'state' to adequately provide goods for society, be it through price subsidies or the availability of certain consumer goods. Under state-socialism the working class identified the institutions of the Party-state as being responsible for these material provisions not the market. This being the case, the protests by *Solidarnosc* can be seen in class terms. The protests were a reaction against the failure of a 'socialist state' to provide for its people, it had failed in its fundamental class role.

This also relates to the conflicts amongst 'revolutionary-socialist states,' notably the Sino-Soviet conflict. This needs to be seen from the perspective of the evolution and dominance of the Soviet model, and how this related to other revolutionary social formations, rather than the pervasive assumption that these 'states' were just like any other in their relations with each other. Soviet experience and the Soviet 'model' through its form of 'socialist construction' became, in effect, the established path of development and class struggle through political institutions. Bolshevism, just as it had managed to silence (and liquidate) any opposition, both capitalist and socialist within the Soviet Union could not tolerate international opposition. International socialist opposition or rivalry, be it Chinese, or Dubček's 'socialism with a human face,' threatened to undermine the contradictory

Unfinished Revolution Russia 1917-1967 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p.41-60.

⁵⁹ See P. Corrigan (ed.) (1980) p. 2

relationship between the Party-state as the agent of socialist transformation and international revolution, with the masses in the Soviet Union. This became increasingly problematic for the relations between the Soviet Union and other 'socialist' social formations, because each could not tolerate an alternative or different path within the international communist movement. Such a situation would have obviously undermined the form of political rule within each respective socialist state, because all of the social formations concerned had not resolved the contradictions of the relationship between the political institutions and the development of productive forces. The Soviet withdrawal of advisers in 1960, which was a major blow to the Chinese development project, revealed these tensions. Soviet actions were based on Chinese criticism of the internal and international developments of the Soviet Union under Khrushchev.⁶⁰ But it was more than just rhetorical jousting between the two Communist Parties. The hostility struck at the heart of the contradictory nature of both social formations, which related to the incomplete nature of their respective revolutions.⁶¹

The international relations between revolutionary states in many respects, then, reflected the situation of the possibility of international disputes carrying the same weight as an internal dispute from an internal political opposition. Because relations were confined to inter-Party-state relations, the impact of disagreement was much more pronounced. This was compounded by the contending 'factions' within each revolutionary leadership that were usually associated with support for a specific international line, and also by the international pressure of the United States. Doctrinal disputes amounted to attacks on a leadership and following this the domestic position of that leadership. Just as much as Soviet disfavour (particularly under Stalin) led to purges and changes of leadership, so the Sino-Soviet dispute reflected the possibility of externally assisted internal change, which all revolutionary leadership attempted to guard against.

Because of the particular relationship between politics and economics in these social formations, international relations reflected the internal tensions between 'socialist' (ie. material construction) and class relations rooted in an

⁶⁰ See I. Deutscher (1966) p.136.

⁶¹ Incomplete not in the sense that these revolutions had been stopped prematurely, but rather, that the form of politics in these social formations, reflected the limited stage of class struggle, where the revolutionary political leadership had not facilitated forms of class struggle that would have abolished, completely, through an ongoing process, the separation of social life, which was partially resolved by Bolshevism and Maoism. Because of the productive project, and the need for rapid development, these social forms continued to reflect a partial separation of economics and politics in the sphere of

antagonism based on the alienation of the form of political rule as a relation of production. The Sino-Soviet split then, and how this was mediated in international relations to the point of military conflict in border clashes, and support for rival factions in national liberation struggles was part of the conflict over rival forms of socialist construction that the Soviet Union and China pursued. The conflict concerned the role of the institutions of political rule, the Party-state as the agency of class mobilisation and 'socialist construction' rather than the working class. This was as much an international problem as it was a domestic one. In the Soviet Union and China the respective Communist Parties were the forces of class struggle, but in international terms, the Soviet Union regarded itself as the sole representative of the international communist movement. Just as in the Soviet Union the institutions of Party-state directed and determined the social relations of the working class (what it considered as class praxis through improved worker productivity) and the nature of socialist construction, so the USSR attempted in the wider relations of the international communist movement. The USSR took it upon itself to determine the conduct of the international revolution, which continued to be bound up with the material and political strength of the Soviet bloc. This was most obviously in the policy shifts that saw a *rapprochement* with a number of 'bourgeois nationalist regimes,' which amounted to the undermining of many revolutionary forces and the sacrificing of communist parties and their cadres in a number of cases. The international relations of the Soviet Union, then, reflected the contradictory position of its social formation whereby capitalism had been abolished, but where the project of socialist transformation was being stifled by the separation of politics and economics, and the fact that politics as a separate sphere and set of institutions had not been abolished. This was compounded when not determined by the international situation.

China and other revolutionary movements were the victims of this instrumental approach to socialism that ended up basing its politics, internal and international, on a 'productivist' logic. Just as the Soviet Union confronted the problems of constructing socialism from an underdeveloped base, and the way in which Bolshevism approached this, so did the USSR's international relations. The critique of the Soviet model, and its international relations by China obviously

corresponded to the manifestations of the contradictions of the Soviet social formation. Because of its productivist orientation in international relations, the Soviet Union was not, according to the Chinese, sufficiently supportive of international revolution.⁶² The accusation of revisionism was connected to the Soviet Union's continuation of a form of international relations that was almost completely reducible to a domestic politics of the development of productive forces, above all else. This was obviously a class based project, the goal of housing, feeding and providing employment and improved living standards for Soviet people, but it was pursued in a manner where politics was increasingly divorced from the social relations of production. The internationalisation of socialism was reduced to a politics of the Soviet state in its relations with other states and revolutionary movements. But because of the domestic goals and thus constraints, the Soviet Union ended up being passive in terms of the sponsorship of international revolution, and positively counter-revolutionary when the international situation or when the actions of Third World revolutionaries or Communists in the West threatened to jeopardise the domestic construction of 'socialism.'

How these social projects actually impacted on international relations is clear from the subsequent development of both the Soviet Union and China. Both failed to fully resolve the contradictions in the relationship between the form of political rule, and how this related to production and the social relations of production. Both failed to overcome the 'productivist' orientation of their respective strategies of social transformation.⁶³ Both became increasingly to depend on external, (ie. non-class based forms of production) through the import of technology and following Western methods. It was only a case of timing. China after the death of Mao and the suppression of the 'Gang of Four' in 1975-6 saw the beginning of the capitalization (as a project for the development of the productive forces of China) under the auspices of the CCP. This followed on from the Sino-Soviet conflict of the 1960s, and the diplomatic *rapprochement* with America, symbolized by Nixon's visit to China in 1972. The USSR's 'progress' was more complex and stunted, and reflected its unique leadership position within the international

⁶² This was related to Bolshevism's (Lenin's) theory of colonial revolution, in that Lenin saw a progressive role for the respective national bourgeoisie in the colonial revolution if it was sufficiently anti-imperialist. This, however, was not only a political question, but also concerned the notion of development and the role that the national bourgeoisie could have in the in the progressive development of productive forces, in underdeveloped states. See M. Carnoy *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p.179.

⁶³ See P. Corrigan et al *For Mao: Essays in Historical Materialism* (London: Macmillan, 1978b) for a more in-depth

revolutionary movement and the domestic political coalitions, which were not resolved until Gorbachev's succession in 1985.

2.3 The Real Politics of the Cold War

The capitalist form of political rule based on the apparent separation of the forms of politics and economics, but the actual 'unity within the capital social relation of the spheres of economics (production) and politics (the legal and property framework of production)'⁶⁴ lies hidden within the orthodox understanding of politics. What this amounts to is that politics is confined to the state, both domestically and externally, manifested in foreign policy. Like the 'privatisation of economics' or production within the domestic realm, international relations, it is suggested, relates to a politics confined to the state. The reality, however, of both politics at the domestic level and in international terms is that politics reflects the parcelization of power relations between the form of the state and the form of production *derived* from the capitalist social relation.⁶⁵ Thus, the system of nation-states is ultimately a reflection of the globalisation of the capitalist social relation. The system of states and the world market of capital are thus dual and co-terminus developments.⁶⁶

In terms of the Cold War and the role of the United States the politics of the United States in the Cold War reflected the division found in the capitalist social relation. What this means is that the so-called 'policy' of the United States, in terms of economic policy, arms production, military interventions and strategic nuclear policy was a reflection of both the internal and international contradictions located in the class antagonism associated with capitalist modernity. However, what needs to be made clear, especially in comparison to the Soviet Union, is that the USA as a social formation, a capitalist form, had a distinct form of international relations. It was not only the American global projection of military power that the Cold War was about, though this was obviously important for a number of reasons,

discussion of this.

⁶⁴ What this separation hides is the actual *source* of politics derived from the capitalist social relation, which appears in an economic and political form. This relates to a specific form of class rule/domination. Thus the state in capitalism reflects a particular *form* of class struggle. This manifests itself, according to Holloway and Picciotto into: '... particularisation of the two forms of domination finds its institutional expression in the state apparatus as an apparently autonomous entity. It also finds expression in the separation of the individual's relation to the state from his immediate relation to capital, in the separation of the worker and the citizen, in the separation of his struggle into "economic struggle" and "political struggle"- whereas this very separation into forms determined by capital, involves therefore an acceptance of the limits imposed by capital.' 'Capital, Crisis and the State,' in S. Clarke (ed.) (1991) p.114

⁶⁵ J. Holloway & S. Picciotto (ed.) (1978) p.2

⁶⁶ Thus, as Holloway and Picciotto make clear: 'The development of the state must rather be seen as a particular form of manifestation of the crisis of the capital relation... the state must be understood as a particular surface (or phenomenal) form of capital relation, ie. of an historically specific form of class domination.' S. Clarke (ed.) (1991) p.110.

but the fact that the capitalist social relation is international. Although refracted through particular social formations this form of social relations is such that it does not recognise the limitations of state space. Thus, capitalism is an international relation that is obviously linked to the state, but that is also relatively autonomous. As long as there is a legal and political framework in place capital can inhabit any social space. Following this, the Cold War saw a correspondence between the *expansion of capitalist social relations as a politics of expansion*. Whereas Realists talk of the expansion of power and securing advantage at the level of appearances or on the surface related to forms of state, what was really happening, ultimately, with *and* without nuclear weapons was a politics of expansion based on capitalist social relations. What was and is particular about this politics of expansion, is that it was different in form to that of the earlier means of expanding capitalism.

What then, were the differences in the forms of international relations between the ‘superpowers’ despite the appearances of similarity ? The differences stemmed from the forms of political rule, and how these forms were derived from social relations of production. Because of the abolition of capitalism as a mode of production in the Soviet Union (and other revolutionary social formations), the relationship between ‘state’ and ‘society’ was redefined. Instead of having a relatively private sphere of the reproduction of social life, that is the ‘economy,’ the form of political rule directly organised production. Thus, the political sphere was identified and indeed was fully part of production relations, and this was evidently formative in the form of international relations of such a state. There was no logic of expansion comparable to capitalist states. Whereas capitalist states expanded through the expansion of capitalist social relations, and the political structures derived from such expansion, the Soviet Union and other revolutionary states did not. Instead, the Soviet Union was limited to a form of expansion *confined* to the political form. The Soviet Union then, did not expand, at least in a way comparable with capitalist forms of political rule. The Soviet Union was limited to either the direct political control through a direct physical presence, as in East-Central Europe or through supporting local revolutions, externally. It did not, it could not expand politically beyond this. This being the case, the social relations of socialism, the abolition of capitalism; if they were not to be overthrown by the Red Army directly,

were limited in their manifestation to the specific politics of each social formation and would expand only through local class struggle.

The Soviet form of international expansion was also distinguished by its own *internal* logic. What this meant, is that because production was centrally organised and co-ordinated (between Party-state institutions, nationally, and between political forms, internationally), the logic of productive accumulation and thus socio-economic expansion was always confined to the specific political form and determined by it. Expansion, then, took on a qualitatively distinct form, because it was determined by the political form, for explicitly *political* ends (ie. physical security and reparations after 1945). Expansion was not economic, but expressly political. In this sense, then, the Soviet Union was a self-limiting economic machine. Its economy could not expand on its own, and thus because it was limited to 'political expansion' was never able to foster a potential global set of social relations.

The contrary was the case in the USA. Here as elsewhere though to varying degrees, the 'state' appeared separate from civil society and production relations. The economy was 'privatised' though only relatively. As is clear from what has been said already, based on Marx's critique of the categories of political economy this separation is a form of the appearance of the capitalist social relation. What this entails is that the 'economy' functions autonomously according to the logic of capital, but its operation is within a framework where the state acts, and is a social relation of production. It is this specific feature of the form of the capitalist state that provides for a logic of domestic politics and international relations. Thus, the international relations of the USA during the Cold War (and beyond) is that of the state form as an international relation of capitalist production relations.

The United States and capitalist states in general operated according to a very different logic, and form of political expansion that was not limited to a direct physical presence within a particular area. Because of the separation of the spheres of social life, capitalism as a social relation, and the politics that derive from this can expand autonomously without the need for a direct physical-political form of agency. The crucial economic distinction between the USA and the USSR was the fact that the American economy, like capitalist economies in general, expanded according to the accumulating drives of capitalist competition. Although the state is

not completely divorced from these developments, the relative privatisation of capitalist production allows production, accumulation and thus expansion to be largely determined by competition between capitalist firms. Thus, what marks out capitalist production is its own internal logic of expansion that is not explicitly politically driven. Expansion is driven by the harsh economic logic of competition, which allows an expansion that is not limited to areas of direct (national) political control. Capitalist expansion is inherent to capitalism as a social system. It does not rest on political decisions, but on the competitive workings of a market characterised by anarchy.⁶⁷ The most important point in contrast to the USSR, is that the anarchy of capital is not limited to the state, but is extra-territorial, and thus in one sense supersedes the political form of the state.

The rule of capital, and capitalist social relations expand through commodities and the exchange of commodities and the relations and politics that follow from the 'mutual dependence mediated by things.' The form of political rule of capitalism is reflected in separate states, but which capital does not recognise and is not limited by. The separation of the spheres of social life under capitalism allows forms of expansion to take on an apparently non-political form when the consequences and actual process of that expansion *are* political. The United States or American capitalism expanded prodigiously without appearing as such, because it expanded into forms of political rule that did not regard such social relations as directly political, though in practice they certainly were. This form of political expansion only became contested by revolutionary social formations or those social formations that were capitalist, but were experiencing particularly intense forms of class struggle. Politics, following this interpretation, becomes broader and deeper, and it provides the defining logic of the Cold War and the conflict reflected in the conflicting forms of politics of the Soviet Union and the United States.

International relations, then, is capitalism. The form and currency of the international relations of the modern era are those of a capitalist modernity based upon the separation of the spheres of the political and the economic which are the defining features of capitalism. However, as within the capitalist social relation as a unique and historically distinct form of the appropriation of labour power, this social relation is based upon class antagonisms. Both in terms of its emergence and

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the notion of 'anarchy' within capitalist states see J. Rosenberg (1994) p.142-58.

expansion this social relation is characterised by the class struggle between appropriators and appropriated. International relations is this struggle, the social struggle revolving around strategies of accumulation based on appropriation and the contradictions and conflicts that this process creates. Again we return to history and politics as process involving particular forms of human agency within specific forms of relations.

This social struggle is not something germane to capitalism alone; it also features within revolutionary social formations. Revolution does not abolish class conflict it merely changes the terrain of that conflict and the structure of that conflict.⁶⁸ For within the Soviet Union it was quite clear that the proletariat did not rule. Although the gains of working class victories after 1917 were institutionalised within the Soviet social formation, because of the contradictory nature of that social formation; a statist form of social relations, there was class antagonism between the direct producers and the political form. It was this conflict that was also reflected in the international relations of the Soviet Union. And, ultimately, it was these contradictions of the Soviet form of political rule that help explain the apparent inconsistencies and 'state-like' relations of the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviet Union was not fully socialist, and its social relations reflected this contradiction. Because of its form of political rule it had international relations of a contradictory social formation, one that was socialist in the sense that capitalism had been abolished, and other social features were present, but that also it was characterised by a form of political rule that had aspects of capital present.⁶⁹ This derived from its project of the development of productive forces where the state or the political institutions were used as instruments to accelerate the development of productive forces. Because the aim was to reach the level of capitalist development and then surpass it, the Soviet Union or Bolshevism as a paradigm failed to focus on a socialism located in social relations, (ie. *how* we actually reproduce ourselves), and instead focused on a project that emphasised the maturation of the material forces of production as things, rather than the more humanist version of social relations. Thus, Soviet 'foreign policy' did seek relations with capitalist states if it was a

⁶⁸ See P. Corrigan et al (1978a) p. 38.

⁶⁹ According to P. Corrigan et al: 'Central to Bolshevism is a struggle between two roads and two lines. Socialist construction was hampered in so far as clearly capitalist techniques and relations (ie. forces) were considered necessary to create the material basis for socialism. Socialist construction was liberated and accelerated in so far as its resources were coherently and consistently recognised to be particular productive collectivities (ie. relations), that is to say, when socialist construction was seen to turn on the simultaneous conscious, collective and thus egalitarian transformation of

means to secure material improvement and economic advantage, and the problems that this caused the Soviet social formation came to a head under Gorbachev where the creeping 'capitalisation' of the Soviet Union was finally given full Party sanction, and the logic or the contradictions of Bolshevism were finally played out.

As for the United States, the projection of military power and influence went alongside; it was the other side of the coin of the American led international capitalist system. American order preserved capitalist global social relations. Thus, as in the domestic realm the State or political form is a form of the capitalist social relation, and acts within the constraints of that relation based on class conflict as process, so in international relations the USA provided the legal and political framework for the expansion of capitalist social relations. The USA did not determine these developments, because, as already mentioned, capitalism has a logic of its own, and it was the agency of change, rather than the state. The development of the world market reflects in the Cold War the international expansion of and struggle involving the two aspects of the form of the capitalist social relation, state and market.

3. Conclusions

Drawing on an Historical Materialist approach this chapter has tried to outline an alternative conceptualisation of the state, or politics based on the historical experience of the Cold War, and the forms of political rule that this period in the history of capitalist modernity and its contesters 'threw up.' The state, as a concept and actuality, needs to be grounded within a specific historical and social experience. Though we can identify common attributes of, and concepts for understanding forms of political rule, and how these impact on international relations, only a more open-ended ontology can provide the means with which to explain the role of 'the state' in the Cold War. If, as orthodox scholars claim, that all states are more or less the same, and act according to the imperatives of anarchy, then intellectual inquiry and political choices are foreclosed. If, however, one's intellectual position is more contingent and open to the possibilities of change and reformulating a 'politics,' then history is there to be made and studied in a much more rewarding way.

What this means for the Cold War is that the forms of political rule and the agency associated with specific forms of political rule need to be scrutinised and understood, not as products of a teleological progression, nor a static time-space continuum, but rather as the processional developments related to the expansion of a specific form of social relations based on capitalism. This is not to suggest that capital has a pristine logic which pervades the world over, but rather, to suggest that the expansion of capitalist social relations, reflects both the existence of previous non-capitalist forms of reproducing material (and ideal life), which have either been abolished or incorporated, in a distorted form, into a globalised system. This is not only an economic phenomenon, but is reflected in the totality of social relations within each social formation. The form of politics, the form of the institutions and administration of social life within a given territory reflect this incorporation of non-capitalist political forms into an 'international society' of states.

The experience of state socialism is part of this experience. Although it was a conscious attempt by specific forms of political agency to remove themselves from this history, and create a different, new form of history, their history is undeniably tied up with the experiences of capitalist modernity, as providing the source of contradictions and conflicts and the concepts and praxis of that alternative. The Bolshevik revolution, and the formation of non-capitalist forms of political rule and politics emerged out of the contradictions of capitalism as a global system. This empirical landscape is characterised by the social struggles of people as classes revolving around how they produce and reproduce their social life, and the social relations that follow from this. Politics or the form of political rule is fundamental to any understanding of this, and how this impacts on international relations. Ultimately, because of the nature of the social relations in question, those of an expanding capitalism, social relations cannot be theoretically understood in terms of the domestic-international separation. In empirical terms we can identify distinctions between social formations and peoples who inhabit different parts of the world, in terms of the social relations of production and the corresponding forms of political rule. What defines these forms of politics, of production and rule, the bourgeois forms of economics and politics, are forms of social struggle. What characterises capitalism is that this struggle is one of class, both in terms of the emergence of, within it, and to promote its transformation. It is the level and form

of class struggle that determines the form of political rule and thus the actual configuration of the state.

International relations then, as a reflection of the relations between forms of political rule, reflects the outcome of the contradictions located in the nexus of relations between the form of political rule, and its relationship with material production mediated by the antagonisms within the social relations of production. The contradictions associated with the social relations of production lead to different outcomes and strategies that reflect the relationship between the form of political rule and the mode and organisation of the economy. However, whilst the international politics of the USSR and 'socialist states' were determined by the decisions of the Party-state alone, as the sole form of political agency, the international politics of the USA and capitalist states reflected the shifting relations between the private capitalist economy and the state. Thus, a substantial political capacity and international relations that amounted to a politics of expansion, was derived from the internal logic of inter-capitalist competition. The competitive and accumulating drives of capitalist production were not only determined by the vertical conflict between capital and labour, but also horizontal national and international competition between capitals.

Although both the Soviet bloc and the advanced capitalist states were characterised by forms of class antagonism derived from the forms of alienation associated with the social relations of production, because the Soviet form saw the complete unity of politics and economics, contradictions were acute, and international competition and expansion was limited to the state form. The contradictions of domestic social relations, then were crucially directly tied to international relations, where international relations was largely about securing the political goals of assuaging internal material and social problems. The advanced capitalist states, though characterised by class conflict, were, because of the apparent separation of the state from the economy, able to manage class conflict and ensure an economic expansion not solely derived from the international relations of the state.

Chapter Four

Military Power and Strategic Conflict in the Cold War

The previous chapter sought to reconstitute the politics of the state in the Cold War by seeing the state as a political form derived from the parcelization of power that characterises capitalist social relations. The state was seen as a political form endowed with specific features that derived from its relationship with the social relations of social and material production. The modern state, then, is more than just a legal-territorial entity, but an historical and social subject that emerged, and was conditioned by social conflict. One of the principal features of the state is the centralisation and monopoly of organised violence, what amounts to absolute power within and competing power without. Much of the previous chapter's analysis was suggestive of this issue, the role and determining force of military power in the politics of the state. This chapter continues the preceding chapter's analysis by explicitly focusing on military power and how far the international relations of the Cold War were defined by the currency of military power and strategic conflict. This is important because much of the analysis of the Cold War, which takes as its starting point the military personality of all states, particularly the 'superpowers,' has understood the Cold War as an episode of strategic conflict dominated by nuclear weapons.

This appreciation focused on the military dominance of the United States and the Soviet Union after World War Two. Bipolarity, as it was conventionally referred to in the abstract language of Realism, dominated the interpretation of the Cold War as military conflict through the arms race, technological advances in military capabilities, and how this was refracted and realised in distinct, but transhistorical forms of inter-state conflict. The Cold War, then, saw the application of different and changing military capabilities. This included the armed encircling of the Soviet bloc after 1945 by American led military alliances and strategic nuclear bases, the encampment of the Red Army in the military 'buffer zone' of East-Central Europe, and the search for global military base facilities. This was part of the wider search for military allies, the preserving of, and expansion into spheres of interest in the emerging world of decolonised states, and the direct military interventions and deployment of military force in the Third

World. All of these account for the dynamic of the Cold War and the enduring forms of military power that pervaded it. What was distinct in terms of the participants in the Cold War, principally, the USA and the USSR, were the competing national-strategic interests and how these related to domestic politics.¹

Military power was perceived as an objective resource, a technical tool for political use. In terms of the Cold War military capabilities served the twin purposes of domestic security and order through the preservation of the internal supremacy of the sovereignty of the state, and externally the protection of this internal capacity, and the expansion according to prescribed political-ideological objectives. Both the USSR and the USA sought and fostered relationships based on military strength as a means to secure their respective domestic political positions both within their own society² and within the alliance formations that they led. However, in terms of the dynamic of the Cold War, the USA and USSR sought to expand their respective military dominance through forms of political-military expansion and conquest that some scholars have conceived of as forms of 'imperialism.'³

Seen in the above light, the superpower projection of military power was comparable. They reflected the structural dominance of each in its respective sphere of political influence and in world politics generally. Following this, the projection of military power was primarily about the securing of certain strategic and political objectives for a particular state. These objectives reflected comparable political interests, which amounted to: military base rights/alliances; access to the local economy in terms of a market for goods and access to raw materials; strategic loyalty, (ie. providing a bulwark against any rival superpower influence in the area and/or local forces sympathetic to one or other superpower).

In terms of appearances there was some element of truth in this 'comparability thesis.' However, it obscures more than it clarifies the forms of military power and relations both between the USSR and USA and other states,

¹ For a discussion of this with respect to the USA, see J. Lewis Gaddis (1982) and for the Soviet Union: G. Kennan "X" 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct,' in *Foreign Affairs* Volume 25, no.4 July 1947 p.566-82.

² In this respect military power did not only facilitate the defence of the state, it also came to play a significant function in the domestic economy, arguably producing limited 'economic' benefits. For such a perspective see M. Kidron (1970).

³ Thus, the Soviet responses to social and political upheaval within their sphere(s) of interest, mainly in East-Central Europe after 1945, were seen as being anti-revolutionary and imperialist as were American attempts to quash revolution in Latin America and elsewhere. This Realist position shares, ironically, many similarities with the work of much analysis of the Soviet Union from a 'state capitalist' perspective. See T. Cliff *Russia: A Marxist Analysis* (London: International

and it reduces the complexity of these military relations and the question of 'imperialism' to a form of symmetry. What needs to be discussed, rather, are the specific forms of military power *as* politics in the Cold War. If we are to take Clausewitz's axiom seriously that 'warfare (the application of organised military power) is the continuation of politics by other means,' then we will need to analyse the forms of military power in the Cold War beyond the appearance of similarity.

This chapter is concerned to focus on the how far the Cold War can be understood in terms of military power. Much of the analysis of the Cold War and its end has focused on military power in terms of the arms race, strategic and nuclear competition, and military intervention in the Third World and elsewhere, as being the defining characteristics of the Cold War. Although these issues should not be dismissed as unimportant, there needs to be some qualification as to what these currencies were, and how they contributed to the Cold War from both an historical and social perspective. This chapter will seek to historicise military power in the Cold War and locate it within a broader social context. In doing so the arms race and military power will not be seen as autonomous factors in the Cold War, but will be seen to be conditioned by the distinct and antagonistic political forms outlined in the previous chapter. In the following pages military power in the Cold War will be discussed from an historical perspective whereby the form of military power will be associated with a specific social epoch, capitalism. Once military power has been embedded within a wider social context, the rest of the chapter will then outline the role of military power in the respective international relations of each 'superpower.'

1. Capitalism, Military Power and War

Military power and war are both social and historical issues. Power in its military manifestation reflects a definite social and political persuasion within a specific historical and technological moment. Undoubtedly, the epoch of capitalist modernity exemplifies one such historical determination of military power and war. The development of the technology of war-making from the machine gun to the long-distance bomber and nuclear weapons reflect the merging of capitalist and

industrial production.⁴ Alongside the transformation in the techniques and organisation of the production of the means of war was the transformation in both the form of military power, and the content of war. These issues relate to the wider social context of military power. This includes the relationship between the production of the means of military power with the form of political authority, and how such political authority relates to other political authorities. It also includes the relationship between wider social and material production and military power as both a potential productive force (through territorial or other forms of military expansion), and a potential destroyer of productive force.

With respect to the form of military power and war, and the content of war (ie. what military conflict is about, why it occurs and what are its objectives), historically and socially we can make qualifications. In terms of the form, military power is determined by the level of technological development and the agency of war. In the era of capitalist modernity and the discipline of IR, agency is reduced to the state and the means of war to modern, industrially equipped and trained armies. Partly because of the identification of the state as the unit for organising military power and prosecuting war, the substance of what military power and war are about is collapsed into the form. That is form determines content. Military power and war are synonymous with the logic of the state *qua* all states. As Martin Wight suggested, all wars are either about 'gain, security or ideology.'⁵In this sense what wars are about, their causes and objectives are collapsed into categories that could be applied to Nazi Germany and the USA to Charlemagne France. This is what tends to characterise Realist scholarship to the point that seldom in a Realist text's discussion of war is the absence of the dubious claim of the contemporaneous import of Thucydides's account of the Peloponnesian wars for modern states. Modern wars, the wars of the mid-twentieth century, the revolutionary and colonial wars, and the wars of counter-revolution all fall into this general description of war that also encompass feudal and ancient conflicts.

An historical and social understanding of military power and war would see war as being inseparable from an understanding of the relationship between the means of war, its actual conduct, and how both of these concepts are located within

⁴ For an historical and sociological analysis that stresses the dynamic of industrialism over capitalism see M. Mann (1988).

⁵ See the chapter 'War' in *Power Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986).

a wider social and political context. Following this one could identify military power and war as being qualitatively different within different social-historical epochs. This relates not only to how military power is constituted within particular political entities (for example states, tribes, empires), but also how these are effected by how the 'international' is constituted.⁶

Capitalist modernity is one such epoch and provides the social setting for the emergence of new forms of political rule, new forms of organising humanity's social interaction with nature to produce and reproduce social life, and new ways of organising and producing military power. Above all, the form of conflict changes. Military conflict becomes organised between territorially centralised states, governed by a central political and legal authority. Military power is no longer concerned with securing dominance *within* a specific territory, but rather, the consolidation and growth of that state power through the defeat of international enemies and its external political and military expansion. However, it is not only about this, but also about the disjuncture between a political form (the state) that is organised within a limited legal and territorial entity, and its relationship with an economic form (capital) that is not limited to the territorial confines of the state.

This has been the focus of much debate about the causal relationship between the international relations of the state, capitalism, territorial expansion and imperialism. Although extra-territorial expansion through military power was not something historically unique to capitalism; with the development of capitalism, the expansion of military capability, territorial conquest and the role of military power took on new forms and relationships.⁷ Thus the modern form of capitalist imperialism was qualitatively different to previous forms of political and military conquest. As Rosa Luxemburg made clear at the beginning of this century, capitalist imperialism was unique. In her discussion of British capitalist penetration of India, she argued that this was historically and socially unparalleled. Whereas previous conquerors of India, from the Persians, Afghanis, to the Mongols:

⁶ For an excellent historical argument that addresses the nature of war in the middle-ages and how it related to 'domestic' and 'international' politics see B. Teschke 'Geopolitical Relations in the European Middle Ages: History and Theory,' in *International Organization* Volume 52 no.2, Spring 1998.

⁷ Following this, we can safely assume that imperialism can occur in a number of forms that are historically and socially determined. See N. Bukharin *Imperialism and World Economy* (London: The Merlin Press, 1972) p.112 and R. Luxemburg *The Accumulation of Capital* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) p.371-2.

'... the Indian village survived... for none of the successive conquerors had ultimately violated the internal social life of the peasant masses and its traditional structure. They only set up their own government in the provinces to supervise military organisation and to collect taxes from the population. All conquerors pursued the aim of dominating and exploiting the country but none was interested in robbing the people of their *productive forces* and in destroying their social organisation.'⁸

The British form of conquest set about the domination and exploitation of India, but most importantly and revolutionary, the social transformation of Indian society.⁹

In earlier historical epochs military power was essential for the initial conquest, and then subjugation of populations in conquered territories; what were in effect, forms of military dictatorship. Social life and political power rested squarely in the realm of military power, that is, who was militarily superior. There was no other *form* of ensuring political order and economic exchange. The expansion of capitalist social relations was predated by the formation of fledgling global trading networks through the expansion of merchant capital and its export (mercantilism). The exchange of 'non-equivalent' goods that mercantilism reflected in international exchange facilitated a functional use of war and military power. This occurred between imperial states and between the imperial state and the colony to support or introduce particular forms of exchange relations that had up until then not existed. This process laid the social and political foundations for the eventual self-valorisation of capital.

In the colonies, imperial rule, though in many cases initiated through military suppression gave way to more mediated forms of political rule that, ultimately, did not in the day-to-day administration of colonial rule rely on military power. As in the metropolises, political rule became enshrined in the abstract rule of law, and the process of the *privatisation* of the economy. Capitalism has had the ability, then, to both develop the technological capabilities of military power, to 'privatise' its use to a specific sphere of political activity by the state and between states, but most importantly, was able to remove military power and coercion from the visible maintenance of a social order, both within the metropolises and colonies.

⁸R. Luxemburg (1981) p.371-2. (Emphasis added)

⁹ See K. Marx 'The British Rule in India' (1853) and 'Future Results of British Rule in India' (1853), in *Marx and Engels Selected Works Volume 1* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969).

The separation of the spheres of political conflict into private and public, economy and state, maintained and ordered through the legal practice of the rule of law reduced the visible political role of military power and reoriented the state's war making capacity.

Capitalism appeared to have secured the separation of military power from society. The state, and its international obligations and objectives are the preserve of military power. However, this separation is problematic, both conceptually and in practice. The production and technological development of military power is not purely a public-state concern, nor is it something that does not impinge on the wider domestic social order. Although there is only one type of customer for military products, the state; there is a relationship between the state and capitalists that produce and develop military technology.¹⁰ The state does not monopolise this sphere of production, despite the fact that the state is deeply imbricated in the social relations of the production of military power, because it alone, needs and uses military products. Rather, in the advanced capitalist states military production, like other forms of production, is carried out by units of capital,¹¹ which ensures a close relationship between private military production for an explicitly public use.

However, warfare and the military apparatus of the state appear to be removed from the direct production of social and material life. Yet, warfare and what it rests on, military power, are produced as commodities by capital. As Mary Kaldor has stated:

'Warfare and other forms of state activity are reproduced within the territorial confines of the state. Capitalism knows no such limitations. The capitalistic state is caught between the global requirements of capital and the need for its own reproduction.'¹²

This tension is resolved differently by each state, depending on the exact international situation and also the conditioning features of domestic politics. But

¹⁰ See W. McNeill *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society Since A.D 1000* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982) for an historical discussion of the 'public-private' relationship of military power.

¹¹ Thus Mary Kaldor (1983) p.2 has argued that: "Baroque" armaments are the offspring of a marriage between private enterprise and the state... between the capitalist dynamic of the arms manufacturers, and the conservatism that tends to characterise armed forces.'

¹² 'Warfare and Capitalism,' in New Left Review (ed.) *Exterminism and the Cold War* (London: New Left Books, 1982) p.265.

what is quite clear is that warfare and military power are parasitical upon the productive capacity of society.¹³

This relationship reflects the political economy of each social formation, particularly the nature and condition of social relations. Military power and its international projection rest on the maintenance of capitalist social relations and the rule of capital *internally*. This form of military power also reflects the international nature of capitalism. Although states are limited territorial and legal forms of political rule, which military power maintains, this formula sits uncomfortably with social relations that are international and *political*.

The relationship between capitalist production, and the state and military power is very close and has been in a state of continual change since the emergence of capitalism. Capitalist production is generally concerned with commodities produced by capitalist firms who then sell their products ('use values') as 'exchange values' in the market place. Military 'use values' do not easily fit into this understanding. The instruments of military power are not ordinary commodities. There is only one consumer, or one type of consumer of these commodities,¹⁴ the state's military apparatus. And in terms of capitalism as a system of social relations and accumulation, the application of military power in war is also problematic. The use values of the products of military capital in war do not usually correspond to any obvious capitalist logic. War undermines the ability of capital to manage itself and usually sees an encroachment of the state to mobilise society's resources for war. Thus, from one important perspective war is not a welcome feature of capitalism. This is not to suggest that the logic of accumulation, and the class and state conflicts that follow from this do not make war a possibility, but to suggest, rather, that capitalism as a mode of production is not inherently warlike or *based* on the premise, the need, for military conflict. The breakdown of political and social order between forms of political rule (states) can lead to the material liquidation of capital, its expropriation, or reduced autonomy because of state directives. Yet all this notwithstanding, although wars obviously jeopardise the social and political order and the continued privatisation of political economy for capitalism, war and the use of military power have been used by

¹³ *Ibid.* p.268.

¹⁴ See M. Kaldor in (1982) p.261-87.

states to force the expansion of the international logic of capitalism.¹⁵ And conflicts have been caused by the specific international relations characteristic of the unfolding of capitalist modernity.

For much of the Marxist-informed writing on war and military power, there is a fundamental but flawed assumption that warfare is a functional necessity of the capitalist state. This originally derived from Lenin's theory of imperialism and his explanation of the causes of World War One, but it also filtered into much of the critical scholarship on the Cold War associated with the notion of a 'Permanent Arms Economy.'¹⁶ The principal argument of these scholars was the defining symbiotic relationship between the state and its use of military power, and the capitalist production of armaments. Here, the Cold War was essentially about the 'structural militarist' and military production presence within the American-Western political economy. International conflict was about the servicing of this structural relationship between the state and capitalist arms producers, which, according to these scholars was to the overall detriment of the economy. Although suggestive of important relations between the militarized state and arms producers in the Cold War, the argument put here, particularly with respect to the analysis of the form of American military power, below, suggests that this so-called 'Permanent Arms Economy' was not defining of American international relations.

Rather, although the presence of a significant militarized capitalist sector that was, in effect, subsidized by the state, did undermine other fractions of capital, the impact of capitalist military production was not all negative in terms of the health and dynamism within the American economy. There were 'spin-offs' in the civilian economy from military technological developments, but the most important point is that the overall servicing of the social relations of capitalist production, both within the USA and internationally, did not rest on the *systematic* application of (military) force. Thus, the notion of a 'Permanent Arms Economy' may have highlighted the structural condition and weaknesses in the American economy, but itself, did not determine American and capitalist international relations in the Cold War.

¹⁵ See N. Bukharin (1972) p.124-7.

¹⁶ See M. Kidron (1970); S. Melman, *Pentagon Capitalism; The Political Economy of War* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1970); *The Permanent War Economy: American Capitalism in Decline* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974); and M. Kaldor (1978); (1983).

War and the mobilisation of military power is confined to the state,¹⁷ or those that seek to gain state power. In the modern era war appears as an autonomous concern of the state, when in fact its relationship with a social formation is more complex and problematic. Thus, although military power has traditionally been seen as a uniquely international issue, its social and material reproduction within any state, particularly capitalist states, has had an impact not only on the state's military defence, but also the internal political order and economy.

Although in a system of states that recognises no superior entity, war can occur; the role of military power goes much further than international relations as traditionally understood. It is not enough to chart the highs and lows of warfare in terms of the operation of the mechanism of the balance of power.¹⁸ Realist scholarship continues to be trapped in the activity of description, which, though it discusses the changing technological nature of warfare and military power, particularly nuclear weapons, continues to abstract war from wider social and historical issues. Such conceptualisation of war is highly problematic. Though one can recognise limited common threads with the historical tapestry of war and military power, the form of military power and war, if it is to go beyond the descriptive, needs to discuss the historical nature of them both. It is not enough to do this in technological terms alone. Nuclear weapons have obviously helped reshape relations between states in technological and political terms,¹⁹ but the common military attributes of the 'superpowers,' their possession and monopolisation of control of these weapons did not make them homogeneous. Military power, its development and application reflects not only the common feature of a system that is 'anarchical' and potentially warlike, but it also reflects the fact that this system is embedded in a social fabric that is capitalist, and that all states relate to this differently. Thus, though we can recognise the systemic constraints that confront states, these will be met and adjusted to in *different* ways. The advanced political economy of capitalism of the Cold War period and beyond reflects that war, and the application of military power took on different forms.

¹⁷ H. Bull (1977) p.178.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.181.

¹⁹ See L. Freedman *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy: Studies in Security* (London: Macmillan, 1989) and M. Howard *The Causes of War and Other Essays* (London: Temple Smith, 1983).

The production and use of military power was politically different in the era of the Cold War than the nineteenth century. It is to this historical and social era that we now turn to.

2. Military Power in the Cold War

The determining influence of military power in the Cold War reflected a number of technological, social and political issues that crystallized at the end of World War Two. The most important military development was the successful use of nuclear weapons by the USA in August 1945. Alongside this military-technological advance were other developments that would lead to a restructuring of international military power in the Cold War. These could be summarised as the augmenting of the conventional military power of the USA and the USSR, the decline in the political and military power of the traditional European 'Great Powers,' and related to this the restructuring of international capitalist military relations,²⁰ the emergence of new methods of military conflict in the form of national liberation-revolutionary struggle in the colonial world.

To qualify these points one could consider that postwar international relations were characterised by strategic military competition between the 'superpowers,' as a global conflict,²¹ the emergence of pacific political relations between the formerly warring advanced capitalist states under American military leadership, and finally the escalation of forms of military conflict in struggles concerned with state formation and social transformation in the Third World. The postwar era, then, saw a transformation in both the form and substance of military power and war, and was to play a critical role in the Cold War. However, what needs emphasising is that all of these military developments were couched within wider historical and social developments. That is, although the world objectively became a more dangerous place after 1945, that danger was not reducible to the presence of certain military technologies, but rather because of the international social and political turmoil and struggles that this period witnessed, which were not outside the shadow of the bomb.

Because of the changes enumerated above, military power was removed

²⁰ Formalised in 1949 with the founding of NATO.

²¹ Despite the fact that the USSR was not able to project itself militarily beyond its territorial borders until the late 1960s

from the political conflicts between the advanced capitalist states to a degree that a forceful thesis emerged entitled 'democratic peace' that argued that 'liberal democracies' did not fight wars with each other.²² This was an unprecedented historical development and outcome of World War Two that reflected the transformation of international capitalism, and the not separable developments of nuclear weapons and the increased Soviet threat. However, although military conflict was removed from relations between advanced capitalist states, military power was to play a critical and sometimes defining role in the international relations of the Third World. The *systemic* subjugation of peoples in Asia and Africa, which was strongly conditioned by coercive power, came to an end after 1945. Yet, during the process of de-colonisation international military power became an important issue in determining the ultimate outcome of national liberation struggles.

National liberation and revolutionary struggles in the Third World, then, became the principal arena for the application of military power in the Cold War. The transformation of the form of international capitalist social relations that decolonisation reflected also reconstituted capitalist military power as no longer was international capitalist expansion conditional on formal and direct political dominance. It was this transformation and the role of the 'superpowers' on it that provides the main, though not complete, spotlight for the role of military power in the Cold War. Moreover, these developments were imbricated with the strategic nuclear relationship between the 'superpowers.'

This being the case, one of the most important questions relating to the developments in the Third World and the Cold War is how far nuclear weapons determined the Cold War, or what Raymond Williams asked:

'What we really have to ask about the full range of nuclear and related weapons, is what specific *variations* they have introduced into the shifting but always crucial relations between a military technology and a social order.'²³

²² Primarily associated with the work of Michael Doyle. See his 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Policy Part Two,' in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Volume 12 no.4 1983; 'Liberalism and World Politics,' in *American Political Science Review* Volume 80 no.4, 1986b.

²³ 'The Politics of Nuclear Disarmament,' in *New Left Review* (ed.) *Exterminism and Cold War* (London: New Left Books, 1982) p.69. (original emphasis).

For Fred Halliday, the political and military transformations²⁴ wrought by World War Two and its consequences were interlinked, in that the ideological-systemic conflict between the 'superpowers' was influenced and constrained by nuclear weapons.²⁵ Halliday tends to separate the ideological-systemic conflict of the Cold War as constituted in the politics of each 'superpower's' social formation respectively, from nuclear weapons as a form of military power. In doing so, he ends up abstracting the technological²⁶ and destructive features of nuclear weapons from the social formation that they emerged from.²⁷ Obviously, the potential destructive power of these weapons makes them classifiable only on their own terms, and they obviously limited political and military conflict, but they did not, in themselves, define that conflict, they contributed to it.²⁸

Nuclear weapons were not an autonomous military development of World War Two, but related directly to the political strategy of the Allies in the war. They did not emerge onto some kind of isomorphic surface,²⁹ but were a new military technological capacity couched within a very different postwar social and political context. In many respects as Halliday suggests, the social, domestic and international relations of the war, arguably, could be seen as a precursor of things to come in the Cold War, by it being for all intents and purposes a conflict between capitalism and communism.³⁰ What needs to be stressed, however, is that war in general, and the expansion of military power, particularly in and after World War

²⁴ J. Spanier makes a similar claim with respect to postwar international relations, which he describes as a 'revolutionary age' according to the following developments: the transformation of military technology, (ie. nuclear weapons); the ideological influence of communism; and the nationalist revolution in the newly-independent states of the Third World. See *World Politics in an Age of Revolution* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967) p.3.

²⁵ F. Halliday (1986) p.31.

²⁶ Halliday does this through his analytical separation of nuclear weapons and military power from the social production of such military power. E. P. Thompson (p.1-33), in his 'Notes on Exterminism' in *New Left Review* (ed.) *Exterminism and Cold War* (London: New Left Books, 1982) suggests that nuclear weapons and the technological drives associated with this form of military technology, actually constituted a 'mode of production' that is autonomous from the social formation as a whole. Thompson treats these weapons in terms of their own technological-strategic dynamic that was not reducible to the politics of the social formation. Mike Davis 'Nuclear Imperialism and Extended Deterrence' (p.34-51; 42) in the same volume, rightly criticises Thompson on this point, not only for his abstraction of military technology, in effect Thompson fetishizes this military technology, but also for his excessive focus on the central European nuclear stand-off.

²⁷ This is taken to extremes by Mann (1988) p.143, who claims, with respect to the relationship between social order(s) and war: 'But the danger would be maintained by any form of society which did not abandon the level of technology bequeathed to it by capitalism and which remained militaristic. The Soviet Union is such a case.'

²⁸ Although in the realm of speculation, without nuclear weapons it seems quite incontestable that, though in a different form, there would have been (continued) political-military conflict between the USSR and the USA after 1945. Nuclear weapons did not determine the US-Soviet conflict, as Mike Davis (1982) p.42 has stated: 'That conflict (between the different social formations of East and West) would have existed and developed into a Cold War, even if nuclear weapons had never been invented. The Bomb has shaped and misshaped its evolution, and may yet put an end to it altogether. But it is not its spring. This lies in the dynamic of class struggle on a world scale.'

²⁹ See E. P. Thompson (1982) p.1-33.

³⁰ F. Halliday (1986) p.34

Two, radicalised the 'mobilised constituencies,' which threatened the existing social order and its social constituencies.³¹ It was this development, coalesced in the collapse of European colonial power and the rise of national liberation movements in the colonial world, that provided the international context for nuclear weapons and military power.

The presence, development and *use* of nuclear weapons in Cold War by the 'superpowers' obviously made the world a much more dangerous place to live in. Nuclear weapons, then, conditioned the international military conflict between the USSR and the USA. However, this conditioning and restraining of military power did not prevent their political use.³² The use of nuclear weapons in the Cold War was not in general; a product of the direct conflict between the 'superpowers,' but rather reflected the conflicts within the international expansion of capitalist modernity and the conflicts this wrought in the Third World.³³ This was the terrain of conflict where military power was used and was sometimes determinate.

These issues are important because they contribute to the question posed above and at the beginning of this chapter about how the Cold War could be defined in terms of military power. Nuclear weapons did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather within the exigencies of war, and for the Soviet Union in a world where they were encircled and threatened by nuclear bases. In this sense military power in the form of nuclear weapons could be seen to have an international derivation. However, this recognition does not mean that nuclear weapons, as a form of military power were autonomous, and solely located within the realm of the international. Although they emerged within an international conjuncture their function and determining effect on the Cold War was not defining, internationally, but was part of a wider set of relations that were not reducible to military power *alone*. Thus, nuclear weapons, and 'superpower' military power more broadly defined could, arguably, be seen to have helped determine the emergence and outcome of a number of crises and conflicts during the Cold War.³⁴ Yet, the

³¹ See G. Kolko *Century of War: Politics, Conflicts and Society Since 1914* (New York: The New Press, 1994) p.xvi; xix; and 374.

³² See F. Halliday (1986) and M. Davis (1982) p.35-64 for a more extended discussion of the political uses of nuclear weapons.

³³ See M. Davis in (1982) p.35-64.

³⁴ Arguably, the existence of nuclear weapons could be seen to have reduced the potential for 'superpower' military conflict. Thus, instead of international political issues being resolved, militarily, by the 'superpowers,' issues were resolved through alternative currencies of politics and military power that involved different forms of political agency, (ie. other

determining of events like the Vietnam war and the Cuban missile crisis cannot be detached from wider issues that conditioned the *use* of military power. As will be argued in the subsequent discussions of American and Soviet military power, military power had a different formative impact on each one's internal and international relations in the Cold War. The role of nuclear weapons and military power were important in this regard, but were determinant in *different* ways for either 'superpower.' This being the case, derived from the political substance of each as a distinct form of political rule, nuclear weapons featured differently in each one's international relations, and thus military power. If it was defining of the Cold War, it was only so in terms of the realisation of each 'superpower's' overall political objectives.

3. The American Form of Military Power in the Cold War

The American military machine that emerged during World War Two was formative of the postwar and Cold War international order. The 1947 Truman Doctrine; the first official political commitment to a global projection of American military power was soon followed by the defining document and policy statement of postwar US military power, NSC'68.³⁵ NSC'68 orientated American foreign and military policy towards what George Kennan, called 'militarised containment.'³⁶ The American form of military power in the Cold War corresponded to the transformed and transformative processes underway within capitalist modernity that World War Two had crystallized and accelerated. With respect to the United States, its military power was produced from within an advanced industrialised capitalist economy that had greatly expanded during the war.³⁷ It was this technological dominance that helped fuel the arms race, the combination of technological sophistication with the imperative of the accumulation of profit for armaments manufacturers, alongside the ideological direction provided by 'Containment' and NSC'68.

states or political movements).

³⁵ For a critical analysis of NSC'68 and its consequences see E. May (ed.) *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993).

³⁶ See his (1984) p.168-79. See R. Latham *The Liberal Moment: Modernity, Security, and the Making of the Postwar International Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) for a critical discussion of this.

³⁷ See I. Deutscher 'Myths of the Cold War,' in *Marxism, Wars, and Revolutions: Essays From Three Decades* (London: Verso: 1984).

The projection of American military power in the Cold War was not only about meeting the perceived military threat of the Soviet Union, but also about pacifying disruptive and unstable social formations, and making them more conducive to the social and political forms of capital. This form of military power was distinct from the previous 'imperial-colonial' form in that it did not fundamentally rest on the promotion and maintenance of capitalist social relations through an armed international capitalist presence within each social form. Providing that the social form concerned encouraged a capitalist form of development, a coercive presence was not generally required; what mattered was the ability of capital to penetrate relatively unimpeded by a political authority that recognised and protected private property.³⁸ Thus, American military power was *not* generalised (ie. *defining* of the postwar international order). Although America throughout the Cold War intervened and was quick to use military power in a number of instances, it did this *exceptionally* in response to the local political and military threat. Military power was only necessary in exceptional circumstances to meet military threats. Instead international capitalism rested on undisputed American military dominance, but also on political forms of rule that were able to reproduce capitalist social relations rather than the necessity of coordinating this through the presence of direct military power.

Previously, the unfolding of capitalist modernity had rested on different forms of the reproduction of capital. The forms of political rule in the European capitalist colonies were part of specific social forms that rested on the direct-coercive form of expropriation by a state based on military dominance. This form of political rule, though it was to have local differences and specificities related to the individual colonial power, was not formally capitalist in the sense of the self-valorisation of capital and the 'free' facilitation of accumulation. Rather, these social formations were tied to the imperial power in a form of protectionist relationship that closed off potential markets and materials for the expanding American capitalist economy. These social formations were not open to full capitalist penetration. Thus, the capitalist world economy at the beginning of the

³⁸ Decolonisation and the emergence of new, formally independent states facilitated the transformation of international capitalism through the conversion of the capitalist political form. However, except in a small number of cases that provoked American hostility, the change in the political form, although it did see a change in the economy, did not necessarily see anti-capitalist transformation. American policy, then, in encouraging political change generally consolidated the capitalist

Cold War was not a fully global or international economy. It was segmented according to imperial formations. The flow of capital and the regimes of accumulation were directly related to separate international forms of political rule, backed by military force. Capitalist social relations rested on direct links with military power, which were fundamentally concerned with the maintenance of local and imperial capital. This situation and the political forms that it effected, was anathema to the USA. However, it was the context of the postwar situation that provided an opportunity for the USA to force the colonial powers to alter the nature of their social and political relationships with the colonies, and consequently transform the nature of the capitalist world economy.

American international capitalist power welcomed, indeed, encouraged the end of Empire. The end of formal political control of imperial possessions was directly related to the new, American form of international relations and military power. This form of international politics was not, coincidentally, related to the expansion of Soviet power and influence after 1945, but rather directly responsive to this threat; a return to the competitive ideological and social projects pronounced by Lenin and Wilson in 1917.³⁹ However, the American dominance of international capitalism and the postwar international order reflected a new *capitalist* approach to military power. The Cold War and American foreign policy reflected this. A number of newly 'independent states' that emerged after 1945 and their respective relations with the United States were illustrative of this.

Decolonisation and legal-'political' independence was the basis of American policy as the best way to prevent communists and thus Moscow from influencing and determining post-colonial politics. This rested on the removal of the colonial presence, but only *after* a 'Western-oriented' government was in place.⁴⁰ However, in a number of cases that were due to the political positions of the colonial powers in a number of their colonies, and the lack of viable non-communist nationalist movements, US policy, in the short-to-medium term ended-up supporting colonial rule. However, what was distinctive about the role of

economy.

³⁹ See A. Mayer *The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918-1919* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968).

⁴⁰ For an historical analysis that focuses on American relations with European colonial powers in South-East Asia see S. Lee *Outposts of Empire: Korea, Vietnam, and the Origins of the Cold War in Asia, 1949-1954* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

American military power in these relationships, was that it was only used or endorsed by the USA when the social order was threatened. The East and South East Asian examples of Taiwan, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia all show the capitalist use of military power. This was equalled in parts of Southern Europe and Latin America where, periodically, the form of political rule was co-determined by military power. This was the case because capitalist social relations could not maintain themselves, or even develop without the direct suppression of its opponents, the collective power of peasants, workers and sections of the intelligentsia. Military power in these cases, and the role of American military power, served to suppress class based opposition to capitalism, but it also, through the state, saw the development of a 'state-capitalist' material base that ultimately succeeded in producing and reproducing its material existence and incorporating the working classes into the social relations of this form of capitalism.⁴¹In these cases, and there were a number ranging across the Third World, the military took upon itself to dominate the state. The involvement of external intervention facilitated this. Basically the military sought to crush internal social rebellion, and institute programmes of modernisation based on the encouragement of inward investment and the development and protection of parts of the economy. The need for a coercive state was not derived from a project to prevent the permeation of capitalism to these societies, but was to prevent the outbreak of social disorder that international capitalist penetration effected. The dislocations and upheavals caused by the undermining of the old social order led to a weakening of the coherence of the state through secessionism and class-based revolts from below. Military power was employed to maintain state authority in a most obvious manner, and to facilitate capitalist modernisation⁴² with which to ultimately address these problems.

⁴¹ The argument put forward by T. McCormick in *America's Half Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) that economic success in the Third World, particularly in the Pacific Rim was 'likely' to be achieved by countries that were capitalist and/or followed a capitalist path of development, misses the point over the fact that capitalist development was contested and it was military power that in a number of cases that was decisive in maintain such a model of development.

⁴² The examples of the 'tiger' economies of South-East Asia are frequently cited as exemplars of 'Asian values,' or the authoritarian road to capitalist modernity. What they most typify, however, is the agency of the state, with international military and economic assistance to institute capitalist modernisation through the state. Military power was essential here. In these states, particularly South Korea (it provides a counter example of successful capitalist modernisation, based on the crushing of social rebellion, against that of Vietnam), the state and military power was incorporated into the Cold War under US guidance and anti-socialist ideology. Thus, state formation and the implanting of capitalist social relations was premised on military power, with international support and investment that laid the foundations for a capitalist material base that has emerged, or rather is emerging as a social formation characterised by the withdrawal of military power from

In terms of the historical evolution of imperialism, capitalist social relations were not produced within the colonial social formations through the separation of the spheres of social life. However, this is not to suggest that capital was not institutionalised within a framework of political power and social relations. It was, but that framework rested on military power, because the state or political order was *directly* associated and identified with the social relations of how humans produced material life. The expansion of an American dominated capitalist system was facilitated by the social forms of European colonialism that in the most part had laid the material and social foundations for *forms* of capitalist production, but ruled through external power. With independence this military power was removed or evicted, and the new state was based on a social framework conducive to the development of a different form of capitalism. In *all* of the cases of capitalist development, however, military power, and the coercive use of other forms of power were essential in creating the framework for capitalist development. But what has characterised the development of capitalism, is that once the 'secret of primitive accumulation' has been revealed and resolved, the institutionalisation of class conflict in the *form* of the capitalist social relation is located between the spheres of public and private, or the role of the state in managing this conflict. What this historically has ensured, though this should not be seen in determinate or teleological terms, is that coercive and military power has been withdrawn from direct participation in class struggle, which has become privatised.

The historical development of capitalism and its relationship with military power, both in terms of the relations between advanced capitalist states and in the general reproduction of a capitalist world system seems to have undermined if not seen off the claim by some Marxists, most famously Lenin, that war is an inherent feature of relations between capitalist states. Thus, war proved itself to be potentially hazardous as a mechanism for inter-capitalist relations. It was the emergence of a world dominated by the military power of the USA and the USSR that structurally determined the military relations between the states in question. This is not to suggest that the Cold War conflict in the form of US-Soviet military

political economy, with the emerging separation of the spheres of social life, based on the development on a relatively privatised economy and civil society.

hostility that developed into a struggle involving the production and competition in nuclear weapons *caused* the emergence of pacific relations between advanced capitalist states, but that the development of the new form of inter-capitalist relations in the Cold War was premised on this historical-structural conjuncture, particularly the power of American political economy and the American form of military power. American military power was coordinated with American political economy to re-organise international capitalism whereby military power was subordinated to American leadership.⁴³ This leadership, and the role of military power was focused on securing the political economy of Western Europe through Marshall aid, and the formation of NATO. This was paralleled by the broader international concern to strengthen the international capitalist system by removing the political barriers of imperialist preference, and re-orientating international capitalism towards a system of political rule based on sovereign states, premised on the encouragement of the separation of the political and economic spheres. This was the projected objective, but it was backed by military power, and it was military power that was to play a key role in maintaining this international order.

With respect to the question of the relationship between capitalism and war, and whether capitalism benefits from war, these capitalist states were not pacific in themselves, but the avoidance of war between them was a necessary development that promoted the consolidation of capitalism. This was quite clear from the preceding history and crises of international capitalism. Until American consolidation and dominance after 1945, capitalism had gone through two world wars. These developments were linked to, and partly responsible for wider developments in international relations: the challenge to European colonial rule from nationalist movements, that in many respects also challenged the existing, fledgling capitalism. Indeed, at the historical conjuncture of the end of World War Two, war appeared to have been a dangerous bedfellow of capital. Whereas in the past it may have benefited capital, it now threatened social change of a revolutionary complexion, after the mobilisation of traditionally anti-capitalist class constituencies. As Michael Cox has commented, capitalism was in crisis, and

⁴³ Former imperial powers attempted to engage in autonomous military expeditions in the Cold War, as in Suez, but these could only be effected with American acquiescence.

with the end of the war in 1945, there was no guarantee that its future was secure.⁴⁴ Only the relatively unblemished citadel of American capitalism had the resources, political will, and most importantly, social relations of production where the organised power of labour and the working class was incorporated into the 'mode of production,' managed to salvage and reorganise international capitalism. The situation in war-torn Europe and elsewhere, particularly Asia, as the Japanese were defeated, was such that there was widespread opposition to the restoration of the *status quo ante*. Thus, American capitalism and its related form of military power was coordinated to restructure international capitalism, both in Europe, with alliances forged with conservative and moderate elements within the traditional political class that sought to isolate radical politics, and in the colonial world by supporting de-colonisation and political independence. This project of the creation of a new international order was premised on a concern to remove military power from society (ie. in the upholding or visible participation in a social order). Thus, America sought to redraw the sphere of military power in terms of international relations with the demand for decolonisation and political independence, and within states with the encouraging of a 'politics of consensus' founded on the inclusion of moderate sections of the working class and isolation of radicals.

This does not mean that war and its preparation through ideology and the material basis of military power, did not service capital. War and the use of military power in the Cold War manifested in strategic nuclear weapons and other forms of military technology were successful in securing certain political objectives. These consisted of the constraining of Soviet and other revolutionary states' international relations, to having an impact on their domestic social form. Although, it would be contentious to suggest that the projection of American military power and the fuelling of the arms race determined Soviet international relations, it certainly had an impact both in terms of the Soviet Union's relations with its allies, and its own political economy. The American military dominance based upon technological superiority was enough to ensure that Soviet attempts to take advantage through third parties of regional instability were thwarted⁴⁵ because

⁴⁴ See M. Cox (1984a) p.136-94.

⁴⁵ Daniel Ellsberg (1981) p.i-ii and note number 3 on p.xxi-xxiii has outlined the role and coercive use of strategic nuclear weapons by the USA in the Cold War against the Soviet Union and its allies in the international communist movement. This was typified by the 1979 Carter doctrine, response to the disturbances in the Persian Gulf ushered in by the Iranian

of American nuclear intimidation.⁴⁶ But more importantly for the argument over the relationship between capitalism and war, particularly the liberal claims from Hobson, Schumpeter, and critics of American foreign policy that capitalism does not benefit from war is highly contentious when military power has not only secured the reproduction of capitalism in a number of instances, but has also served to contain potential Soviet expansion.

American military power was not however limited to helping determine international relations, it was also characteristic of a specific form of military power that related to the domestic social and political order. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, American military power was reflective of a technological moment that mass-produced armaments through capitalist production, and within a wider capitalist economic form. This capitalist form of military production and use served to distinguish the form of American military power within the domestic political-economy and how this related to international relations.

Capitalist military production had a massive presence within the American economy that reflected a clear social relationship between the political form and the economic form that produced the *matériel* for the state. The means of military power, then, were imbued with the logic of accumulation that contributed to the technological drives within the American armaments programme. Although it would be difficult to distinguish how far the accumulative drives of military capital contributed to the arms race and US military power, such drives were obviously important, if not in terms of quantity, then certainly in how far competitive tendering served to accelerate technological advances. The relationship between capital and the state through military production saw the political form intervening both 'politically' to provide the political legitimacy for postwar re-armament, particularly in domestic political debates over the 'missile gap' with the USSR, and 'economically' by using public funds and borrowing to support research and production of military 'use values.'⁴⁷ The United States, then, was characterised by

Revolution. The words 'any means necessary, including military force..' were a direct threat to the Soviet Union.

⁴⁶ Thus, writers like James Cronin are wrong, when they claim that American arms policy had no major impact on the Soviet Union, or were not particularly successful. See p.192-3 of *The World the Cold War Made: Order, Chaos and the Return of History* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁴⁷ A report in *The Guardian* newspaper (July 2, 1998) stated that the US economy, since 1940 had spent over \$19 trillion on military 'hardware.'

significant militarisation of its productive base. This militarisation 'distorted' the overall economy, but also helped ensure economic growth and employment. The Cold War dynamic not only effected the external projection of military power, then, but also the internal complexion of American capitalism.

Despite the militarisation of the American economy during the Cold War, and the huge amounts of private and public finance devoted to military production, the United States did not suffer to the same degree the economic and political distortions that were to plague the USSR. This obviously related to the unprecedented material and technological lead that the USA commanded in 1945 and after over the USSR. It also related, more importantly, to the form of American international relations with other (formerly rival and sometimes hostile) capitalist states. Despite the American military presence in Europe through NATO, relations with other capitalist states were not militarised, or conducted in terms of political-military hostility. Moreover, because of this, American military power was only one form of American international relations with both advanced capitalist states and other states. And in this sense, military power played a more exceptional role. Finally, because of the inter-national nature of capitalist social relations, the financing of American military production and power, particularly Reagan's rearmament programme in the early 1980s did not rest on the American economy alone. The United States was able to use international capital to finance the production of its military capacity. Thus, what is perceived to be the defining aspect of the state, independent military power was not limited to the political nor economic form of American capital, but was also *imbricated* within wider international capitalist social relations. Whereas American military power served to intimidate and at times contain the Soviet Union,⁴⁸ it managed to do this without unduly enfeebling the wider reproduction of a capitalist social order, but also helped undermine the Soviet economy,⁴⁹ and thus contributed to the weakening of its internal political legitimacy.

⁴⁸ This it ultimately did. Indeed, from its inception, the atomic age has been led by the arms production and policy of the USA. This policy rested on the need for US strategic nuclear dominance. This it maintained for most of the Cold War, and it was determined by: '... the ability to disarm the opposing superpower of its strategic forces in a first strike and... the ability to retaliate against the homeland of the of the opposing superpower in a second strike, were both capabilities strictly manipulated by the USA until the late 1960s.' D. Ellsberg (1981) p.vii. See also F. Halliday (1986) p.46-80.

⁴⁹ See F. Halliday (1994a) p.198-201.

The American form of military power was constitutive of postwar international relations. In helping to determine the shape of the postwar international order, American military power effected a new form of capitalist international relations that played a crucial role in defeating and/or containing alternative revolutionary and Soviet supported attempts to reshape the international system. American military power was imbricated with a specific capitalist logic in its production, development and use. Thus, military power was not a fully autonomous sphere within American international relations. This is not to suggest that international sources of rival political and military power did not have an impact on the production and use of American military power, they patently did. American military power was used throughout, with nuclear weapon alerts, the dispatch of counter-insurgency forces and the deployment of strategic air power to undermine and quash a number of Soviet backed and nationalist movements. Yet its role in the Cold War was part of a *dual* relationship in the projection of American capitalist power; one of direct military force produced by the American capitalist arms producers and actualised in the form of the American state, and the other less visible, but equally effective expression of capitalist power in its purely commodified form, in the law of value and its expansion and incorporation in *inter*-national relations.

4. The Soviet Form of Military Power in the Cold War

The Soviet Union has been described as a military formation akin to capitalism in a state of war; for all intents and purposes the Soviet social formation was essentially defined and constituted by the dominant role of military production and war preparation.⁵⁰ This understanding of the Soviet Union saw the interplay of the need for a domestic mobilisation of society and centralised bureaucratic control under Party dictatorship, which was facilitated by the perceived⁵¹ foreign military threat. The Soviet social formation, then, rested on two constituent elements. First, the actual 'mode of production' premised on rapid and heavy industrialisation with which to create a modern military machine capable of defending the USSR. This

⁵⁰ See O. Lange 'The Role of Planning in Socialistic Economy,' in O. Lange (ed.) *Problems of the Political Economy of Socialism* (New Dehli: People's Publishing Press, 1962) and Mary Kaldor in (1982) p.280-2

⁵¹ This argument citing the manipulation of international hostility combined with the traditional features of Russian xenophobia and inferiority with respect to the more advanced West, is associated with George Kennan. See (1954) p.63-90.

saw the centralised-bureaucratic orchestration of society, exemplified in Stalinist planning to direct and coerce a transformation of society to create a modern industrial society with a strong war-making capacity. This was Stalin's 'achievement' cemented by Soviet military expansion during and after World War Two. Second, was the persistent need for an external threat with which to galvanise society, thus facilitating a militarised form of production. Such external threats against Bolshevism revealed themselves with Allied intervention against Soviet Russia between 1917-20, the German attack in 1941 and the American/Western hostility after 1945.

The Soviet Union was a social formation premised on military inferiority, which though genuine was manipulated to foster and consolidate a particular form of social relations and political rule.⁵² The military history of the Soviet Union can be seen as the interplay between the need to maintain centralised Party dominance and external security. Viewed in this light, the Soviet Union needed the Cold War and American hostility, and the arms race engendered by US power after 1945, which provided the Communist Party with an important means with which to maintain its political rule.⁵³ In these terms military power was constitutive of the Soviet social formation, and Communist Party rule was premised on the coercive ability derived from military power. The deep, penetrative form of military power within the Soviet Union was a means to ensure loyalty to the regime and inclusion. Unlike the capitalist form of military power, which appears removed from society, military power within the Soviet Union was directly part of society and fully imbricated within the social formation, and production and social relations within the Soviet Union.

This being the case the Soviet form of military power was distinctly different to the capitalist form. Soviet social relations were based on a much more obvious and visible coercive capacity, in that the spheres of political authority and social-material production were not formally separated. Military power traversed both spheres of social life, being directly related to Party dominance in politics,

⁵² *Ibid.*, *passim* and M. Cox in (1986) p.17-82.

⁵³ This argument has been much commented on in terms of the debate over the end of the Cold War. For a representative selection see R. Ned Lebow & T. Risse-Kappen (ed.) (1994) The main assumption is that the changed international security framework of the mid-1980s that Gorbachev recognised was the premise for a rethinking and re-structuring in Soviet security policy, (ie. the realisation of the liberal critique of American Cold War ideology), that the Soviet Union was an enemy and a military threat because it perceived such a threat from the West.

and being materially produced within and by the economy under direct Party guidance and planning. Military production, the production of the *matériel* of military power was not autonomous or tied to a different logic of accumulation, à la capital. It was subsumed within an overall social formation that was directed by the political rule of the Party. Whereas military power in capitalist societies, although manifested in its application through the state, was produced by units of capital that serviced the military capacity of the state, but also the accumulative and expansive needs of capital. Military power in capitalist social forms, though organised by the state, is not reducible to the state, because military power rests on the ability of capital to reproduce the social relations of capitalist production and from that the productive relations with which to produce military power. Thus, the capitalist state derives the ability to make war from the functioning strength of capitalist production.

This distinction between Soviet and capitalist forms of military power was not only pertinent to their respective constitutive roles within each social form, but also the wider issue of what Isaac Deutscher called the 'Great Contest'⁵⁴ between the USSR and the USA. For Deutscher this was about the economic and material potentials of Soviet socialism and capitalism, which from Deutscher's rather idealist perspective favoured the former.⁵⁵ However, with the benefit of hindsight, something that unfortunately Deutscher never benefited from, the impact of military power, particularly in terms of its production within the economy of the USSR, was in the long-term costly to the USSR's 'great contest' to outproduce the West. The Soviet drive for 'strategic parity' with the USA did damage the wider socialist material goals. This is quite apparent when looked upon from the wider conjuncture of the 1960s, both domestic and international. It was after 1962 that the USSR made massive leaps in military production,⁵⁶ precisely at the time when, despite Khrushchev's promises, the economy was soon to fail to maintain the postwar momentum of material growth,⁵⁷ and moreover, when the material drain on the economy form fulfilling its international revolutionary commitment increased

⁵⁴ *The Great Contest: Russia and the West* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960)

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.78-83.

⁵⁶ SIPRI Yearbook 1968/9 p. 200-1 figures show that Soviet military spending increased from US\$ 22 billion in 1960 to US\$ 33 billion in 1963 up to US\$ 40 billion in 1968. Cited in F. Halliday (1986) p.59.

⁵⁷ See R. Davies *Soviet Economic Development From Lenin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) p.67-82; A. Nove *An Economic History of the USSR 1917-1991* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992); and F.

substantially. Thus, increased military production and resource allocation from within distorted wider social goals, and had a profound impact on the overall political legitimacy of the form of political rule. With respect to the external realm, the USSR's dependence on military power served to undermine the political potential of socialism in East-Central Europe because it quite obviously rested on direct forms of coercion.

The Soviet Union derived its military power from both within its own social formation and the production relations it engendered, and also from the hostility of the international system. The Soviet social formation, indeed the revolution from which it was born, derived from international military weakness due to its backward nature. Thus, within the project of Bolshevism was the goal of overcoming Russia's endemic weakness.⁵⁸ The programme of rapid and intense industrialisation was accompanied by the goal of military modernisation and expansion.⁵⁹ The orientation towards heavy industry, and the subordination of society's human and material resources to five-year plan targets which, particularly under Stalin, were heavily imbued with military expansion highlighted this. The Soviet Union appeared to prioritise military production, thus military power over other social needs. For many scholars and critics military power was defining of the Soviet Union, (ie. the Soviet Union was more than anything else, a society of war, a society pervaded by militarism).⁶⁰ The domestic features of this 'militarism' were obviously guided by genuine international military threats,⁶¹ but also how this external threat was *provoked* by the Soviet Union's proclaimed commitment to international revolution. Thus, there was international hostility against the USSR because of what it was, but also from what it actively did after 1917, and particularly after its wartime victory in 1945.

Halliday (1986) p.137-45.

⁵⁸ See D. Holloway *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* Second Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) p.5-7.

⁵⁹ As R. Craig Nation *Black Earth Red Star: A History of Soviet Security Policy, 1917 to 1991* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) p.65 notes: '... building socialism in one country under the conditions of capitalist encirclement demanded more than the expedient of accommodation. It demanded the positive goal of securing through strength, of "catching-up with and overtaking" the leading imperialist powers.'

⁶⁰ The term 'militarism' has more than one meaning, and has been used to describe the Soviet Union, a 'militarist' society, or one following a militaristic logic. Much of this critique of the Soviet Union derives from a liberal-conservative perspective, even stretching to some Marxist analyses. If we were to understand 'militarism' as an ideology that emphasises martial- military strengths within society, and where military institutions have a high position in society, both in terms of resource appropriation and values, then the Soviet Union could be described as such. However, if we were to develop from this notion of militarism, as a social form and ideology bent on aggressive international military expansion and the use of force, then the historical record of the Soviet Union would be more complicated. Because the Soviet Union was not overly militarily aggressive in the Cold War.

⁶¹ *Ibid...* p.xii and D. Holloway 'War Militarism and the Soviet State,' in D. Smith & E.P. Thompson (ed.) *Protest and*

From its emergence as a different kind of politics based on the overthrow of capitalist social relations and the capitalist state, the Soviet Union endured international capitalist hostility with the aim of limiting the Soviet Union's international relations and even destroying it through forms of military competition.⁶² The postwar period reflected this, particularly in the arms race and American technological dominance in it. The capitalist-militarist nature of American hostility, based on superiority in arms production and use, tied the Soviet Union to a form of international competition that accentuated many of the tendencies that already existed within the Soviet Union.⁶³

However, the argument that the Soviet Union was militaristic or was bent on military expansion is disputable. Though military power was a visible feature of Soviet life, this was partly a result of its historical legacy⁶⁴ as much as it was anything to do with the 'natural' militaristic nature of the Soviet Union. Yet, as an international and later global power under Brezhnev, Soviet influence did rest disproportionately on international relations *restricted* to military power. The 'Brezhnevite' goal of strategic parity after the failure to secure political objectives (for example in Cuba in 1962) rested on augmenting military power, particularly nuclear weapons. And the Soviet ability to challenge American political dominance rested overwhelmingly on military power. Thus, *détente* from the American perspective was about reducing military competition, and thus the Soviet Union's potential to challenge American capitalist power. The United States knew that without the projection of military power the USSR was very limited in how it could determine the direction of the international system.

The Soviet Union, then, was not a victim in the Cold War and it did use military force to suppress alternative forms of politics. Yet despite this reliance on military power, its use of military power was more limited and contingent than that

Survive (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981) p.135-6.

⁶² This was the case for the history of the Soviet Union from 1917 and allied intervention up to the era of the 'Cold War.' See F. Halliday (1986) p.47-55 and (1994a) p.198-205.

⁶³ Indeed, as David Holloway has suggested, the role of military institutions and overall Soviet military policy was not problematic, broadly within Soviet society and political institutions. The purported goals of: forcing the West to recognise and negotiate with it from a position of reciprocal equality; to limit and prevent Western intervention in the Third World against Soviet allies. See (1981) p.148-9.

⁶⁴ The historical legacy effected the organisation and ideology within the Soviet Union's military forces. As David Holloway has noted: 'Why is it...that the country in which the first socialist revolution took place is so highly militarised? Why is Soviet military organisation so different from original socialist concepts, with rank and hierarchy distinguished in a very marked way? Why are the values of military patriotism given so much emphasis?' in *Ibid...* p.131. See, also the introduction in R. Craig Nation (1992).

of its capitalist enemies. Indeed, the Soviet Union was limited to military power as a currency of political expansion and this, ultimately, not only reduced its ability to influence and alter international relations, but also made it dependent on military power as a currency or form of politics. This is probably the most important aspect of any discussion of the Soviet Union's form of military power in the Cold War. The 'politics of expansion' of the Soviet type of social formation was limited to a politics directly related to military power. However, the Soviet Union in the Cold War did not confine itself to protecting its dominance within East-Central Europe. Because of its form of politics, which derived from its social form, and the fact that politics was inseparable from production, the Soviet Union could only expand through political-military conquest or subordination. The situation in East-Central Europe after 1945 is definitive in this respect. The Soviet Union could not expand into East-Central Europe, or secure political-economic cooperation, as the United States did in Western Europe, because it was not *that* kind of social form. Because social relations were explicitly part of the state, the Soviet Union could not, because it did not have the social relations, the means with which to secure a certain kind of politics. It could only guarantee sympathetic forms of politics and corresponding types of social form through the direct expansion of its politics, rather than the American expansion of a different form of social relations.

The means with which the Soviet social form, and its related politics expanded, what critics of the Soviet Union termed 'imperialist,' were the Red Army and local communist parties. Much of the discussion of the 'Sovietisation' of East-Central Europe is couched in terms of totalitarianism and uniformity. Yet, this is an over simplification. Though the Red Army, in *all* cases was the final guarantor of the Soviet-type of political rule, based on local communist parties, the enforcing of a political and social uniformity was dependent on the role of the local Party-state form of political rule (backed-up by the Red Army), its ability to secure popular material objectives and how these relations were mediated by tensions and conflicts between the working class and the alienated form of political rule. The Red Army was the means, during and after World War Two, to destroy fascism in Eastern Europe and also any vestiges of capitalism. Local communist parties were ultimately reliant on the coercive ability of the Soviet Union to

maintain communist political rule. If the Red Army had not been the agent to lay the basis for a communist seizure of power in East-Central Europe, then the postwar situation, in all probability, would not have seen the revolutionary social transformation that occurred there. In all likelihood, fledgling forms of pluralist democracy would have emerged alongside an embryonic market economy. Moreover, without the political control enforced through communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union, East-Central Europe would have been able to receive financial and other forms of economic assistance and penetration from the USA. In effect, capitalism in all probability would have re-rooted itself into the social flesh of East-Central Europe.

Because of the nature of capitalist social relations and the fact that the Soviet form of social relations was premised on something different, the Soviet Union could only secure political and economic cooperation, and ultimately, subservience through explicit political sanction. There was no other way that the Soviet Union could guarantee political support against the USA without an externally imposed form of political rule. Indeed, as the historical developments in Albania, Yugoslavia and China highlighted, even revolutionary socialist transformation within states, and the supplanting of capitalist social relations and removal of Western imperialist interests did not provide the Soviet Union with sufficiently supplicant allies in the struggle with the USA and international capital. The only certain method for the expansion of Soviet material and political interests was through Soviet dominated local communist parties and the Red Army.

However, the Soviet Union did encourage and supported many nationalist and revolutionary movements in the Third World. Indeed two such revolutionary movements that came to determine politics in Cuba and Vietnam joined the Soviet led economic organisation the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). Nationalist and revolutionary movements were obviously important to Soviet international relations through their expulsion of Western influence and military and economic links with the USSR. However, and this will become clearer in the following chapter on social revolution and Part Two of the thesis, these forms of political agency and change did not amount to a *Soviet* politics of expansion. Precisely because of the limited nature of the form of Soviet international relations,

'revolutions' did not emerge from Soviet-driven directives or policy decisions, but rather from *within* international capitalist social relations. Despite the political-strategic advantage⁶⁵ of these revolutions to Soviet objectives of reducing American international power, many of these revolutions subsequently became a burden when they did not develop into outright hostility towards the USSR. The 'expansion' of the Soviet form of politics and social relations, when derived from an autonomous source, as in a number of cases in the Third World, because of its form of change, involving an autonomous and authoritarian political agency, qualified, when it did not problematise Soviet international objectives.

The expansion of 'socialism' was associated with the expansion of the Soviet form of political rule. Many critics of the Soviet Union, from both left and right of the political spectrum have identified this form of political expansion, premised on military power, as imperialism. This has been supported by the history of the Soviet deployment of military power in East-Central Europe after 1945. The interventions in 1953, 1956, and 1968, alongside the threat of intervention in Poland in 1980-81, and the intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 all, so the argument goes, reflected a Stalinist-imperialist dynamic. All of these interventions and the social and political relations they derived from had identifiable aspects of exploitation and coercion within them. The events in East-Central Europe in 1989 and after are indicative of this. However, to suggest that the international politics of the Soviet Union and the role of military power within this politics of expansion conformed to imperialism is problematic. This is not to suggest that the Soviet Union's relations with its allies in East-Central Europe was generally beneficent, because, such a claim is insupportable, but that does not mean that we can or should lump the social and political relations of the Soviet bloc within the same conceptual framework with which one uses to analyse the form and nature (with or without a discussion of military power) of the relations between capitalist states and their imperialist possessions, nor the politics of American capitalism after 1945. Although immediately after world War Two the Soviet Union plundered much of East-Central Europe, particularly eastern Germany as *de facto* reparations for war damage and losses, the general

⁶⁵ It would be very difficult to justify any notion of economic advantage to the USSR from these revolutions.

relationship, both between the Soviet Union and its allies in the Soviet bloc, and within Soviet bloc countries was one of the facilitation of the abolition of exploitative capitalist social relations of production, and the foundation and expansion of state or politically led and planned socialisation of the means of production and political direction of the economy by the communist parties, according to a basic logic of social provision.

The Soviet Union only intervened (ie. employed military coercion) when the form of political rule, *its* form of political rule was threatened. The form of political rule was directly related to the relations of production and to how society materially reproduced itself. Therefore military power was directly imbricated with the material relations of each social formation within the Soviet bloc. Because of the central and defining nature of military power (ie. the Red Army and communist party in each social formation), political authority and power were directly associated with the production of goods and the standard of living. Social and thus political legitimacy, because they were not separable were symbiotic, and one kind of change necessarily meant the same in the other sphere. Social change equalled political change, and political change equalled social change.

Soviet socialism, then, was more deeply defined and ultimately limited to the politics of military power. This not only deeply undermined the long-term viability of the social formations of East-Central Europe and the social ^{and} as political relations that they rested on, but also limited and problematised any politics of expansion, because all political expansion was premised on direct political-military power that had to confront and overcome American and Western (military) hostility. Because the Soviet Union could only expand in tandem with direct military power, unlike capitalist social relations, which did not, each time the Soviet Union did expand or supported forms of expansion it faced the real military threats of the USA. This is not a case of imparting blame to either side with respect to the origins and development of the Cold War, but it does suggest that one side, the USSR's, means of expansion was limited to direct political forms of expansion and domination that not only limited its ability to expand and challenge American capitalism in the Cold War, but also, because of its nature, made such expansion costly, and risky because of what it potentially confronted, particularly in a world

of nuclear weapons. Whereas capitalism expanded without military or direct political power, the Soviet Union and its type of social relations limited itself to a most dangerous and potentially costly form of expansion.

In East-Central Europe after 1945 Soviet political expansion with the 'revolutions from above' that ushered in the revolutionary social transformations directed by local communist parties and guided by Soviet initiatives, was ^a more or less a *fait accompli*. The only way in the early stages of the Cold War that capitalism and liberal democracy could have been 'restored' to these areas was through military force and the removal of the Red Army from East-Central Europe. Thus, the history of the military and political division of Europe reflected the military strengths of each side in 1945. Fortunately, when this situation was ultimately undone in 1989 the situation and the role of military power with respect to social relations had altered to a degree that political change in East-Central Europe and the collapse of communist power could be achieved without the direct use of military power.⁶⁶ However, in terms of the conflict in the Cold War between the USA and the USSR, the division of Europe though heavily defined by each side's respective military power did not succumb to war. Rather, the 'revolutionary' social formations of the Soviet bloc did not attempt to expand socialism and forms of revolutionary social transformation in Western Europe. This was because of the inherently limited and conservative nature of the Soviet social formation. It also related to the realisation that the only way that socialism could be expanded into Western Europe was through military power, (ie. conquest). This was not an option. Even if the Soviet Union had wanted this and planned for it, the threat of American military power would have made this a practical impossibility, or political suicide.⁶⁷

The only viable means of the expansion of revolutionary forms of social transformation in Western Europe and elsewhere was through local social revolution. Within Western Europe in the postwar era this did not seem, and indeed was not likely. Even when there was, arguably, a possibility of social

⁶⁶The role of military power was important, though indirect, in that it was not deployed, as in the past, by the Soviet Union to prevent political change. Gorbachev's refusal to allow the Red Army to be used to suppress change, was a *de facto* rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

⁶⁷Indeed, as R. Craig Nation rightly claims with respect to the Soviet Union in 1945: 'Never was a society less well placed to launch into risky imperial ventures. All logical considerations pointed in one direction: Soviet national interest demanded a period of recuperation..' (1992) p.159

transformation when radical socialist and communist movements were strong at the end of the war this was scuppered by Soviet weakness, but more formatively American military and social power. However, these external factors should not lead the to neglecting of local factors. The bottom line was that social revolution was not a real possibility. And even if such things had been attempted by the radical left after 1945, as happened by default in Greece, in all likelihood the American response would have been swift and decisive, as it was in Greece and Turkey. But, also, ~~that~~ the Soviet Union would not have intervened.

The terrain of military and political conflict in the Cold War, however, was not confined to Europe. With decolonisation and the emergence of the Third World, military power, and Soviet military power was to be an agent of social transformation and politics on a much wider and more dangerous scale than in Europe. Whereas Soviet political expansion was limited in Europe by the military confrontation and the limitations derived from its specific form of politics, the situation in the Third World, particularly the convulsions within the process of decolonisation, and the end of formal imperialism realised a different and more contingent type of politics. Such a political context provided potential political space for Soviet expansion. However, one should be clear of the history in this respect. The Soviet Union was a latecomer to involvement in the Third World, and all forms of Soviet involvement; even its widespread use of arms sales and transfers never matched the scale of American involvement.⁶⁸

Not only was the Soviet Union slow in getting involved in the Third World because of the doctrinal dogmas of Stalin's 'Two camp theory,'⁶⁹ but the Soviet Union even found it difficult to gain influence through military power, its only real currency of politics. Because of the comparative military weakness of the USSR after 1945 with respect to the USA, the most important goal, which Soviet international relations as much as anything else was subordinate to, was retrenchment and postwar reconstruction and consolidation.⁷⁰ Indeed, for a substantial part of the Cold War the Soviet Union did not have the logistical means with which to globally project its military power. Rather, it was limited to

⁶⁸ See D. Holloway (1984) p.84-108.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of Soviet 'Two Camp' Theory see M. Light (1988) p.90-110 and A. Lynch (1987) p.18-25.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of Soviet security policy within this context see R. Craig Nation (1992) p.158-201.

projecting its military power through states that it bordered. It was not until the late 1960s, particularly after the humiliation of the Cuban Missile Crisis that the USSR developed the means to counter American military dominance in the Third World. This was most vividly seen in what the former US National Security Adviser (to President Carter) Zbigniew Brzezinski, termed the 'Arc of crises.' He was referring to the spate of revolutionary upheavals in the Third World that saw the collapse of a number of US allies⁷¹ and a visible increase and boldness in Soviet political and military intervention in the Third World.

This was the high-point of Soviet intervention and the projection of military power in the Third World. It was a reflection of the domestic and international problems that confronted the United States that related to its military involvement and consequences of in Indo-China. It also reflected the historical and social conjuncture of revolution derived from the contradictions of international capitalist expansion under US direction. The 1970s saw the collapse of a number of regimes many of which had been propped up by American and Western power. These regimes were overthrown by local revolutionary movements, a number of which had, or solicited Soviet aid and support.

The important thing to remember with these international developments and the role of Soviet military power in them was their contingent nature, and the fact that the politics of expansion that these developments revealed was fragile because they were *based* on military power.⁷² In few, if any of the cases of revolution in this period where Soviet support was significant did revolutionary regimes make good on military victory to institute successful and long-term social revolutionary transformation. In all of the cases one could consider, revolutionary regimes, Afghanistan being the most obvious, suffered American backed military counter-revolution.

The politics of expansion, was then, limited to the projection of a contingent military power to revolutionary states, or 'progressive states.' This was dependent on either the local state wanting Soviet assistance, as in the case of

⁷¹ See Z. Brzezinski *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-81* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983)

⁷² However, though a number of these regimes were politically weak because of their dependence on military power, Soviet support was in a number of cases determinant both for their seizure of power and post-revolutionary survival. Moreover, despite the problems associated with military power outlined, Soviet military power was central to the international 'extra-territorial expansion' of the USSR with the political relationships with other revolutionary states, particularly Cuba and

Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, or India, or where a revolutionary struggle ensued and sought Soviet material support. What was problematic for the Soviet Union, particularly its limitation of politics to military power, was that Soviet aid was limited to the means of war, or material, rather than social relationships. What this meant, and the history of Soviet thinking on international relations is indicative of this⁷³ was that the Soviet Union unless it had a direct military presence, as in East-Central Europe, could not institutionalise political relationships of any substance. Unless Soviet military aid went to Communist regimes, (ie. those social formations under communist party rule) it could be as quickly revoked as they were requested.⁷⁴ The politics of expansion then was limited to a *contingent* projection of military power that managed to secure Soviet influence, but it did not in itself manage to be the means of securing a more fundamental transformation of social relations and political rule. The USA used force to a much larger degree than the Soviet Union, but this force reflected the substance of the 'political component' of capitalist social relation, and was not removed from the penetration and expansion of capitalism. Thus, the USA managed to facilitate capitalist expansion partly through the projection of military power, but if this was to be successful it was tied in with the consolidation of capitalist social relations and the form of political rule that flowed from this.

The Soviet Union was unable to do this, to cement social relationships. Because its form of social relations was confined to the politics of a political rule under communist party rule social relations were not transported or internationalised in the delivery of aid or military power, but only through direct political control, via a communist or revolutionary party. Soviet military power was a means with which to support social revolution, but it was confounded by its inability, and not only in the USSR, to engender a social relations of socialism between people rather than through the alienated structures of the Communist Party, and the politics of military coercion which flowed from this form of political rule.⁷⁵

Vietnam that military power facilitated.

⁷³ See the work of J. Hough (1985) and E. Valkenier (1983) for commentaries on this.

⁷⁴ Thus Soviet military support and aid to Algeria, Egypt, among others was quickly revoked, and the regime concerned took on an alternative international profile when the regime changed or was overthrown.

⁷⁵ R. Craig Nation makes a similar point, but with reference to the intellectual and political dynamics behind Gorbachev's Perestroika: 'Security is not coterminous with military capacity, and one of the basic sources of Soviet perestroika (sic)

5. Conclusions

This chapter has tried to highlight the specific nature and role of military power in the Cold War. It has argued that military power, if it is not to be treated as a technological object, should be contextualised from the point of view of the specific social and historical moment that it is found within. Following such a course suggests that military power not only goes through an historical technological metamorphosis that nuclear weapons reflect, *par excellence*, but that the specific role of military power and its relationship to how its produced materially and socially, also changes. The unfolding of capitalist modernity has, undeniably, had the most profound impact on military power, both as technological object, and as a means for pursuing political objectives. Capitalism, through its transformation of the division of labour, and material production, through industrial mass production to later computer-based 'smart' technologies has transformed the mode and nature of warfare and military power. Correspondingly, there has been a transformation of the social production of military power and its role in the maintenance and expansion of the capitalist social order.

The Cold War is particularly illuminating in this respect for the need to historicise and understand the social relationships that defined military power and how this form of power facilitated particular kinds of politics. The Cold War saw the transformation of the capitalist form of military power under American dominance, but also the contestation of the international capitalist order through social revolution and the forms of military power that social revolution fostered. In this respect the Soviet Union was defining of a form of military power that related to a different form of political rule derived from different social relations of production. The relationship between the Cold War and military power, or rather the impact of military power on the developments in the Cold War is instructive. The existing literature on the Cold War, however, appears to reify the conflict as one of a conflict of military-technological superiority. Even those studies that have tried to locate military-technological power in wider social processes end up

was the conviction that in the past an attempt to achieve security by maintaining unassailable military strength actually undermined the Soviet Union's more enduring interests.' (1992) p.x

separating out the logic of military power from the social formation that this power is part of and derives from, thus falling into the same trap as more orthodox arguments. The Cold War illustrates the fact that military power important though it was, was not the determining agent, or at least not in the way most IR theory purports it to have been.

Military power in the Cold War reflected the asymmetry, the disjuncture in the form of conflict, and its role in defining a social order and its currency of politics, rather than a conflict of 'equivalents.' Soviet and American military power were different, in the way that they were organised, produced, and how they related to the wider reproduction of each respective social formation. These differences were also reflected in the respective international relations of each. Whilst the Soviet Union was restricted to an international relations of military power as a means of expansion, the USA managed to expand, politically, with and without military power. But it was in the maintenance of capitalist social relations and forms of political rule that the difference was most profound. The maintaining of capitalist forms of politics in new states, and in the postwar settlement in Western Europe was not premised on an expansion through overtly political-coercive domination. The end of the era of formal imperialism saw the removal of this form of capitalist politics and political expansion to one confined to the form of the globalisation of the form of the sovereign state. This form of politics, though it did not secure the uncontested international expansion of capitalist social relations, did remove the visible international military presence from political rule. Military power was not constitutive of the social order and the state to the same degree as it was formerly, and capitalism could expand without the prerequisite of military domination.

The commodity and the social relations that flow from its exchange *between and within* states was enough to base a new international order upon. Political rule could be maintained without the need for direct state coercion. However, this episode, like that of the earlier historical conjuncture of the 'primitive accumulation' of capitalism, and the role of the political form in this process was to see the use of military power to suppress class-based revolt and revolution. But whereas the 'Soviet type' (of military power) regimes did not have

an alternative means with which to maintain long-term authority, American capitalism managed to remove military power from the servicing of capitalist forms of politics.

Chapter Five

Social Revolution and the Cold War

The two preceding chapters on the state, and military power and the Cold War have sought to conceptualise these concepts from a historical and wider social context. In doing so, the argument put forward is that the Cold War needs to be seen as reflecting an antagonism between two different forms of political rule founded on specific class-based sets of social relations. This chapter seeks to complete the theoretical framework of the thesis before Part Two, which seeks to provide a more historically registered exposition of the theoretical claims made in Part One. Through an analysis of social revolution, this chapter will seek to focus on the principal social dynamic within the Cold War, the expansion of capitalist social relations and their political contestation. The Cold War was inclusive of the transformation of the international capitalist system in terms of political forms and the corresponding mode of accumulation. Indeed, the core of the antagonism between the 'superpowers' did not only rest on their respective internal social features, but also how and why each 'superpower' form of political rule conducted relations with states that sought their own social and political transformation.

Social revolution as a form of rapid, violent, and structural social and political transformation, involving class-based forms of political agency, has not been widely discussed in the literature of the Cold War.¹ This is obviously a major oversight that this chapter will seek address. Social revolution, it will be argued exposes a number of fissures within international relations at the level of the state as a political form, and how the state relates to the wider social formation through the social relations of production. Social revolutions see a rupture and transformation at both levels; the state is reconstituted by a new form of political agency that is located within a distinct *class* constituency, and the political form transforms the relationship between politics and economics and between the domestic and the international.

The transformation of the political form directly relates to the discussion in chapter three on the nature of the state in the Cold War. Social revolution alongside the agency of the Soviet state in the form of the Red Army was the principal means for the political contestation of the 'states system' and the social fabric it rested on.

¹ This oversight is mainly associated with Realist scholarship. I will not be addressing Realism in this chapter as I feel that what I have said already in chapters two to four provides a sufficient coverage.

Moreover, social revolution not only led to new, alternative forms of social and material production, and politics, but also a new form of military power, as suggested in chapter four. Finally, social revolution exposed the tensions and contradictions within capitalist social relations, in their expansion and transformation during the Cold War under American leadership. Capitalism, as a social relationship between human beings based on an interaction with nature, and the forms of social and political organisation that stem from such production relations was contested and overthrown. It was this, the attempted political contestation and overthrow of capitalist politics and the response to it, political, economic and military that directly involved the 'superpowers' as reflections of distinct political forms that crystallized the conflict of the Cold War.

The organisation of the chapter revolves around the core assumptions of those scholars that have tried to explain the Cold War in terms of the impact of social revolution on world politics. These scholars are either Marxists or radicals associated with American Revisionism. Whereas the former have tried to explain social revolution as a response to capitalist penetration and exploitation, and the consequences this has had on the 'superpowers,' the latter have focused on social revolution as a means to criticise the overtly militarized response of American foreign policy to revolution. Their main goal was not to dwell on the transformative effects of revolution and how they might challenge American objectives, but rather *downplay* such assumptions.

The chapter begins with an analysis of radical and Liberal positions that have sought to criticise the American response to social revolution working on the assumption that social revolution is 'accommodable' or was not an *a priori* threat to the United States. This is followed by an analysis of Marxist engaged work that has sought to emphasise the centrality of social revolution to the Cold War. The third and final section of the chapter will develop the criticism put forward in section two and reconstruct a Marxist based understanding of the nature and role of social revolution in the Cold War. This will be based on an understanding of social revolution based on a focus on forms of class and non-class based political agency and how one can emphasise the importance of social revolution through an analysis between the political and economic form.

1. Liberal Approaches to Social Revolution in the Cold War

Social revolution as noted earlier has been a phenomenon largely marginalised or ignored in International Relations.² This has also been the case in Cold War scholarship. This needs some qualification, because revolution has been recognised as leading to international instability in traditional Cold War theory, but *in itself*, social revolution has not been seen as the major causal dynamic of the Cold War. Because of the lack of Realist scholarship on the international relations of revolution³ the alternative approaches that will be considered are limited to Pluralist or Liberal approaches.

Liberal theory, like Marxism adopts an explicitly 'normative' position on social revolution, seeing revolution in terms of particular local eruptions of political violence that are explicable in terms of the repressive nature of a state or its lack of legitimacy. Indeed, Liberals, unlike conservative derived Realists, have their own theory of revolution or rebellion found in the work of John Locke.⁴ Revolutions are sometimes seen as 'necessary' events when a tyranny is overthrown. They are not inherently hostile to the existing international social or political order, and despite the rhetoric of revolutionaries, in essence revolutions *should* not be a source of international conflict.⁵ Because of this appreciation of revolutions, Liberals attempt to distinguish the internal revolution and its consequences from the international. Revolutions occur in particular societies and should be seen in this light. How can revolution in a country like Cuba or Nicaragua be a threat to the United States when the revolution is only about changing internal political relations ?

This being the case Liberals were preoccupied with a critique of the foreign policy responses of established states to revolution and the suggested alternatives to them; the ways to create a *modus vivendi* with revolutions. Such assumptions are associated with the Liberal fringe of American Cold War Revisionism, in particular

² For attempts by IR scholars to register the import of social revolution see D. Armstrong (1991); S. Chan & A. Williams (ed.) *Renegade States: The Evolution of Revolutionary Foreign Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); P. Calvert *Revolution and International Politics* (London: Francis Pinter Ltd., 1984); M. Wight 'Revolution,' in (1986); K. Kim *Revolution and International System* (New York: New York University Press, 1970); R. Rosecrance *Action and Reaction in World Politics: International Systems in Perspective* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1963).

³ The work of David Armstrong (1991) is exceptional in this regard. However, because of what I have already argued with respect to his work in chapters two and three I will not be addressing his work in this chapter.

⁴ *Two Treatises on Civil Government* (London: Dent, 1924).

⁵ See R. Barnett *Intervention and Revolution: The United States in the Third World* Revised Edition (New York: New American Library, 1980) p.20; R. Lowenthal *Model or Ally. The Communist Powers and the Developing Countries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) p.256-7; W. LaFeber *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1992* Seventh Edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993) p.171; R. Feinberg *The Intemperate Zone: The Third World Challenge to US Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1974) p.1-9.

the work of Richard Barnet⁶ and Walter LaFeber.⁷ Revolutions themselves were not a threat to the international system. They only become a threat when they were pushed into hostility with neighbouring states and Great Powers through the *exaggerated* perceived threat that revolutions posed. Thus, like Realists, Liberals suggest the international impact of revolution is limited. They only acquire significance through the hostile reactions of outside powers that in effect provoke the revolutionaries into extremist positions, instead of a search for common ground. In many respects this approach has a lot in common with some Marxist derived American Revisionism, most notably the lack of a Soviet role in revolution, and the argument that revolution, in the Cold War anyway, was not inevitably pro-Soviet.⁸ The difference between Liberal and Marxist Revisionists is to be found in the explanatory importance given to social relations, in particular capitalism in the causes and effects of revolutions. For the former it was an issue among a number that revolution was a response to, whilst for the latter, the international influence of capitalism on these states provided the main explanatory prism with which to interpret social revolution.⁹

Two major points emerge from Liberal theorisation of revolution. The first concerns the revolutionary state and its political hostility to the existing international order. The second concerns the notion of social and economic modernisation and the attempts at social transformation by revolutionary states. First, political hostility. Liberals seek to divorce the rhetoric and the internal political programme of revolutionaries from the international realm. Because a revolution professes anti-Westernism or antipathy for Western political institutions, or because a pro-Western regime has been overthrown, does not necessarily mean that the result is, or will be, unreconcilable hostility to all things Western. This links in with the assumption that revolutions in the Third World matter, or that they will always be pro-Soviet in their outcome. George Kennan, though associated with Realist assumptions concerning IR was a major critique of US foreign policy during the Cold War after he had left government service. One of his main points, apart from the over-militarised manifestation of containment, was that revolution in the

⁶ (1980)

⁷ (1993)

⁸ See D. Horowitz (1969).

⁹ See R. Crockatt (1994) p.167-200; R. Barnet (1980) p.322-32 for liberal explanations compared with D. Horowitz (1969) p.16; 60 for a Marxist based American Revisionist account that highlights the differences.

Third World was not an issue.¹⁰ These occurred in states that were marginal when they were not worth thinking about to American interests. If American foreign policy was either detached or non-committed to the situation in a particular country undergoing revolution, or if the response was a guarded welcome, with some level of political engagement, then relations between Western states and revolutionary states could have been productive, and not characterised by hostility. In addition, such an engagement would have made it difficult for the Soviet Union to become the main external guarantor or influence on that revolutionary state's internal social and political development.¹¹

In many respects there is an element of truth in such arguments. Notably in the actual choice and execution of American foreign policy. This is most evident in the case of Vietnam and the debacle that ensued with direct American involvement after the French exit in 1954. In many respects, revolutionaries, especially those in former colonial territories, or those fighting anti-colonial wars may have been drawn to American anti-colonialism; note US support for the Indonesian (non-communist) independence movement against the Dutch. Another example concerns Nasser in Egypt. His prime political and ideological motivation was not socialism as such, and particularly not Soviet-type socialism. Rather, his prime consideration was the removal of the Anglo-French colonial presence in the Middle-East, and following this, Arab unity under Egyptian hegemony, which was to be facilitated by the destruction of Israel. Nasser turned to the West and in particular the USA for military and economic aid after seizing power. He was not successful and sought arms elsewhere. The only other source was the Soviet bloc. The infamous 'Czech arms deal' in 1955 was enough to ostracise the US, and their subsequent withdrawal from funding the construction of the Aswan Dam. Again Nasser turned to the Soviet Union, and an alliance ensued.

Although these points shed some light on the relationship between revolutionary states and the Cold War, they all overlook the fact that in all of the instances of social revolution and even in those without a class-based revolution, as in the case of Egypt, where there was a radical nationalist regime, all conflicted

¹⁰ See George Kennan (1982) p.xx-xxi

¹¹ See W. LaFeber (1993) p.154; B. Kiernan *The United States, Communism and the Emergent World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972) p.8-10; 18; 158-98. Richard Crockatt makes a different point by suggesting that developments in the Third World, revolutionary or otherwise, were increasingly becoming separate from the conflict between the superpowers. Thus, revolutionary developments in the Third World were internal phenomena that were not part of the Cold War conflict. (1994) p.297.

with the international *capitalist* nature of American/Western social and political forms. All of the revolutions were concerned with expropriating foreign controlled aspects of their economies and this also extended to the expulsion of the foreign presence and interference in their domestic affairs. This also, but to a lesser degree, related to the Soviet Union as well.¹² Inevitably and consistently the rhetoric of revolutionaries did correspond to actions as foreign, usually Western property, was confiscated and foreign activity was outlawed or severely limited. To argue that such developments could be avoided or 'worked around' is to miss the point about what a revolution actually is. Further, all the revolutions in question inherently had a project of exporting revolution. The revolutionary project was based on the instability of neighbours if not their overthrow.¹³ This was something that was at the heart of the revolutionary project, which though confounded by political-territorial limitations of states was always based on ideological concepts located in an internationalism that sought, though never succeeded, to transcend the territorial and political limitations of states. This was prevalent in the Cold War not only in the instances of the newly created revolutionary regimes in Cuba or Vietnam, who either provided assistance or were directly involved in the attempts at the export of revolution, but also in the case of the Soviet Union.¹⁴ The history of the Soviet role was contradictory reflecting shifting priorities and fluctuations of Soviet interests and the opportunities that developments in international relations offered. Yet throughout its existence, even up until the final days of the Gorbachev leadership, the Soviet Union did convey an element of revolutionary internationalism with military and economic aid to a number of revolutionary states in the Third World.¹⁵ Thus, the Liberal argument concerning the political hostility of revolutions or lack of it and the ability to overcome this does not hold. Revolutions were in essence political threats to the existing international order and the internal structures of other states.

The second point concerning Liberal analysis relates to the social-economic dimension of revolutionary transformations in the Third World. For a number of

¹² See G. White et al (ed.) *Revolutionary Socialist Developments in the Third World* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1983) p.5-6.

¹³ For example, after seizing power in Egypt Nasser was concerned to limit if not remove Western (mainly British) influence from the Middle-East. This influence was manifested in the British backed Baghdad Pact of 1954 which allied the Hashemite monarchies ostensibly against Soviet (communist) influence in the region but was also a means to limit burgeoning radical Arab nationalism. Nasser made this a focus of his attack and acted to undermine this support for anti-Hashemite forces in Jordan and Iraq.

¹⁴ See F. Halliday (1986) p.152-154; (1989) p.31; (1994) p.136-9 and 'The Ends of Cold War,' in *New Left Review* No.180, March-April 1990 p.15.

scholars who have either addressed the Cold War or the social and economic development of the Third World, 'socialism' in its Soviet transplantation in the Third World was merely a variant of modernisation that the West went through earlier, based on a different method, but with the same aim.¹⁶This concern with social-economic development is linked to the consideration above on political hostility, as much of the debate concerning the Soviet Model of modernisation in the Third World is treated as an accompaniment to a Liberal critique of US foreign policy discussed above.¹⁷The argument is that communism or Soviet derived socialism was like a number of other statist projects in the Third World, a method of rapidly catching up, or modernisation. Modernisation in the particular form associated with the Soviet Union and emulated by a number of states in the Third World was not something that sought to transcend, or form a distinct social alternative to the Western defined experience of what it was to be 'modern,' but to actually realise it. The Soviet Union was the supreme example of a model for the emergent world, through communist revolution.

'What Russia sought to achieve by communism, and what the underdeveloped countries are trying to achieve by reliving the Russian experience, is the status of a Western society, a powerful, wealthy, and modern state.'¹⁸

This understanding of what it meant to be 'modern' pointed to the attempts by states to break from traditional social and political patterns of organisation to avoid subservience or even colonisation by more advanced states (the West), as in the case of 'Meiji' Japan and the flawed attempts of the Ottoman Empire and Egypt in the nineteenth century. Soviet socialism, and the social revolutions in China, Vietnam, Cuba, and elsewhere all figured within this conceptual understanding of what it meant to be modern. Thus social revolution in the Third World was fundamentally no different to that of the modernisation or the development of the states of Western Europe, and communism was only a tool, a means not an end.¹⁹

As already mentioned such an understanding potentially provides a cogent critique of the Cold War, and in particular the US response to social revolution. Social revolution and its ensuing project of redefining the state, and using a

¹⁵ See F. Halliday (1989) p.128-9.

¹⁶ See for example C. Black & T. Thornton (ed.) *Communism and Revolution: The Strategic Uses of Political Violence* (Princeton: University Press, 1964) p.3-25; 431 and B. Kiernan (1972).

¹⁷ For examples see the following: R. Barnett (1980) ; W. LaFeber (1993).; M. Gurtov (1974).; R. Feinberg (1983).

¹⁸ B. Kiernan (1972) p.6

¹⁹ *Ibid* p.8-18;35-57.

bureaucratic state to orchestrate the destruction of traditional, pre-capitalist patterns of social-economic organisation and production was to be welcomed as something 'progressive.' The state was the instrument because of the weakness or non-existence of a 'progressive' bourgeois class with which to lead economic development. The vehicle was social revolution because existing elite(s) were not only repressive and corrupt, but they were also an obstacle to social-economic development and political change.²⁰

The focus of this critique is the concept of the nation and nationalism. What this amounts to is a theory of post-colonial state formation and Third World nationalism. The substance of such developments are not very different from the Western experience of the development of national consciousness in political communities and the emergence of the state. Nationalism is the fundamental force or form of political agency here, not communism.²¹ Communism or socialism was an extreme form of state induced nationalism, whereby the state sought to remove foreign interference and protect the development of the national political economy. The Soviet Union was important only because it provided an historic example of this process and a particular method of state-bureaucratic modernisation. And as already mentioned above, for Liberals, because of American-Western hostility, the Soviets filled the vacuum of external influence and provided political and military support against American hostility. Class as a form of agency represented within a movement or a vanguard party is dismissed, as intellectuals were identified as the principal revolutionary agents.²² And the consequences of social change within the Third World were not seen in class terms, (ie. the removal of one ruling class with another) but rather the centralisation of state power by a party-movement led by intellectuals using a nationalist based ideology.²³

How this linked to international relations and the Cold War in particular has already been alluded to. First, was the misperceived hostile response from the

²⁰ See J. Kautsky *Communism and the Politics of Development: Persistent Myths and Changing Behaviour* (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1968) p.93-96; 101 J. Kautsky (ed.) *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries: Nationalism and Communism* (New York: Robert E. Krieger Co. Inc., 1976) p.20-1.

²¹ *Ibid* and J. Plamenatz *German Marxism and Russian Communism* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1954); J. Barrington Moore Jr, *Soviet Politics. The Dilemma of Power: The Role of Ideas in Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985); H. Seton-Watson 'Twentieth Century Revolutions,' in *The Political Quarterly* Volume 22 no.3, July-September 1951; R.V. Daniels 'The Chinese Revolution in Russian Perspective,' in *World Politics* Volume 13 no.2, January 1961.

²² See M. Watnick 'The Appeal of Communism to the Peoples of the Underdeveloped Areas,' in S.M. Lipset & R. Bendix (ed.) *Class Status, and Power: Social Stratifications in Comparative Perspective* Second Edition (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1967) p.428-36. For a Marxist critique of this position and a restatement of the class basis of social revolution and its project, see J. Petras 'Socialist Revolutions and their Class Components' in *New Left Review* no.111, September-October 1978.

United States in particular, which served to create a conflict when one was not inevitable. Second, was the fact that it led to a void for the Soviets to fill and thus ensure further American hostility. For scholars of this perspective, such actions disqualified any beneficial American involvement with the 'radical' regime and led to an almost complete cut-off in influence with the government concerned. Thus international conflict arose out of a situation that did not warrant it.

This understanding of social change and the problems of social-economic development in the Third World, however, is not without its problems. First, such a theory has a flawed understanding of the history of modernisation or what is usually termed 'modernity' itself, in the sense that it fails to properly historicise or ground the capitalist state form in any genuine historical context. Clearly, the peculiar form of 'state' that is capitalism is not something that is either natural or inevitable. It is something that emerged and was created by a particular form of human social agency. The organisation of the economy and polity, the *appearance* of the separation of spheres of politics in the state, and the economy in capitalist appropriation is the classical form associated with Western modernity. If this social form was created by an historical process of political and social conflict, we must be very careful about applying this to the particular social forms of the Third World, most of which were already in, and emerged as political entities (colonies) through Western political, and economic dominance and exploitation.

Second, it has its own teleology. The West is the final outcome of modernisation. It is the end of the modernisation project and it is what all states wanted to realise. This is also to be found in the process that Third World states have undergone in the post 1917 era. It is a classic case of reading back into history from what has happened in a number of dominant states. Because the advanced capitalist states went through a particular process of evolution and reached a stage where for all intents and purposes, through social theory as much as in actual politics they defined what it was/meant to be modern or what characterised 'modernity' and the rest of the world was merely following in one way or another this inevitable path. If Marx can be accused of being teleological so can this understanding, for it plainly misrepresents the distinct conceptual break that 1917 and social revolution provided. In one sense it ignores the profound problems and

²³ See J. Kautsky (1968) p.7; 36; 57; R.V. Daniels in *World Politics* Volume 13 no.2, January 1961 p.217 -20.

consequences of Western imperialism and the expansion of capitalism to a global stage. It does this by avoiding the issue of the fact that very few states have been able to break the bond of poverty, exploitation and political vulnerability. It applies a general rule to a situation that clearly confounds such a rule. In doing this it misunderstands the import of social revolution, which was about restructuring the productive forces in a society and through this redefining the state. Because the Bolshevik revolution and revolutions elsewhere ended up inhabiting states in an already existing states-system, hostile to revolution does not mean that we can treat them like any other state. Though these states never overcame the *problematique* that social revolution from 1917 created, that of a social form antagonistic to, but forced to exist within a state, does not necessarily mean that we can come to the conclusion that its essence is no different to other pre-existing states.

The Liberal critique of Marxist approaches to social revolution and the Cold War points to particular areas of investigation but fails to fully grasp the nature or context of social revolution in the Cold War. It does not refute or undermine the social essence of social revolution; in fact it fails to fully discuss this. It fails to historicise the concept or understand the particular form of agency involved, and it fails to recognise the genuine and real, *inevitable* political conflict and hostility that revolutions created for international relations.

2. Marxist – Informed Approaches to Social Revolution in the Cold War

Of all the theoretical traditions or ‘paradigms’ that were identified in the first chapter, Historical Materialism is the one that has sought an explanation of the Cold War through a focus on social revolution. In this regard the work of Isaac Deutscher,²⁴ Fred Halliday²⁵ and scholars associated with American Cold War Revisionism²⁶ will be critically discussed in terms of how they understand social revolution and relate it to the Cold War.

²⁴ See I. Deutscher (1960); (1966); (1967); *Russia, China, and the West* Edited by Fred Halliday (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970); (1984).

²⁵ See F. Halliday (1986); (1989); (1994).

²⁶ Specifically, G. Alperovitz *Cold War Essays* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1970); D. Horowitz (1967); *Imperialism and Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1969); D. Horowitz (ed.) *Containment and Revolution. Western Policy Towards Social Revolution: 1917 to Vietnam* (London: Blond, 1967); W. Appleman-Williams (1988); G. Kolko *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

2.1 American Revisionism

In the case of the American Revisionists cited, the analysis of the Cold War was a means to give a radical interpretation of American history and foreign policy. Though obviously having roots in forms of Marxist economic analysis, the principal focus was an understanding of America's postwar role in international relations that was in a period of crisis during the Vietnam war. It was this conflict, and American involvement that provided an intellectual and radical political space with which to critique American foreign policy as the source of the Cold War and to *blame* the policies of the United States for the Cold War.²⁷

The impact of social revolution in the Cold War was principally a relationship between revolutionary states and the United States and its foreign policy. Thus the Truman doctrine was a response to revolutionary threats by the United States, but threats that had a global reach and were not reducible to the Soviet threat in Europe.²⁸ Thus, although the main point of conflict in the Cold War era was between the United States and revolutionary states, this conflict was global because it derived from the contradictions of the international hegemony of American capitalism.²⁹ Such an understanding drew on the work of William Appleman-Williams³⁰ and other radical historians who located the Cold War in the dynamic of American capitalism that confronted potential stagnation if it did not expand beyond its borders after World War Two.³¹ This being the case, the conflict was not only between revolutionary forces but also the closed colonies of the Western European powers.³²

The main point that distinguishes American Revisionists from other Marxists is that they make a clear separation between social revolution and the American response to it, and the role of the Soviet Union both as a threat to the USA and facilitator of social revolution.³³ The Soviet Union was *not* a significant actor, and its role in social revolution, be it support, example, or facilitation was considered marginal or problematic. The Soviet Union presented a problem

²⁷ See D. Horowitz (1967) p.19.

²⁸ D. Horowitz (ed.) (1967) p.10; D. Horowitz (1969) p.94.

²⁹ The contradictions related to the global quest for markets and raw materials and how this necessitated an aggressive foreign policy, but also how the militarised nature of the economy led to the emergence of a military-industrial-complex. See C. Wright Mills *The Power Elite* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

³⁰ See his (1972) p.15; 229-269.

³¹ See D. Horowitz (1969) p.71; 88; 238-40.

³² See G. Kolko (1988) p.33; 53; 75 and G. Alperovitz (1970) p.14; 86.

principally because of the internal nature of the Soviet Union. In many respects it was seen as 'counter-revolutionary.' The Soviet Union was in many respects a form of 'imperial' power, most notably in the episodes of the invasion of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. American Revisionists, however, were concerned to highlight the greater 'evil' or allocate blame for the origins of the Cold War, at the door of American capitalism. The United States was the predatory and expansionist power both against revolutionary regimes and its Western capitalist rivals. The Soviet Union was essentially a conservative and weak power that was not expansionist in the same way as the US was. Its role in the Cold War was demonstrative of a particular type of state form that provided an alternative to American hostility to revolution. David Horowitz typifies this in his analysis of American foreign policy with respect to the Cuban revolution. The reason Cuba became an ally of the Soviet Union, and became a 'Soviet type state' was, according to Horowitz, because of American counter-revolutionary hostility, rather than the fact that Cuba was pro-Soviet, or that the revolution was carried out with Soviet assistance and with a Soviet or Bolshevik-type revolutionary organisation.³⁴ Thus, in many respects the Soviet role was immaterial in the actual emergence of revolution and the revolutionary crisis. For American Revisionism this applied to Vietnam as much as to Cuba. The Soviet Union only became important with the subsequent hostility of the USA after the revolution had seized state power and began to implement a programme of social transformation that inevitably came into conflict with American political and material interests.

American Revisionists have focused on social revolution as an explanatory tool to highlight the problems associated with American post-war global hegemony that saw a conflict with rival capitalist states, principally the former colonial powers, and those revolutionary movements that sought a social transformation of colonial and backward states through social revolution. Social revolution in this respect led to the overthrow of the existing political and social-economic order and a radical-revolutionary programme of change. Implicitly, there was a link with the Soviet Union but this was not something derived from the organised international communist movement. It was only the outcome of social-economic changes that

³³ See D. Horowitz (1967) p.401.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p.410. See also D. Horowitz (1969) p.223-8; and G. Kolko (1988) p.140-3.

were similar to those of the Soviet Union, and because of American hostility that many of these states were drawn into the Soviet orbit.

This account of social revolution and the Cold War has a lot to offer, particularly in identifying the locus of the Cold War in the revolutionary response to the contradictions of capitalism. However, it has a number of difficulties. First is the identification of capitalism with American hegemony. Postwar capitalism has indeed been shaped by the absolute and then relative American dominance. However, in this focus on one particular state, and the tensions between this and other capitalist states, the Revisionists obscure capitalist social relations within the states and societies of the Third World. It serves to over-emphasise and neglect the local-internal manifestation of capitalist class rule, and how this refracted the international aspect of capital. This also relates to the identification of American capitalism as being particularly predatory. Although we can identify particularities within the American social formation, the focus on American capitalism's appetite for global expansion needs to be located within the overall logic of capital, which is exactly about expansion in the accumulation of profit.

Another point related to this discussion of capitalism, is the over-emphasis on the strategic aspects of American decision-making, and the results of US strategic policy on revolution. This ends up marginalising the 'autonomous logic of capital' that served to expand and consolidate in a number of states. Thus, the success of American counter-revolution should be located in the ability of capital to consolidate and develop in a number of Third world countries, and elsewhere³⁵ (as in Western Europe and Japan after 1945), that owed a great deal not only to American support but also the local configuration of class relations and the relative power of capital in these situations.

The other main point of contention is the role of the Soviet Union, or lack of one in the Cold War. The Cold War was about the outbreak of social revolution in the Third World, but these were separate developments to the conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union. America was a counter-revolutionary power even before the USSR existed. The Cold War, then, was essentially about the American foreign policy response to revolutionary developments in the Third World. This is a

³⁵ David Horowitz is wrong when he suggests that not a single underdeveloped country has been able to achieve a stable 'bourgeois-democratic' revolution comparable to Britain, France, and the USA. See his (1969) p.107. Using such a comparison serves to obscure the changes within the Third World after 1945, which have seen the expansion and consolidation of capitalist social formations in all regions of the world.

problem because it tends to overlook the particular historical-social context of the Cold War that was reflected in the outbreak of social revolution in the Third World. All of these revolutions were located within a context that was already defined by the theory and practice of Bolshevism, as manifested in the USSR. Although we need to qualify the Soviet role, we should be clear that despite the contradictions and the propaganda, the Soviet Union, as Fred Halliday has suggested, did act with a degree of consistency to support revolutionary states. Without this 'progressive' Soviet role the outcome of a number of these revolutions would have been less clear cut and their existence much more problematic.

2.2 Isaac Deutscher

The second major theorisation of the Cold War and social revolution is associated with the work of Isaac Deutscher. Deutscher saw the Soviet Union as a social form that had the potential for political change, (ie. to complete the revolution of 1917 that was stalled by Stalin).³⁶ Within this conception he saw the potential for a progressive role in international relations, especially in competition with the West.³⁷ However, he was also clear that under Stalin international communism had been seriously weakened.³⁸ Deutscher was not willing to go along with American Revisionism so far as to ignore or marginalise any 'progressive' Soviet role in world politics, especially with respect to revolution in the Third World, but neither was he willing to fully endorse the Soviet Union as 'progressive.' His position was equivocal, and exposed the contradictory position of the Soviet Union, on the one hand cautionary in its direct relationship with the USA, but in other respects supportive of revolutionary change. This was a situation he could not fully reconcile.³⁹ For him, the Soviet Union was an opportunist power, and the Cold War lay in ideological hostility between the superpowers⁴⁰, increased by the currency of social revolution in the Third World, but essentially it was about American

³⁶ This was Deutscher's distinguishing position. Indeed, not only did Deutscher see the potential for political change, he also expected the USSR to overcome (ie. reform itself) and thus politically compete with the West. He also saw the potential for political change being paralleled by the imminent possibilities of Soviet socialism to materially outproduce the West, and thus win the 'Great Contest.'

³⁷ I. Deutscher (1960) p.59.

³⁸ I. Deutscher (1966) p.55-6.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p.147-63 and I. Deutscher (1967) *passim*.

⁴⁰ See I. Deutscher (1984) p.72-87.

containment of social revolution, and not the inherently revolutionary threat of Soviet expansionism.⁴¹

For Deutscher, Stalin and the Soviet Union pursued the twin goals of realising the material basis of a politically controlled mode of production, and a reduced security threat, which was secured by the 'buffer zone' of East-Central Europe.⁴² These objectives were achieved by Stalin's death, and because of this, the Cold War and Soviet international relations were subordinated to what Deutscher termed 'the Great Contest,' the *internal* goal of 'outproducing' Western capitalism.⁴³ Deutscher, then, foreclosed his analysis of the linkage between the expansion of international communism through social revolution and the international presence of the Soviet Union. Indeed he even went further to suggest that in some instances the Soviet Union did more to hinder the successful expansion of international communism than the counter-revolutionary policies of the USA.⁴⁴ Because the Soviet Union wanted to avoid a military conflict with the stronger USA, and because its priority was always internal consolidation and development of its productive forces, the actual competition with the West was limited to the level of production.⁴⁵

Deutscher's work though persuasive and insightful is present with a number of unresolved tensions that problematise his understanding of the relationship between social revolution and the Cold War. First, is how Deutscher understands the USSR's relationship with revolution and revolutionary states. Although he did recognise the importance of the Soviet Union for the potential success of social revolution,⁴⁶ he had problems in explaining why the Soviet Union did support and help sustain revolutionary movements and states. The argument that the Soviet Union's support for particular revolutionary movements and states for reasons of *raison d'etat*, or its own internal consolidation, or to control and manipulate such movements, fails to provide an adequate explanation as to why, following the logic suggested, the Soviet Union supported movements and regimes that actually undermined what could be identified as aspects of

⁴¹ See I. Deutscher (1960) p.54-7.

⁴² I. Deutscher (1966) p.52; (1970) p.192-3.

⁴³ His understanding of capitalism, particularly its proneness to periodic 'economic' crisis led him to assume that the Soviet Union could outproduce the leading capitalist states and win over the masses of the world with its example of economic efficiency and productivity alone. See (1967) p.52-70; (1970) p.67;197; (1960) *passim*.

⁴⁴ (1967) p.154; (1984) p.78.

⁴⁵ (1970) p.22-67.

⁴⁶ (1967) p.155; (1984) p.201.

Soviet *raison d'etat*. In a number of historical instances the Soviet Union intervened to support international revolution, when it could not have been sure of controlling them, and when such interventions served to jeopardize the relationship with the USA, which was the main international issue, according to these arguments, for the USSR. Moreover, to understand this⁴⁷ in terms of the need for the USSR to be seen to support international revolution, though it did not want to, does not provide an adequate Marxist explanation.

The source of this problem lies in Deutscher's failure to put forward a developed theory of the form of Soviet international relations. This is partly related to his conceptualisation of the Cold War as a 'contest' confined to competition in material production between East and West. Although correct to stress the impact of Soviet internal material goals (and the impact they had on social relations within the USSR), he fails to link this to the means with which the Soviet Union sought to realise its international relations and 'expand.' Because of its internal political form, the Soviet Union was limited to a specific kind of international relations that did not have an 'economic' aspect. What this amounts to is that Deutscher identified economic competition as the genuine source of the Cold War but failed to identify the international limitations of the Soviet economic form. Because production and the social relations of production were directly tied to the political form (the Soviet state), the Soviet economy could only internationally expand through direct (ie. territorial) expansion. This was obviously the case after 1945 in East-Central Europe, and it seems quite obvious from this perspective why the USSR rejected the Marshall Plan. Economic as political expansion was obviously achieved differently under capitalist social relations and forms of politics, but the Soviet Union could not compete internationally in the sphere of material production alone. This had to be accompanied by political expansion. However, this was highly problematic because of the political and military costs that such 'expansion' would incur. The only alternative means of political, and thus economic expansion was through social revolution, yet even here the political problems that surfaced served to potentially undermine internal political cohesion within the USSR and the CPSU,

⁴⁷ As Deutscher does in (1967) p.155-6.

and wider political conflicts over the competing models of 'socialist accumulation.'

Another concern with Deutscher's analysis is his detaching of the 'contest' in material production from the broader concerns of international conflict. He cannot explain the deep-seated problems and contradictions within the Soviet social formation that related to its international conflict with the USA. His understanding of this relationship is weakened by his failure to articulate an analysis of capitalism in the Cold War era. It is limited to the basic elements of a theory of uneven and combined development, manifested in the impact of capitalist social relations in the Third World. Deutscher follows the imminent teleology of Trotsky's theory, by assuming that the contradictions of capitalist expansion will serve to weaken metropolitan capitalism through revolutionary upheavals in the Third World, and that the Soviet Union will take advantage of the 'paradox of backwardness' to overtake the United States.⁴⁸ His failure to conceptualise the specificity of the American era of capitalism, and particularly the successes of class compromises in the Western metropolises that altered the form of capitalist social relations led him to adopt a teleology, that had a 'productivist' orientation. Indeed, his analysis of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc ended up falling into the trap that he had accused Stalinism of. From the beginning, which Deutscher fails to recognise, Bolshevism was based on the contradictions between a theory of productive forces, and social relations. Its history highlights the unwinding of this contradiction, where productive growth, (ie. 'catching-up' with advanced capitalism in productive terms), but failing to surpass it, socially. Class antagonism, ultimately, is the explanatory source here, and it is overlooked by Deutscher's analysis. It was this contradiction and the particular form of class struggle that this threw up that is explanatory of the Soviet Union and its international relations, rather than seeing it as explainable in terms of an international relations limited to conserving itself and outproducing the West.

⁴⁸ *Ibid* p.55-6.

2.3 Fred Halliday

Halliday offers the most insightful theorisation of the Cold War and revolution by suggesting that social revolution in the Third World was an aspect of international conflict that involved the superpowers in social conflict as 'systemic' actors.⁴⁹ To put it simply, the United States and the Soviet Union were different states based on different constitutive political and economic values. One acted to support one form of 'systemic values,' identified with the West, while the other sought to support a different form of constituent values similar to that of the Soviet Union. The Cold War then, was about this struggle between two different types of state projected onto world politics and derived from the different political and economic constituencies of each superpower.⁵⁰

Halliday seeks to place social revolution in the Third World within a particular historical and social context.⁵¹ Social revolution was anti-American, because, the USA was the dominant presence in international relations, but also, and following the Revisionists, because it was capitalist and social revolution in the Third World saw the overthrow of forms of capitalist social relations. However, Halliday goes beyond the Revisionists by placing social revolution in the shadow of the Soviet Union. He seeks to explain the Cold War through the occurrence of revolution and the role of the Soviet Union as a revolutionary, anti-capitalist state. For Halliday, we cannot fully understand the occurrence of revolution unless we can understand the Soviet Union as a particular kind of state that contested American international hegemony and sought to support those states that were anti-American and anti-capitalist.⁵²

Halliday seeks to link the actions of states, principally the 'superpowers' with the revolutionary social developments in the Third world within a particular historical conjuncture. He does not see the Cold War as something with temporal consistency; this is highlighted in his major substantive account of the Cold War,⁵³ but rather something that was shifting, and determined by the 'superpower' relationship within the conditions of post-war international politics. Although

⁴⁹ See F. Halliday (1994a) p.170; 174-5; 80.

⁵⁰ *Ibid* p.175

⁵¹ F. Halliday 'The Conjuncture of the Seventies and After: A Reply to Ougaard,' in *New Left Review* no. 147 September-October 1984 p.82.

⁵² See F. Halliday (1986) p.97-104.

⁵³ *Ibid.* in particular p.8-9.

Halliday recognises a consistency in the actions of the 'superpowers' as states, according to their particular social configuration he does not ignore the inconsistencies of the frequently cited examples⁵⁴ of the USA supporting Yugoslavia and then China. The Soviet support for regimes that persecuted communists, as in Iraq and Egypt, or the close alliance with states that were manifestly different or closer to the West than the Soviet Union, as in the case of India. Halliday recognises the anomalies or contradictions of particular episodes of American or Soviet behaviour, but in essence this is not enough to undermine the overall argument. As Halliday has stated, Egypt and India were Soviet allies 'but remained within the capitalist bloc...here it was Soviet state interests that seem to be the primary motivation.'⁵⁵ Yet compared to inter-capitalist rivalry in the Third World (between the USA and Western Europe), the Soviet role is qualitatively different:

'..inter-capitalist rivalry as states is nothing compared to that between the USA and the Soviet Union and inter-capitalist rivalry has not manifested itself in terms of Western Europe supporting revolution against the United States.'⁵⁶

Halliday's work is characterised by a distinction between his work on the Cold War and that on social revolution, which is most clearly reflected in his later understanding of international conflict in terms of 'homogeneity and heterogeneity.' Using these concepts he attempts to understand international conflict in terms of an international society distinguished by a distinct set of norms:

'.. shared by different societies, which are promoted by inter-state competition. This is based neither on inter-state nor on transnational models, but on the assumption of inter-societal and inter-state homology.'⁵⁷

Thus international relations has a tendency towards homogeneity in the internal constituent norms (in terms of both state and society) of the members of international society. And it is international pressures, which are responsible for compelling states to conform to a particular kind of internal arrangement.⁵⁸ Revolutionary states are important within this conceptualisation of the international in that they are attempts to overcome these pressures to conformity. Revolutions represent a crisis in the internal and international social order whereby through the

⁵⁴ See K. Waltz (1979) p.172.

⁵⁵ (1986) p.41-2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ See F. Halliday (1994a) p.94

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p.95

seizure of state power, attempts are made to alter and transform state-society relations, and thus create a heterogenous international system, whereby rival forms of internal norms compete to homogenise the other. The outcome of revolutions provides an alternative model of state-society and consequently a heterogenous international system.

There is obviously some truth in this. The Soviet Union was characterised by different internal norms than the United States, and through political hegemony and forms of international activity sought to expand the social space of 'socialism,' in conflict with capitalism. However, on two crucial points, this understanding of international relations and the place of revolution within are problematic. First, how can this conceptualisation explain the *occurrence* of social revolution? If the operation of international relations is about the compulsion of state-societies to conform to a particular political, economic and cultural configuration, then how can these same processes of compulsion be responsible for helping to create a crisis which has an outcome of revolution and the transformation of a state in direct contravention of the existing and dominant international norms? The only way of resolving this is to understand social revolution in terms of 'catching-up' as a crisis that results in structural transformation which seeks to transform a state so it can more adequately compete with its international competitors. Halliday suggests as much, with his citing of scholars associated with Historical Sociology, Otto Hintze, Michael Mann, and Theda Skocpol. Thus, the concept of homogenisation appears to have a Neo-Weberian bent, where modernity or modernisation is the goal, and the logic of international competition dictates this end. Such an understanding of revolution overlooks the *class* nature of the transformation that they engender. Social revolution is a response to a class crisis, which obviously implicates the state as a defender of particular class interests and the manager of class antagonisms. It is in the crisis engendered by the international expansion of capitalism and the contradictions this creates for particular types of states that leads to a breakdown in the arrangement of class relations that sows the seeds of revolution.⁵⁹ Thus, the crisis of those states that succumbed to revolution were fundamentally related to the contradictory impact of capitalist social relations at a particular conjuncture and

⁵⁹ See the work of Michael Löwy *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution* (London: Verso, 1981); and James Petras *Class, State and Power in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1981); *Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

within a specific domestic class structure. The state in this respect was important as being a *relation* of production, a facilitative regime-institution that managed, or in the case of a revolutionary crisis failed to effectively manage the existing social order on behalf of capitalist accumulation.

Homogenisation, then, tends to understand social revolution in terms of inter-state competition, whereby the state is subject to external pressure and its reaction to this pressure leads to an internal social crisis, mainly because of the state's need to appropriate resources from particular social classes, causing it to lose legitimacy. Skocpol⁶⁰ provides the most obvious example of this, and it seems to inflect on Halliday's theory of homogeneity. Such an analysis, however, does not adequately acknowledge the class nature, which is international, but relates ultimately to the transformation of class relations within a revolutionary state. If Halliday embraces the Skocpol thesis then he must downplay social conflict for political-state conflict. In doing so, homogeneity or heterogeneity as the outcome of revolutions becomes a form of modernisation or development, rather than a class-based phenomenon, where the notion of development is overtaken by the concept of international class conflict. This is an area I will return to below, but for the moment I will leave it and discuss my second problem with Halliday's concept of international homogeneity.

Halliday is right to cite the international as a 'socialising' force or the location of conflict that sees the undermining or nourishing of particular forms of state-society relations. Capitalism as the quintessential international relation, acts both to reinforce and mould particular forms of state-society relationship. However, it does not seek to homogenise, or make all societies fit into a particular model or framework. Capitalist state-society relations are characterised if anything by heterogeneity.

Stalinist international relations was guilty of a vulgarisation of Marx partly based on the rhetoric of the *Communist Manifesto* that was suggestive of the homogenising power of capital. This was used to justify Soviet foreign policy through a dogmatic 'stagism' analysis of levels of socio-economic development⁶¹ over when it was right for a 'socialist' seizure of power. Such interpretations of

⁶⁰ (1979) especially p.24-33.

⁶¹ Such a position drew on Marx's bold claims outlined in *The Communist Manifesto* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967) p.84 and the 1867 Preface to (1976b), where he appeared to endorse a theory of the homogenising power and tendency of capital.

Marx have served to simplify and fixate the complexity of his analysis.⁶² Additionally, and more important from the perspective of social revolution and the Cold War, is the actual politics of particular social formations. What for Marx determined both the nature of the social formation and the character of the state was the condition of class antagonism and the relative positions of conflicting classes.⁶³ This obviously directly relates to social revolution and the Cold War, and it also relates to the debate about the 'relative autonomy of the state' that Halliday engages with through his interpretation of Skocpol. Homogenisation can be seen to denote a fixed position of class relations/conflict, which reflects a convergence that is international as well as internal. Such an understanding ignores the actual combined but uneven nature of both the expansion of capitalism to non or only partially capitalist states, and also ignores the contradictions of this expansion and consolidation which reflected the presence of human agency through international class struggle.

Halliday's model is dependent on a notion of international competition, which seasons his notion of the Cold War as 'inter-systemic conflict.' This competition in the realms of political, economic and military affairs assumes a degree of symmetry between both the constituents involved in this competition (for all intents and purposes the Soviet Union and the USA) and in the form and logic of that competition. In one sphere, the logic or nature of competition was quite apparent, and it fitted the orthodox understanding of international relations and the explanation of the Cold War. The arms race, and in particular the strategic and nuclear arms race provided a potentially devastating currency of competition. However, as argued in chapter four, such a currency or logic of competition is insufficient for the conceptualisation of the Cold War, and indeed, does not fully reflect Halliday's focus. Halliday points to a combination of competitive logics from ideas to the production of consumer goods. What he does not do is place them within an overall logic, and neither does he argue that we need to distinguish the qualitatively different logics present within each system. Both were not only

⁶² Marx was fully aware of the particularities of capitalism inhabiting different and contradictory societies through his concept of social formation. See *Preface and Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976a) p.39 and the 'Marx-Zasulich Correspondence: Letters and Drafts' p.97-126 and 'Karl Marx: A Letter to the Editorial Board of *Otechestvennye Zapiski*' p.134-7 in T. Shanin (ed.) *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the 'Peripheries of Capitalism'* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

⁶³ See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works in Two Volumes. Volume One* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951). In particular 'The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850' p.128-220 and 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' p.221-311.

different in their organisation of production and social relations, they both operated according to different types of material and social reproduction. However, in terms of the nature of revolution and the conflict of revolutionary social formations with the existing capitalist social forms, what separated them was the distinctly different logics of the reproduction of social life. For the latter, the society *and* state is based and dependent on a particular set of class relations that facilitates a logic determined by the accumulation of profit. Capitalist states exist within a self-perpetuating logic of profit and expansion. It is this, which drives economic growth, resource depletion, the organisation of the economy and society and the strategic role of the state as the guarantor and facilitator of a particular kind of class relationship. We can even see the state as 'autonomous' in these terms, not in the sense of in and for itself *à la* Skocpol,⁶⁴ but in the sense of the logic of capitalist accumulation.

The Revolutionary state overthrows such a regime of accumulation and form of class relations, and institutes a new set of class relationships. This reconfiguration sees the expropriation of a particular social constituency (namely international capital and the internal ruling class). This in turn allows the state as inhabited by, and transformed through revolution to facilitate the results of class struggle as the outcome of the revolution with the redistribution of land and the collectivisation of production on behalf of its class constituency. The logic of private capital accumulation based on the rule of profit is broken and a new social logic determines the reproduction of social life, one that is derived from the reconstituted social relationships. Under the rubric of socialism, social revolutions have ~~sort~~^{sought} to replace the logic of profit by an alternative logic based on the collectivisation of property and the planning of production and distribution according to social and political criteria through the agency of a political party *contra* the market mechanism.

The logic of private capital accumulation (profit) by a social class, the bourgeoisie, is replaced by the collective, national agency of the state as facilitator of new class relations. The logic of profit only impinges on these new social formations through international pressure. There is no internal capital constituency. Thus, we have an *international* conflict between the conforming and undermining

⁶⁴ For a discussion and critique of Skocpol's position see P. Cammack 'Bringing the State Back In?' in *British Journal of Political Science* Volume 19 part 2, April 1989 p.261-90; and R. Milliband 'State Power and Class Interests,' in *New Left Review* No. 138 March-April, 1983 p.57-68.

pressure of capitalist social relations against a *political* form of appropriation or accumulation. The state serves to adopt a logic based on an ideology and plan, which seeks to limit the internal vestiges of capital and prevent its internal penetration from the outside. This was in many respects the source of the Cold War conflict, the conflict of the international expansion of capital into social formations either where the capitalist class had been abolished and replaced by a 'socialist state' or where a state-national bourgeoisie acted to limit the power of international (imperial) capital to operate and penetrate those societies and thus transform their social relations. Counter-revolution was in these terms the international project of capital that manifested itself in armed intervention and the military attempts to either prevent or overthrow social revolutions. Politics here was not something instrumental, (ie. the political victory of the United States in Indo-China to pave the way for American capitalist penetration) but rather the *general* international concern to prevent revolution that served to limit the international power of capital.

Such are the problems with the 'Homogenisation' thesis as proposed by Halliday. If it is to avoid becoming a form of Neo-Weberian teleology, then one must recognise the role of particular forms of human agency in revolutions, which have class outcomes that are distinctly different to seeing them in terms of modernisation. To see the state in these terms is to accept its autonomy, and ultimately its political content distinct from the social. One does not need to follow a mechanistic logic as in that adopted by most variants of American Revisionism to find this ontology insufficient. A materialist ontology would attempt to overcome this abstract polarisation of spheres of human agency and instead provide a form of unity between the spheres of politics and economics. To give a social content to each that reflects the presence of particular kinds of human agency (classes) located and grounded within a particular objective relationship. In terms of international relations, states are as much located within a particular *accumulating* logic as are economic enterprises and classes. The separation of politics and economics serves to obscure the intimate relationship between the two, the interaction between the two spheres that makes them separate in the abstract but part of a social totality in the concrete.

I have outlined the major existing Historical Materialist informed approaches to social revolution and the Cold War. In the following section I will

develop the critical foundations above, and drawing on Halliday's work give an overview of what I think an Historical Materialist based theory of revolution and IR should be, and relate it to the Cold War.

3. Social Revolution as a Dynamic of the Cold War

3.1 The Relationship Between Social Revolution and the Cold War

The relationship between social revolution and the Cold War was symbiotic. The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was the international rupture that created the USSR and began the Cold War. Despite the wartime relationship between the USSR and the USA, there *was* a Cold War that ran from 1917 through 1941-45 and beyond to the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989. The principal reason for the continuity from 1917, despite the 'state behaviour' of the USSR lay in the contestation of international capitalism by revolutionary forces throughout the world.⁶⁵ The Soviet Union may have acted ambivalently in a number of cases, but the theory of Bolshevism, and its practical techniques were to be consistently applied after 1917.⁶⁶

What then was the nature of social revolution in the Cold War ? Where did revolutionary conjunctures appear, and why ? What social constituencies were involved, and what were the results ? Without a doubt social revolution was a phenomenon related to social and economic 'backwardness.'⁶⁷ Just as the Bolshevik revolution was derived from the social relations of backwardness and the form of social and political crisis engendered, so did the subsequent revolutions in the Third World. However, to avoid a Trotskyist teleology; backwardness did not make social revolution inevitable, nor did it mean that even when imperialism was politically challenged in the Third World ~~that~~ revolutionary social transformation was the outcome. Whilst the Bolshevik revolution saw the destruction and transformation of a 'state,' many of the Third World revolutions were directly related to the need to *construct* a state. Revolutions, then, occurred because there was no (modern) state in China, Vietnam and elsewhere.

⁶⁵ See E. Mandel *The Meaning of the Second World War* (London: Verso, 1986).

⁶⁶ D. Horowitz (1969) stresses this, see p.205-30.

⁶⁷ See Leon Trotsky for an explanation of the relationship between 'backwardness' and revolution. *The History of the Russian Revolution Three Volumes* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957); *Results and Prospects* (London: New Park Publications, 1962); *The Permanent Revolution* (London: Worker's International Press, 1940).

Social revolution was an outcome of the transformation of international capitalism, principally the change in the capitalist form of political rule from formal colonial control to political-legal independence. The Cold War paralleled this process, but although conceptually distinct these processes were, historically, deeply imbricated with the questions of social transformation and political rule. This was also clear in the early foreign policy of the Soviet Union, epitomised in the Comintern conference for the 'Toilers of the East' held in Baku in 1918.⁶⁸ Here Lenin debated with anti-colonial nationalists on the question of national liberation and revolution, and how social revolution could be engendered from specific backward social relations. Thus, from its inception, indeed because of the type of state that Tsarist Russia was, the Soviet Union as a type of anti-colonial state, and a practical theory of revolution had a presence in the colonial world. However, this presence in a direct political and material form in terms of the Soviet state, and through local Communist Parties was not determining in the politics of the colonial and later Third World. Instead it was but one, sometimes dominant, form of agency and currency that contested the status quo and attempted social and political change.

The goal of legal and political independence was matched by the goal of social and economic development, and social revolution was but one method of achieving these goals. Yet, what distinguished social revolution, the social and political transformation by class-based forms of political agency, was, as E.H. Carr noted that the Bolshevik revolution was the first revolution that was consciously planned and developed within a theoretical framework based upon the revolutionary critique of the existing social order. Its self-consciousness made it unique in that it was *applied* elsewhere. Both the organisation and strategy of postwar revolution were derived from the Bolsheviks. This in itself was a unique historical and social development, the emergence of a global professional class of revolutionaries.⁶⁹

Social revolution in the Cold War tended to occur within specific social forms characterised by the penetration of capitalist social relations yet without a developed and politically strong bourgeoisie. Because of the problems associated with social and economic development and how this related to the state, the Cold War saw, as Fred Halliday has stressed, an international conflict about what form of social and political development these new 'states' should follow. This provided the

⁶⁸ See E.H. Carr *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923 Volume Three* (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1953).

⁶⁹ E. H. Carr *The October Revolution. Before and After* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969) p.8-9.

nexus of the relationship involving the 'superpowers' and the Third World, which saw relationships develop with non-revolutionary states, revolutionary states and military dictatorships, amongst others. What was defining, however, was the nature and content of social revolution. Despite the fact that a great many newly-independent states legitimised themselves on some kind of revolutionary heritage or legacy, it is questionable how far all these states were indeed social revolutionary.

The Cold War in this sense was played out both internationally, between the 'superpowers' in their attempts to determine events in the Third World and internally based on the competing strengths of political movements, social classes and ideologies. While it is important to stress the linkages between the strength and performance of nationalist, communist or other political forces and international support from one or other 'superpower,' ultimately, the political outcomes rested on the relative strengths of these political movements derived from within.

The Cold War then should be seen as a distinct period in modern world history where certain forms of politics derived from specific types of political agency and social constituencies attempted to either challenge or maintain, and consolidate capitalist social relations with the external involvement of the 'superpowers.' In a general sense this was as much the case in Europe as it was in the Third World. What distinguished much of Europe⁷⁰ from the Third World was backwardness, or its relative absence in the former. This was characterised by advanced levels of social and economic development that rested, generally, on a productive and capitalist agricultural sector and a strong legitimate state. This was obviously problematic in 1945 and after, particularly in France, Germany, and Italy, but with material inducements and the support of a wide coalition of social and political forces, from former Fascists to Social Democrats, communism was successfully opposed and marginalised without the necessity of direct physical coercion.

The Third World or those 'states' characterised by limited social and economic development and vestiges of colonial rule were 'paradigmatically' different. Here, the contestation of capital and American power was overtly more political in the sense that social and economic goals were seen to rest on the

⁷⁰ Southern Europe and Turkey reflected many of the problems associated with the Third World that saw the political necessity of military and authoritarian forms of rule to suppress leftist and anti-capitalist forces. Even in the mid-1970s, the USA was concerned that Portugal after the fall of Salazar might 'go socialist.'

overthrow or fundamental re-structuring of 'state-society' relations, which in terms of degree went from the extreme and exceptional social revolution⁷¹ in communist expropriation and dictatorship, to the more moderate state-led capitalist modernisation, characterised by South Korea. The central point in discussing the Cold War and social revolution is the processional and contingent nature of postwar developments. Whereas the 'revolutionary left' in Western Europe, in the guise of communist parties was either politically defeated and marginalised, or forced to adopt non-revolutionary positions⁷² early after 1945, the situation in the Third World was very different. Here the weakness of the colonial and post-colonial state, the impact of capitalist penetration on traditional patterns of material production and political authority, and the general lack of liberal democratic institutions and established democratic movements all made politics more contested and potentially revolutionary. If this is taken seriously, then, the postwar history of the Third World was fundamentally about the *possibility* of revolutionary social transformation. The postwar history of the Third World was essentially about the struggles, involving the 'superpowers,' over the local strengths of the revolutionary left. Whereas in South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and much of Latin America the revolutionary left had been smashed by the late 1960s, in other parts of the world, notably Africa, the revolutionary left was to continue to be able to challenge existing political and economic forces. The 'Arc of Crises' in the mid-1970s that saw a number of 'revolutionary crises'⁷³ was precisely the last gasp of the revolutionary project with Soviet support.

The successes of the revolutionary left were determined by the international conjuncture (ie. the role of Soviet support and the corresponding American response), and also the local strengths of the contending political forces.⁷⁴ Though not wanting to use an inflexible typology to distinguish forms of social and political transformation between revolutionary and non-revolutionary, 'socialist' led and

⁷¹ The Iranian 'Islamic revolution' is singular in this respect. A revolution led by a cleric who espoused an anti-modernist and anti-materialist ideology. However, the revolution itself, despite its theological outcome, was heavily influenced by class-based mobilisations and the involvement of the revolutionary left. The failure of the revolutionary left to seize power was obviously related to the 'Islamic form' of the revolution in terms of leadership and the organs involved (principally the mosques), but also the subjective mistakes of the Tudeh Party leadership. For an analysis of the revolution see F. Halliday 'The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism,' in H. Alavi & F. Halliday (ed.) *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

⁷² As with the emergence of 'Eurocommunism' in the 1970s that rested on the recognition and defence of bourgeois political institutions and freedoms by the main communist parties in Europe.

⁷³ Halliday (1986) p.93-104 identifies these as Ethiopia (1974), Guinea-Bissau (1974), Cambodia (1975), Vietnam (1975), Laos (1975), Mozambique (1975), Cape Verde (1975), São Tome (1975), Angola (1975), Afghanistan (1978), Nicaragua (1979), and Iran (1979).

⁷⁴ With respect to the 'Arc of Crises' the conjuncture also related to the collapse of the last colonial empire, that of

nationalist led, a distinction does need to be made. This is important because through distinguishing the form and substance of 'revolutionary transformation,' there is a clear link with the Cold War, particularly the nature and durability of the 'expansion' of the Soviet form of state. This distinction could be seen in the distinctiveness of 'national' from 'social' revolution. Whilst both of these forms of social and political change were encapsulated in the crisis of the colonial and post-colonial state and the expansion/consolidation of international capitalism, the origins, nature, and consequences of change or 'revolution' were very different in each. The principle differences between these two types of social transformation were located in: first, the impetus and nature of the change; second, the political (class) agency involved in the transformation; and third, the nature of the class relations and social structure that 'revolutionary change' realised.

3.2 The Nature of Social Revolution in the Cold War

First, the impetus and nature of change/revolution. Whilst radical change in the Third World grew out of similar structural contexts, (ie. a specific position within the international division of labour under capitalism) the differences were manifest in the pre-revolutionary crisis. In both cases, the progressive role afforded to the national bourgeoisie (which typifies the ideal-type models of liberal political economy and theorists of development and modernisation) was lacking. In classical Leninist terms there was no bourgeoisie that could or would lead a 'national-democratic revolution.' In each case the national bourgeoisie was replaced by an historical surrogate; social groups and officials from *within* the state in the case of national revolution, and the revolutionary political coalition *without* the state in the case of social revolution.

In all of the cases of 'revolutionary change' in the Third World in this century, from Mexico, Turkey, Brazil, and Egypt, to China, Cuba, Vietnam, all were in positions of social-economic weakness and exploitation within the global capitalist system along with a weak and inefficient state. However, although all of the above shared this common position and experience, the contradictions that manifested themselves in these relationships differed in each particular national locality. They all shared a common position but were inflected with different

historical and social particularities.⁷⁵ It was the meeting of the *objective* circumstances of capitalist social relations and the *subjective* nature of the class structure within particular states that served to create or not create, as the case was in a number of situations, a revolutionary crisis and overthrow of the state, rather than forms of *coup d'etat*. In the case of the latter, the seizure of the state apparatus by elements within the state and/or sections of the ruling class, the causal or momentum-impetus was not based on a reconstitution of class relations, but the restructuring and strengthening of the national state. This may have had consequences in terms of class relations, but the essence of the actual human agency involved, the 'Free Officers' movement in Egypt, the Ba'athists in Iraq, and the PRI in Mexico, was the consolidation of state power based on more or less the same regime of social relations and class structure. In these terms, one could see such developments in terms of modernisation, (ie. the state, acting in place of the classical role of the bourgeoisie in developing productive forces but within a capitalist framework). Because of the structural economic weakness of these states and the lack, or weakness of an indigenous capitalist class, the state, in the guise of radical elements within the state apparatus, usually drawn from the military caste, sought to overthrow *from within* the existing political leadership and through a number of political measures develop productive forces and resolve the 'peasant-agricultural question' through land redistribution.⁷⁶ The background to this seizure of state power from within consisted of a crisis within the state and the manifestation of greater outside-imperialist influence from foreign capital and states. This in many respects was the primary goal of the seizure of state power, to remove the foreign presence/interference within a particular state, be it from an 'imperial hangover,' as in the case of continuing British influence in Egypt, Iran, and Iraq, or American influence in Guatemala and Mexico.

The important distinction on this first point on the impetus and nature of 'revolutionary change' is that the impact of the social contradictions manifested themselves most acutely in a crisis of, and within the state that resulted in a *coup*, rather than a real revolutionary crisis of society which implicated the state but as the political shell of a set of particular social relations. In this case a revolutionary crisis was engendered whereby a social, (ie. non-state constituency) attempted to

⁷⁵ See M. Löwy (1981) p.104-5.

⁷⁶ See J. Petras (1978) p.84-102.

overthrow not only the political regime and the state, but the social basis of that regime and institute a new set of class relations. Thus, in this case, the nature and impetus of 'revolutionary change' was from without the state, and was usually the product of a history of class conflict about the nature of *social* relations. Historically, the most successful agency of such social conflict were forms of collective political organisation based on social *class*. It was parties and movements derived from the Soviet or Leninist model that provided the political foci of class struggle in the Third World, leading or initiating a process of class conflict involving intellectuals, the poorer peasantry and the proletariat. Thus, the process itself, and the vision involved in that process was conceptually different from that involved in national revolution.

In terms of social revolution, the main constituency of the political agency involved was that of class, specifically the embryonic proletariat and the radicalised poorer peasantry. The emergence of subaltern class based forms of human-political agency was tied up with the social transformations associated with the impact of capitalism that saw a reconfiguration of social structures and social relations. Social revolutions were reflective of singular manifestations of class agency.

If this was the case, then what do I mean by class ? First, and this is quite clear from any study of these revolutions, is that class did not manifest itself in the form of the classic 'polarisation model of bourgeois and proletarians.' The expansion of international capitalism in the Cold War highlighted the complex, uneven, combined and contradictory nature of class relations and following this class antagonism and conflict. The social and material configurations of capitalism in the Third World did not reflect some *a priori* model of what a capitalist society is, but rather the combination of material forces and social relations within an international capitalist relationship.

Second, is that because of the complexity and dynamic nature of these social formations, a dynamism that is characteristic of capitalism, particularly those distinguished by contradictions and crises of a colonial and post-colonial nature, class does not always appear or 'act' in accordance with any pre-set aims. What this amounts to is that the typical quantification of class in these societies, according to occupation, income, educational level and voting habits, although empirically identifying groups of people whom may share certain objective qualities, does not

in itself highlight or explain class. Such definitions are static, and lack proper historical and social contextualisation. Class agency reflects the history of struggle, and the organisation and ideology associated with that struggle. It also reflects the temporal importance of specific conjunctures when class mobilisations occur and when they were defining of political strategies and the securing of specific political objectives.⁷⁷

Third, is the identification of class as a social relationship based on antagonisms derived from specific forms of political and economic subordination and exploitation. In this sense class is not an object, or characteristic, but a *process* identifiable within historically and socially specific relationships and which radiates more force at certain temporal moments. The struggles between peasants and landlords or between workers and foreign capital, reflected common features premised on the objective antagonism and conflict that lay at the heart of the capitalist social relation, but which also distinguished differences in terms of the form of organisation of struggle and goals. Thus, capitalism not only effects the proletariat, and the proletariat is not the only anti-capitalist constituency. Because capitalism forms a social totality, it has an impact on all-manner of people and groups within a society. Just because capital is not being reproduced, directly, though the 'self-valorization' of capital does not mean that capitalist social relations are not pervasive within a social formation, or that people and classes are not effected, *in other ways*, by capitalism. Cuba and Vietnam, amongst many other examples worth comparing, from Mexico and Brazil, or Korea and Indonesia, reflect the penetrative impact of capitalism as an international social totality, that on another level does not appear to be capitalist.

Class mobilisation and struggle as 'relational developments' did not follow a pre-determined path and outcome, or that the relations of class forces and the substance of class struggle were the same. Rather, the forms of class struggle and the level of mobilisation and effective organisation determined the level of revolutionary transformation. Without class participation the depth of the transformation was always to be more limited. The working class and radical

⁷⁷ Thus, in Cuba the successes of Castro's guerrillas in overthrowing Batista did not rest, alone, on working class mobilisation and support. However, revolutionary social transformation *did* rest on specific working class support and mobilisation. This saw a coalescing of the political goals of the revolutionary leadership with the transformation of the class structure and class relations. The working class was *active* in this process, as members of the revolutionary militia and through participating in changes throughout Cuban society. This amounted to a class based transformation that saw the working class secure a privileged position within Cuba.

peasantry were determining of their own futures in this respect. The impact of class was also a conditional category in that it was inflected with race, gender, age and other influences, which ensured a local idiosyncrasy. This conditioning was also influenced by the wider social setting, most notably the strength of other (antagonistic) classes, and the impact of military power on the process of revolutionary change.

The second point of difference I have already mentioned to some degree in the first point, above, concerning the nature and impetus of revolutionary change. Important though the location of struggle was, it was the nature and consequences of the differing types of human agency involved that again separated national from social revolution. It was the coalescence of the national class formation and its contradictions with the penetration of international capital that provided the context for the emergence of a revolutionary party or bloc. As already mentioned the experiences of the Bolsheviks were formative, though adapted to suit the national location. Cuba in many respects stands out here, and indeed the work of Régis Debray claimed a peculiar method and agency of social revolution based on the *foco* or military struggle leading the political one.⁷⁸ However, the success of this model, if it can be described as such, is disputed, especially with the failure in the Bolivian jungle in the late 1960s which ended in the death of Ché Guevara and the serious questioning of the utility of such a revolutionary model.

The Cuban revolution was not led by a communist party; the Cuban party during the revolution maintained the neo-Stalinist and official Soviet line on 'stagism,' arguing that the tasks of the national-democratic revolution had to be completed before there could be a genuine social revolution. It did not fulfil its historic role, and instead the revolution was led by the 'Movement of the 26th of July.' Whilst this is a notable exception to the nature and development of the Cuban revolution, it does not follow that Cuba did not have a social revolution, it surely did. What is important, and this relates directly to the concern with the exact type of human agency, or class(es) involved in social revolution, was that Castro's movement was part of an organised class mobilisation, strongly supported by the organised working class and the peasantry that overthrew the Cuban state that

⁷⁸ See *Revolution in the Revolution: Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

ushered in the transformation of social relations.⁷⁹ Thus, in the case of Cuba, the outward appearance may have looked at odds with the argument presented here, but in the content of the revolutionary struggle itself, and the social forces involved, it should be seen in terms of the struggle of particular social classes against a particular regime of social relations, as was the case in Russia, China, and Vietnam.

With respect to national revolution, the radical elements within the state apparatus were concerned to achieve specific social tasks but within the existing overall social structure. The class agency involved here was quite different to that which manifested itself in the examples of social revolution. There was no coordinated and comparative class mobilisation or historical context of class struggle. Instead the state was the focal point for elements within the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, the latter mainly located in the military. There was not an autonomous mobilisation of society, instead, the new ruling elements within the state acted to crush what they perceived to be the real revolutionary tendencies within society. The national revolution saw a restructuring of the state-society relationship but this was not at the behest of sustained class conflict, rather it was the result of strategic decisions of the new state leadership.

The third and final distinction to be made between national and social revolutions concerns the consequences or project of change. Without a doubt both the social revolutionary agency of the class coalition led by the communist party and the radicalised elements within the state sought to transform their 'dependent' and exploited relationship with the dominant states of the international system and their position within the international division of labour. In both cases again, the state was seen as the vehicle with which to achieve this transformation in political and economic relations. However, the difference between national and social revolutions in the Third World was derived from the two points already discussed which led to the realisation, or attempts at the realisation of very different social projects based on distinctly different class relations and consequences for the overall social structure of the states involved. National revolutions were conceptualised within the logic of capitalist forms of accumulation and did not lead to a long-term structural severing of links with international capital that social revolutions were to realise. This was essentially because of points one and two,

⁷⁹ See M. Löwy (1981) p.142-59; J. Petras (1978) p.287-94; and in *New Left Review* No.111 September-October 1978 p.37-64.

above. However, it was not these alone. The momentum of the revolution and most importantly the role of the masses: workers, peasants and elements from the middle-class under the guidance of a centralized political organisation and sometimes radicalizing the involvement of the Communist party. It was these developments, alongside the support and guidance of political parties committed to socialism that were to push the revolution in the direction of social appropriation and an attack on the social relations of capitalist accumulation, that saw the capitalist class, as the owners of private property, abolished.

The outcome of 'socialist' revolution was generally the following in all of the social revolutions identified: a decisive break of the power of the capitalist class in the social-economic and political spheres of human relations. A new form of social-economic organisation was introduced which derived its logic from a state-collective plan; second, 'socialism' either immediately or soon after, was intended to bring about revolutionary social transformation. This was represented in the nationalisation or public ownership of industry, the collectivisation of agriculture, the abolition of the market and the 'laws' of supply and demand, and social relations organised around a comprehensive planning structure to direct and allocate production.⁸⁰ This did not happen in the national revolutions. There was no comparable mass involvement and the expropriation of property through nationalisation was a political act, alone, through state action. This extension of the national state to economic production however, was to culminate in the emergence of a class of property owners within the state apparatus and political elite.⁸¹ Whilst foreign capital was expropriated *en toto*, national private capital was co-opted into the state, and/or a new property class emerged within and under the protection of the state from predatory international capital and local outbursts of social unrest.

These points, in general form, provide the distinguishing features between social and national revolution in the Third World. How then do these two types of social formation relate to the Cold War conflict? Within the conceptualisation put forward they form the main dynamic of the Cold War in the consequences and responses to the international expansion of capitalist social relations. It was this phenomenon, above all else, that provides the explanatory framework for the developments described. With respect to the globalised conflict between the Soviet

⁸⁰ See G. White et al (ed.) (1983) p.1-4.

⁸¹ See M. Löwy (1981) p.160-88 and J. Petras (1978) p.86-88.

Union and the United States; these two states acted *within* this global dynamic/conflict. They did not initiate this conflict *as* states, but rather the social formations that they represented provided the general conceptual and actual means of international conflict through revolution and the international repercussions and response to it. Whilst social revolution saw the general hostility of capitalism and in particular the United States to its realisation, the history of national revolution was generally more complicated. As mentioned above national revolution was state-centric in the sense of the consolidation of national state power, which was facilitated by the protection of the national economy in strategic sectors, land reform, and the removal of the foreign political and economic presence. Almost universally these actions were to result in the removal of Western political and military structures, and the expropriation of Western commercial property. This in itself was enough to antagonise and warrant the hostility of the West. This situation obviously provided an opportunity for Soviet involvement through political links, military assistance and economic aid. However, both because of the nature of the Soviet Union, its limited economic resources and the structure of its social formation, which did not facilitate international social linkage/expansion, the formation of a 'socialist international system' was never fully realised. The nature of the Soviet Union in this respect, in its international *relations*, the revolutionary social transformation was always limited to the realm of social revolution within a state. Thus, its interaction with other states, both antagonistic and sympathetic was always limited to the logic of its outward appearance as a state, unlike the international social relations of its capitalist rivals. In effect, the societal relationship was fully merged with that of the state, and there was no relatively autonomous interaction. This was obviously a contradictory relationship that ultimately confounded social revolutionary states.

However, with respect to the motivation behind Soviet actions, revolutionary ruptures, because they rested on the severing or transformation of links with Western states, the USSR was offered the *only* means with which it could augment its international position. Increased political relations with other states, though diplomatic support, military protection, or economic and military aid was important for the Soviets, as the only means of 'expanding' the anti-capitalist coalition, without direct Soviet political control. The problem that confounded the

USSR was how far, and in what ways it could maintain a cohesion to the 'progressive bloc' and how far such international involvement would impinge on the relationship with the West, particularly when the continuation of militarized competition threatened to undermine prospects for continued economic growth within the USSR.

The social nature of national revolutionary regimes also played a part. They were 'developmentalist' rather than more class-based, and the linkages with the Soviet bloc did not become long-term or entrenched. They did not lead to a socialisation of the means of production, in fact in many cases, the communist movements in these countries were persecuted and murdered. Thus, there was nothing inherently anti-American in these regimes, nor pro-Soviet; rather, the national statist development project had an internal orientation and sought to limit their external relations, and sought only to facilitate national cohesion and development not international class struggle. However, these regimes became part of the Cold War dynamic for the following reason. Their internal and national projects did involve being anti-imperialist in more than just rhetoric. A number of these regimes did aspire to undermine Western (imperial) interests, most notably Nasser in the Middle-East, and in this they did receive Soviet assistance, which served to heighten Cold War tensions, in the sense that the national revolutions themselves had served to trigger Western hostility, and a Soviet presence obviously extenuated that. However, in terms of the global conflict of the Cold War, these states were never fully *unreconciled* to international capitalism. It was the outward appearance of political subservience combined with a sense of national pride and mission that dominated both internal developments and their international outlook. The Soviet Union and the USA acted to carve out relationships and alliances, but it was the enduring international logic of capitalist accumulation and the place and relationship these states had within this international logic that was pervasive in the long-run, rather than the political interests of states.

4. Conclusions

This chapter has put forward a theoretical argument that locates social revolution as a defining feature, and a dynamic of the Cold War. The ruptures in class relations and the challenges to state power in the Third World were distinct processes not

reducible to the Soviet-American antagonism alone, but as outlined above, the result of complex local social and political developments that were partially determined by 'superpower' involvement. The relationship between social revolution and the Cold War was that social revolution was the principal means for the contestation of the American led international capitalist order and also the 'expansion' of different forms of politics, which were directly related to the USSR.

Revolutions exposed, both conceptually and politically, the problem of collapsing the concept of power with the state. Although revolutions were obviously about states, they were more than this. The state was important as a shell or organism of specific sets of social relations. However, social revolutions were fundamentally developments that occurred at the non-state, societal level, involving coalitions derived from without the state. The determining condition here was the crisis in the relationship between the political and economic forms, between social and material life and existing forms of political authority that the penetration of capitalist social relations triggered. Revolutions in the Third World, then, were not attributable to the *policy* of states, and to think in terms of states, alone, only limits the analytical scope for the observation and explanation of revolution.

Yet, this is not to argue that states were not important, one should not ignore states as manifestations of revolutions; they have clearly shown that although limiting, states did act internationally as bearers of revolutionary forces. Rather, revolution its causation and consequences needs to be seen from the perspective of a non-static spatial and temporal setting. Revolutions were moments indeed, when state and social power changes social constituency, but if we limit ourselves to this understanding we also ignore the process of revolution which sees the interaction of the internal and international, the political and the social-economic. Revolutions did not suddenly end, (ie. the state becomes socialised and adopts an objective *realpolitik*), but instead, revolution was tied up with the international class struggle located in the expansion and durability of the site of that class conflict, capitalism. Revolutions occurred at particular conjunctures, when a number of social and political developments coalesced in crisis. In occurring, revolutions obviously inflected that particular conjuncture, as 1917 did. The social and historical period in question was that governed by the particular relations of class forces within capitalism. It was such a configuration of social power that obviously guided if it

did not determine the direction and character of the post Second World War international order.

These crises were provoked by the nature and dynamic of capitalist social relations, and how these societies were incorporated into the world market. The uneven and combined effect of capitalist penetration created the structural forms, and with the contestation of these forms, the agency of revolutionary social transformation. Class, particularly the fledgling proletariat and the peasantry, were the constituencies that were uprooted (created in the case of the former) most by the impact of capitalist social relations. Although these people contested capitalist penetration, the realisation of social transformation through revolution was to come only through the organised mobilisation of these class forces, at specific conjunctures before, during, and after the revolutionary seizure of power. These mobilisations in turn were conditioned, when they were not determined, by the political goals of the revolutionary leadership and the response of the international system. In this sense the Cold War conflict was defining of the revolutionary transformations. The internal transformation through the collapse and overthrow of the pre-revolutionary state, and transforming of social relations were always international in essence. This derived from the international capitalist presence in these social formations and how this presence permeated the form of political rule. Thus, the transformation of the form of political rule and social relations ruptured the *substance and form* of the international within the revolutionary social formation. This being the case, the form of the new relationship between the revolutionary state and the international system was re-negotiated. Although the revolutionary seizure of power and the class mobilisations had secured a transformation, *how* this transformation was to extend to the construction of a new form of social relations and politics was to be decided by the *interaction and conflict* between the revolution and the international system.

For the period in question, the international system was for all intents and purposes the Cold War. Despite the presence of the 'superpowers' in defining the Cold War, this amounted to more than just the abstracted foreign policies of these two states. Rather, the Cold War reflected a specific period, a coming together of a number of specific features, contradictions and crises within a wider totality of the restructuring of international capitalism and its contestation at both the domestic

and international level. The revolutions in question exposed the strains and tensions within this restructuring. Whereas in other social formations in Europe and Asia the transformation of the international system through the redefining of the form of political rule and social relations did not accrue through such sudden explosions of conflict, the transformations were contested and mediated.

However, these revolutions sought a transformation through negation. However the negation of the state and capitalist social relations immediately turned into a struggle to form a new relationship with the international system that would facilitate a process of social transformation. Yet, despite the fact the revolutions in question did have specific objectives and programmes, these only *materialised* through the process of the conflict with the international system. Thus, social transformation in Cuba and Vietnam was a result of the process of the re-negotiation of the relationship between the revolution and the international system of the Cold War. This was never static. Instead it reflected the pressures and problems that revolutions confronted and how these were conditioned by the Cold War.

The prime objectives of expelling the foreign (imperialist) presence and developing the productive forces through transformations of class and social relations, however, were contingent on international relations. Thus, despite the successful transformation of the revolution, the *ex post facto* developments rested on securing certain things from international relations, and resisting others. This was even more apparent in the context of the Cold War. Whether or not the revolutionary leadership identified with, or was organised and followed a specific international doctrine, its social and political transformation was premised on reconfiguring international relationships. Cuba and Vietnam were exemplars of such developments and the problems associated with the reforming of international relations in the Cold War

The international was obviously important in determining the ultimate outcome of internal revolutionary change, and 'superpower' intervention to either support or contain and/or overthrow revolution, particularly in the form of the projection of military power. The role of military power was clearly determining in many respects in Afghanistan and Vietnam, particularly in terms of the human and material costs incurred and the impact this had on the goals of revolutionary social

transformation. But we cannot separate these developments and their consequences from the social question(s) of class relations and the project of revolutionary transformation. Halliday errs in the direction of an explanation seen in terms of separate and autonomous logics, (ie. between capital and state) and between revolutionary internationalism and state or national interest. However, they were in fact part and parcel of the same process, the international expansion and consolidation of capitalism, and the state-society relations that facilitated this at the domestic and international levels.

Part Two: History

Chapter Six

The International Relations of the USSR in the Cold War

Thus far this thesis has sought to put forward a theoretical argument about how, using a historical materialist based approach, IR theory might reconceptualise the Cold War as a conflict between different forms of political rule. These forms of politics were founded upon how the Soviet Union and the United States were internally constituted, based on the relationship between the spheres of how politics was institutionalised and ordered, and material and social reproduction. The argument put forward suggested that social and material reproduction within a limited territorial entity rested, historically and internationally, on certain kinds of relationships that produce a specific kind of 'internal politics' and 'international politics.' Though one can make an analytical distinction between the domestic and international in this respect, in real terms, they are symbiotic and not detachable, the internal conditions the international and *vice versa*.

The relationship between these two spheres of human action rested on specific kinds of social relations, which, put simply, were conditioned by how people were socially organised to produce, and what role politics, formally and practically, played in this process of production, and in the relationship between the form of rule and production. Such a conceptual distinction not only identifies and problematises the relationship between politics and economics, and how this might clarify what we actually mean by international relations, it also raises the issue of the form of international relations of different forms of political rule. With this conceptual distinction comes a questioning of the impact of both substance and form within particular currencies of international relations. For example, what role military power plays in the international relations of different forms of political rule; just because military power consists of the same *matériel* and hierarchies of organisation within different states does not mean that it is the same in terms of its domestic and international relations. Military power, then, is determined not by itself alone, but rather by the wider social relations and forms of politics that it exists within. The constitutive place of military power within any given form of political rule will obviously provide that 'state' with a specific

currency of both domestic and international politics. This will not be autonomous but will reinforce a particular form of politics and will be linked to other spheres and currencies.

It is the concern of this and the following chapter to relate the preceding theoretical discussion of the state, military power and social revolution to a more historically orientated understanding of the international relations of the 'superpowers' towards the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions. The point being to see how far the theoretical framework put forward in the earlier chapters offers a useful perspective in terms of understanding the relationship between the Cold War and social revolution. The Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions were, arguably, defining of the Cold War in the sense that they exposed, both from within, and internationally, the themes raised in the preceding theoretical discussion. These revolutionary conjunctures emerged within the context of the international expansion of capitalist social relations, and how this had a contradictory impact on Cuba and Vietnam. Moreover, not only did these revolutions emerge within an international capitalist context; they were also largely *determined* by that international conjuncture. Revolutionary conjunctures saw the transformation of the form of political rule, and the emergence of new currencies of domestic and international relations. This had a reflection in the realm of the 'economy' and military power. However, what is most important for the thesis put forward here, is that these revolutions contributed directly to the Cold War by challenging capitalist rule and American power and serving as forms of expansion for Soviet-type 'socialism.'

The issue of revolution and the international impact on them is at the heart of an understanding of the Cold War as I have understood it. The developments within Cuba and Vietnam were greatly influenced by the hostility and/or support from either 'superpower.' While this chapter will not discuss, in any depth, the nature of the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions, indirectly, their character and international relations should become apparent through the examination of how the USA and the USSR attempted to determine internal developments in each revolutionary state. In addition the analysis will expose the problems of how specific forms of political rule, and thus international relations have difficulty in relating to a specific kind of (revolutionary) state. The

foregoing analysis, I hope, will bring out the distinctive nature of the Soviet and American forms of international relations, and the possibilities and limitations of each that contributed to the Cold War taking the form it did.

International relations in the Cold War, as reflected in the international relations of the 'superpowers,' highlighted the import of specific currencies of politics derived from the domestic constitutive features of the Soviet Union and the United States. The international relations of each 'superpower' were different reflecting a different internal relationship between the form of political rule, and the tensions within the relations of social and material reproduction of each social formation, and how they were played out both domestically and internationally. Such relations provided for a specific role for military power within domestic politics (ie. how the organisation and maintenance of the internal social and political order rested on direct-coercive military power), and in what ways this had an impact on international relations. The constitutive make-up of the political form of rule and whether it rested on a direct public role for coercive power facilitated specific kinds of international relations that were characterised by a direct and obvious international *politics*.

With respect to the Soviet Union, international relations were confined to a specific form of politics *reduced* to the political form of rule, the Party-state apparatus. The internal constitutive features of the Soviet Union based on Party-state power determined both the form and substance of its international relations, to the point where Soviet international relations appeared to rest on an 'expansion' of the politics of the Soviet state. Soviet international relations, then, were an extra-territorial form of politics derived from the domestic relations of the Soviet social formation.

1. The International Relations of the Soviet Union, and the Cuban and Vietnamese Revolutions

Soviet relations with the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions within the historical context of the Cold War reflected a number of tensions derived from the relationship *between* the internal nature of the Soviet Union and its form of politics, and the wider capitalist dominated international system. Because of the abolition of any autonomous political spheres in the Soviet Union, internal and

international relations were restricted to the organs of the Party-state. The Soviet Union was characterised by international relations that related either directly with other states in the international system, politically and economically co-ordinated by the Party-state apparatus, and with non-ruling communist parties.¹ For the purposes of this chapter my concern will be with how the Soviet Union related to two revolutionary states that were internally characterised by a form of politics similar, but not the same as that which characterised the USSR. In these cases the Soviet Union related, politically and materially, directly with revolutionary forms of political rule that had either abolished or were attempting to abolish any autonomous spheres of politics associated with capitalist or private social relations.

As will, I hope become clear in what follows Soviet relations were limited with respect to the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions. Unlike the direct-physical presence in East-Central Europe the Soviet Union had to rely on local revolutionary leaderships: the Movement of the 26th of July-Communist Party in Cuba, and the Vietnamese Workers Party in Vietnam. Soviet involvement was through its direct links with the Party-state, and what soon became the Party-state with the 'Castroite' take-over of the Cuban Communist Party leadership in the early 1960s. Soviet relations, however, were not only conditioned by the perceived goals in relations with Cuba and Vietnam, but also by the internal debates and struggles within the CPSU, the ideological confrontation with the Chinese and, most importantly, the conflict with the United States, and how Soviet relations with Cuba and Vietnam effected this. As argued in Part One, the USSR was confined to a 'politics of expansion' through social revolution or direct political 'occupation.' Cuba and Vietnam were important, then, because they were potential sources for augmenting Soviet political and strategic power in the Cold War. In this sense, though the internal politics of the USSR were determinant for the *form* of Soviet international relations, with respect to *substance*, Cuba and Vietnam were important as internationally derived sources

¹ As will become clearer in this chapter, the Soviet Union did not limit itself to cultivating international relations only with like-minded states and movements. From its birth it sought to expand diplomatic and economic links with capitalist states for its internal development and external security. This diversification was seen as a means to limit the possibility of attack and also increase its chances of survival should war occur. As Trotsky claimed in 1925: 'The more multiform our international relations, the more difficult it will be... for our possible enemies to break them. And... even if (war or blockade)... were to come about, we should still be much stronger than we would have been under a "self-sufficient" and consequently belated development.' Quoted in E. Krippendorff 'Revolutionary Foreign Policy in a Capitalist Environment,' in E. Jahn (ed.) *Soviet Foreign Policy: Its Social and Economic Conditions* (London: Allen & Busby, 1978)

for augmenting Soviet strategic power. Objectively, the possibility of placing nuclear missiles in Cuba and securing an American withdrawal from South Vietnam were issues that would influence Soviet domestic politics, but were not reducible to it. The opportunity of placing missiles in Cuba had the potential to improve the Soviet strategic position *vis-à-vis* the USA. This was especially so, when US-Soviet competition in the strategic realm was one of the main (if not only) areas for expanding the Soviet 'sphere of interest.'

The central point to be made, then, is that the Soviet form of international relations was limited to a form of relations based on a politics confined to the organs and currency of the Party-state. Whilst providing an ideological and political link with the two revolutions in question, the inability to relate to these 'states' in other ways served to limit the forms and impact of influence. Because of the inability to secure a direct physical and political presence within Cuba and Vietnam, the Soviets were limited to relying on local communist leaderships. This relationship, though secured through ideological unity and hostility to and from the United States, also exposed the tensions within, and between revolutionary and post-revolutionary forms of political rule. Soviet pressure and influence, politically, was transparent because it was confined to only one currency of international relations. Despite providing important advantages, especially in terms of political controls and channels of authority, it also had significant disadvantages. The most significant of these was that the Soviet Union could only foster a politics through the local revolutionary leadership. Following this the Soviet Union was identified with the local revolutionary leadership, though its ability to influence it was limited. Because of the inability of the Soviet Union to directly control events in these 'states' its relationship with Cuba and Vietnam were characterised by opportunism and danger. Despite the ideological and political sympathies, due to the nature of the Soviet Union and its internal problems, the Soviet Union was concerned to avoid political commitments that threatened to problematise its position of dominance within the 'socialist camp,' and related to this material and political position within the socialist bloc, commitments that could possibly undermine international relations that were premised on augmenting the material base and productive forces of the USSR.

Revolutions posed threats and opportunities for the Soviet Union. The threat derived from a revolutionary form of international relations that identified itself with the Bolshevik revolution, but was not directly led, or controlled by the CPSU or Red Army. This not only served to question the ideological and political legitimacy of the Soviet Union within the international communist movement that could draw on fissures within the CPSU leadership, but it also problematised the wider international position of the Soviet Union, particularly its relations with the advanced capitalist states, especially the USA. Revolutions exposed the fundamental contradiction of the Soviet Union, a form of political rule born of social revolution that had internally reduced the revolutionary potential of the Soviet Union through the silencing of any alternative currents of politics that proclaimed itself to be the vanguard of the international revolution, but which had prioritised internal material development over all other political goals. Revolutions tested whether the Soviet Union was true to its ideology, particularly when revolutions jeopardised the international position of the Soviet Union by threatening to create crisis situations that would engulf the Soviet Union with other states.

The opportunities derived from revolutions served, potentially, to consolidate internal political rule within the Soviet Union both within the Party-state apparatus as it related to the rest of society, and within the particular leadership faction in the ruling apparatus. Revolutions also undermined international capitalism and the international power of the United States. Cuba and Vietnam reflected this par excellence. Indeed, because of the limited nature of the Soviet form of international relations, revolutions were the *only* means of an extra-territorial expansion of the Soviet social form. Without direct physical control, as in East-Central Europe and Mongolia, the Soviet social form only 'expanded' through social revolution. Moreover, because of the mixed experience of the Soviet Union in the post-Stalin era with a number of Third World states (something that was to persist throughout the international history of the USSR), revolutions led by communist parties provided the only means by which the Soviet Union could secure stable and long-term goals based on Communist Party-state control and the social transformation premised on the abrogation of capitalist social relations and political forms. In the many instances where the Soviet Union

had relations with non-communist/revolutionary political leaderships, as in Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia and others, because of the limited ability to influence and manipulate events in these countries, pro-Soviet tendencies were vulnerable to removal and the eviction of Soviet influence. Without communist party leadership or, as in the case of a Cuba a proto-communist leadership, the Soviet Union had no guarantee that it could secure and maintain a long-term influence in a country. With communist leadership, although the Soviet influence was not quite direct, because it was based on a specific kind of internal social and political transformation, it made it difficult if nigh impossible for alternative political leaderships to emerge. As long as the Soviets could maintain good relations with other Party-states then, Soviet influence would be preserved. Though even here, as the Sino-Soviet dispute highlights, ideological and political symmetry based on social transformation did not ensure international political solidarity.²

Revolutions, then, exposed the contradictions of the consolidation and expansion of the American led international capitalist system through its contestation and overthrow. This not only weakened American capitalist power; they also benefited the Soviet Union by augmenting its international posture *vis-à-vis* the USA. The increase in Soviet power in one sense facilitated the overall project of the Soviet Union, the maintaining of internal Party-state dominance and development of the productive forces, but also, more importantly, served to increase its international bargaining and coercive power against the United States. International developments not directly related to Soviet domestic politics had the potential to secure strategic and thus political advantage for the USSR over the USA. However, the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions also served to problematise the political form of rule in terms of its international relations. The Soviet Union was never able to fully assert its will in Cuba and Vietnam. Rather, it found itself being drawn into developments within Cuba and Vietnam,

² Indeed much of Soviet policy was in response to, or in the light of changes in the relations between the USSR and China. Because of the limited nature of political rule and the relationship between the form of political rule and the social and material relations of production in both 'states,' inter-national ideological disputes carried much greater weight because of the ideological-political link through revolution and communist parties. This was even more manifest in the international relations of each communist power. However, it was in the scope of internal material development that relations became the most strained, and how the 'Bolshevik model' was contested as a form of class based social and material development. Ken Post *Revolution, Socialism and Nationalism in Viet Nam: Volume Two Viet Nam Divided* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1989b) p.188-90 highlights this tension with respect to the timing of Khrushchev's claims of immanent communist development and how this related to the 'dissident' Chinese path embodied in Mao's plans for the 'Great Leap Forward.'

especially when those developments conflicted with the USA that jeopardised Soviet international goals based on the internal consolidation and development of the Soviet Union's productive forces. Support and involvement against the United States threatened not only to put the Soviet Union in dangerous military situations against the United States, but also undermined its attempts at developing a durable *modus vivendi* with the advanced capitalist states, which, it was hoped, would facilitate its internal material goals.

2. Cuba

Soviet relations with Cuba reflected many of the tensions outlined above. Indeed, the Soviet-Cuban relationship within the context of the Cold War highlighted a number of distinctive features in the Soviet form of international relations. These included the relationship between Soviet policy towards Cuba and the internal position of not only the Party-state in the USSR, but also the position of the leading faction within the CPSU. This situation was also linked to the wider relations with the international communist movement, particularly the problems associated with the Sino-Soviet split and the national liberation/revolutionary movements in the Third World. Finally, the Soviet-Cuban relationship was a major factor in the US-Soviet relationship provoking a crisis that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war in October-November 1962. Whilst offering a major opportunity for Soviet penetration of Latin America, an area that prior to the Cuban Revolution, the Soviet Union appeared to have had scant intellectual, political or economic interest in,³ as the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis emphasised, it also offered grave dangers.

One of the most important features of the Cuban revolution, which has marked all social revolutions, was the unique local-Cuban nature of the revolution. Indeed, the Cuban revolution was *sui generis*⁴ in that it had not had any significant Soviet involvement until Castro had fully secured himself in power by the early 1960s, and had sought Soviet aid. The Cuban Revolution, then, was not only geographically distinct (ie. in what the Soviets had always

³ See N. Miller *Soviet Relations with Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁴ For analyses of the Cuban revolution see D. Wood 'The Long Revolution: Class Relations and Political Conflict in Cuba, 1868-1968,' in *Science and Society: An Independent Journal of Marxism* Volume XXXIV no.1 Spring 1970; R. Blackburn 'Prologue to the Cuban Revolution,' in *New Left Review* no.21 October 1963; S. Farber *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba, 1933-1960: A Political Sociology from Machado to Castro* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1976); T. Draper *Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1962); and M. Pérez-Stable *The Cuban*

understood as 'America's backyard'), but also organisationally, ideologically and politically distinct.

This is important because for a long period⁵ of Soviet relations with Cuba it was the distinctiveness of the Cuban revolution, in all its forms, that provided the central 'contradictory dynamic' in the relationship, and indeed, in Soviet policy as well. Central to Soviet international policy, and which accompanied the lack of a 'private political capacity'⁶ in the USSR, was the concern to ensure ideological and political unity under Soviet international leadership, whilst maintaining an international momentum that could undermine American-imperialist power, thus securing the USSR, and facilitating its internal social-material development. Developments in Cuba, particularly its relations with other states and revolutionary movements in Latin America, some of which were facilitated by Soviet economic aid and military support for Cuba, in one sense gave great hopes to the possibility of Soviet penetration of Latin America and undermining American power there, but also increasingly fuelled tensions there, and in the wider Third World between it and the USSR.

Thus, at the core of Soviet policy towards Cuba were the objectives to consolidate the revolution and use Cuba as a kind of 'revolutionary bridgehead' for penetration of Latin America, and in doing so secure Cuba, ideologically, politically and militarily within the Soviet dominated international communist movement. This was to ensure not only the 'expansion' of the Soviet bloc system, and thus strengthen the world 'correlation of forces' in favour of socialism, but also to reduce the potential for a Cuban induced confrontation between the 'superpowers' over Cuba, and also an undermining of wider Soviet goals (diplomatic and economic) in the region.

Soviet relations with Cuba were never detached from the wider interests I have already mentioned.⁷ The successes of the Cuban revolution offered an impetus and potential acceleration to revolutionary anti-American struggle in Latin America. However, as with other revolutionary conjunctures, the Soviet

Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁵ Up until the mid-1970s and even beyond in some respects, Cuba was always a dissident within the official debates over revolutionary strategy.

⁶ This is also pertinent to the lack of a private international capacity of the Soviet Union. See C. Blasier *The Giant's Rival: The USSR and Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983) p.11.

⁷ Herbert Dinerstein makes a telling point in this regard in his observation that initial Soviet support for Cuba was cautious rather than strident to avoid jeopardising the possibility of securing a concession from détente with America over the status of Berlin. When détente had obviously failed in this regard, more strident support for Cuba was easier. *The Making*

Union was concerned to ensure the maintenance of its own form of political rule, and how this was facilitated by both its own form and substance of international relations, and other developments not directly controlled by Moscow. Thus, the Soviet Union sought to involve itself with Cuba to ensure these objectives, but because of the autonomous nature of Cuba the success of Soviet policy in ensuring the survival of the regime, even after the diplomatic/military debacle of October-November 1962, allowed for Cuba to pursue an alternative revolutionary strategy that had the capacity to undermine Soviet interests.

The Soviet form of political rule provided the framework for Soviet-Cuban relations in the sense of the exact form that Soviet relations took, and in the consequent interests these relations were meant to serve. Soviet international relations were meant to secure the realisation of not only Soviet international goals, but also internal ones. This was particularly the case in the sometimes-turbulent leadership of Khrushchev. Again, one needs to mention the wider international context of Khrushchev's leadership and policy decisions. The ideological dispute with China, and policy towards the Third World were central to this. Party-state legitimacy and Khrushchev's leadership position were deeply influenced by a combination of internal material developments and how these related to the international struggle against American led capitalist-imperialism. Because of the problems associated with Soviet economic development, particularly after Khrushchev's promise of the 'reaching of communism' in the near future at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in 1961,⁸ Khrushchev's internal position needed an international success.⁹ The Cuban revolution and the possibilities this opened up for his leadership and the Soviet bloc were an opportunity to secure an international success that would compensate for the continuing problems of productive development within the Soviet Union, and also the political conflicts with the Chinese and rivals in the Party-state machine.¹⁰ The international, then, played a constitutive part in Soviet internal politics, where Cuba could play a decisive role in securing the position of a faction of the CPSU. However, this is not to suggest that Soviet relations with the

of a Missile Crisis: October 1962 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) p.60.

⁸ J. Lévesque *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution: Soviet Ideological and Strategic Perspectives, 1959-1977* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978) p.87.

⁹ Soviet support for Cuba served internal and external needs particularly if Khrushchev's 'sabre rattling' appeared to deter US aggression against Cuba. See H. Dinerstein (1976) p.90.

¹⁰ For extended discussion of this, see K. S. Karol *Guerrillas in Power: The Course of the Cuban Revolution* (London:

Cuban revolution were only about Soviet domestic politics. As later developments would highlight, the revolution also offered the genuine possibility of augmenting Soviet international power at American expense.

The form of political rule problematised the internal stability of the regime due to the fact that particular forms of 'political' problems, and social-material ones were highly political in the Soviet Union, were directly related to the form of political rule. The form of Soviet politics meant that international relations provided an opportunity¹¹ to secure domestic political benefits, and Cuba in this respect helped secure a political victory for the leading elements within the Party-state. However, because of the reductive nature of the scope of internal political debate, because there was no separation of spheres, politics equalled society and the economy, not only the state, then the potential for resolving particular internal problems *within* the existing form of politics was highly problematic, where the international provided a 'window of opportunity' for their resolution. This goes to the heart of the contradiction of the Soviet Union and its international relations. Because of the internal necessity to increase the level of productive forces, and because of the structural contradictions of the social relations of production within the USSR, international relations were identified as an important source in facilitating internal development. The exhaustion and limitations of the autarchic Stalinist model despite the political advances after 1945 were apparent by the early 1960s with the failure of Khrushchev's economic reforms. The key for the Soviet Union lay in maximising the possibility for a channelling of internal resources away from military expenditure and into the civilian production. Accompanying this was the goal of pursuing an international policy that allowed this, but at the same time reduced American power, and thus hostility. Peaceful coexistence, a policy that originated with Lenin after the failure of the German-European revolution sought to ensure links with the advanced capitalist states, particularly in terms of advanced technology and other economic goods to bolster the development of Soviet productive forces, whilst also giving support to attempts to undermine American influence.

Jonathan Cape, 1971) p.204-7.

¹¹ The international provided both opportunities and dangers to the internal maintenance of the Party-state form of political rule. Because of the limited nature of Soviet politics due to the political domination of the Party-state dictatorship, the internal was determined more by international events, because of the lack of an alternative autonomous politics, internally. The international came to provide an arena with which to influence internal Party-state developments. The cases of Tito and China were important, as well the developments in East-Central Europe in 1956, 1968, and 1981-2.

It was expected that Soviet support for Cuba would weaken American power in Latin America, and facilitate through Cuba constructive links with Latin America, either through the export of revolution and/or formal links with the states and economies of the region in mutually beneficial trading and political relationships that would lessen Latin American dependence on the USA. The problem for the Soviets was the inability to control the activities of the Cuban revolutionaries who sought to champion their model and export armed struggle as revolution throughout the region. This not only questioned the Soviet revolution as an international model, but also threatened to provoke a like-minded American military response, and because of Soviet links with Cuba, involve the Soviet Union. This was something that the Soviets, through a mixture of threats and inducements, wanted to avoid at all costs.

The Soviet Union, then, committed itself to Cuba in order to not only offer some protection for Cuba¹² but also to ensure that once a Soviet commitment had been made, it would have a direct means of guiding developments within Cuba and maximising the successes of undermining American power, thus contributing to the global balance of forces against American imperialism.¹³ Unfortunately for the Soviet Union it was not able to limit the autonomous nature of the revolution. This was highlighted by the way 'Castroite' ideology and revolutionary movements, like the Chinese in Asia, began to challenge the orthodox pro-Soviet communist left in Latin America. Despite Soviet encouragement of local communist parties to support the Cuban revolution before any other political consideration in the summer of 1960,¹⁴ it soon became apparent that because of the nature of the Cuban revolution, the traditional 'revolutionary' left in the region would be pressured and criticised by the 'Castroites' to change their policy in accordance with the successes of the M-26-7.

The local communist parties were, apart from direct Soviet influence, the

¹² This is worth stating despite the humiliation for both the Cubans and the Soviets with the resolution of the Cuban missile crisis in late 1962. Although one should avoid over-speculation, the American military threat to Cuba was real, and although there is no evidence that the Soviet political-military commitment to Cuba prevented the US from a military intervention, it did provide a number of military and economic supports, that otherwise the Cuban's would not have found, thus, making Cuba much more susceptible to forms of American intervention, and not only military. Soviet support, though it increasingly came to limit the possibilities for a truly independent Cuban path of development, did allow local experiments and political stability that ensured radical and egalitarian social transformation.

¹³ See P. Shearman *The Soviet Union and Cuba* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs/Routledge Kegan Paul, 1987).

¹⁴ J. Lévesque (1978) p.23.

only means to influence Cuban policy. Thus, the Soviets wanted to facilitate an incorporation of the Cuban revolution into a broader communist led Latin American strategy. The Cuban Communist Party was obviously integral to this, and prior to the formal merging of the M-26-7 with the CCP in October 1965¹⁵ was not only a source of information for the Soviets on Cuba, but also a possible vehicle with which to limit the leadership autonomy of Castro by institutionalising the revolution according to a form of the Soviet model.¹⁶ While Castro maintained individual leadership and autonomy in decision-making it was very difficult to provide an internal institutional limit to his policy. Castro was aware of this, and was keen to preserve his autonomy even after the merger with the CCP. He was also wary to prevent possible institutional limitations on his autonomy. Although there is no clear evidence that the Soviet(s) encouraged the 'dissident' Anibal Escalante in the early 1960s, they would have benefited had Escalante's attempts to increase Communist Party influence over Castro proved successful.¹⁷

Soviet attempts to institutionalise the revolution from both within Cuba and without did not, at least initially, prove successful.¹⁸ Moreover, they exposed the limitations of Soviet policy. And because Castro was not only aware of Soviet objectives, and also because he had his own ideas about international revolution, fissures emerged. Castro and Cuba obviously needed Soviet military and economic support, but to avoid a dependence that would bring an end to Cuban autonomy (particularly pertinent for Castro during and after the missile crisis), Castro identified the necessity of cultivating autonomous non-communist party revolutionary movements that would look to Havana and not Moscow for guidance and support. The appearance of a difference both in strategy and organisational form simmered in Soviet-Cuban relations, highlighted by the

¹⁵ *Ibid* p.108-9.

¹⁶ For an analysis that treats Cuba as essentially a Soviet type of 'state capitalism' see M. Gonzalez & P. Binns 'Cuba, Castro and Socialism,' in *International Socialism* no.8 Spring 1980, and for a critical response to this see R. Blackburn 'Class Forces in the Cuban Revolution: A Reply to Peter Binns and Mike Gonzalez,' in *International Socialism* no.9 Summer 1980.

¹⁷ See Y. Pavlov *Soviet-Cuban Alliance: 1959-1991* (Miami: North-South Center Press, 1994) p.84-89.

¹⁸ Soviet policy, however, persisted in its aim to ensure the 'institutionalisation of the Cuban revolution' not only to secure it from overthrow as occurred in Algeria, Ghana and Egypt, which led to a consequent expelling of Soviet influence, but also to facilitate the political and institutional incorporation of Cuba into the Soviet bloc. There is no coincidence in this respect that Cuban membership of the CMEA in 1972 was soon followed by further changes in the institutional set of Cuban politics manifested in the 1975 (1st) Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. As Lévesque (1978) p.186 states: 'The fact that the Soviet Union attached so much importance to the congress is a good illustration of the fetishism concerning political structures. Despite its greater flexibility on the issues of the transition to socialism and the strategy of the revolutionary movement, the Soviet Union still wanted to consider itself the most advanced model, if not the only possible model of socialist society.' This can only be emphasised with the contemporaneous attacks on the Soviet model

inconsistencies within the compromise statement (the Second Declaration of Havana) on armed struggle in the Latin American revolution at the December 1964 Havana Conference of communist parties. It came to the surface, outright, later in the January 1966 Tri-continental Conference of communist parties in Havana, but was most manifest in the meeting of the Latin American Solidarity Organisation (LASO) in August 1967. This meeting was dominated by non-communist¹⁹ revolutionary organisations, that had a separate Cuban led organisation (LASO) and which was very critical of the Soviet position on armed struggle, and also Soviet links with national-bourgeois regimes in the region.²⁰

In helping to secure Cuba the Soviets had also exposed themselves to a contradiction in their international relations that was of their own making. In many respects the contradictions in Soviet policy towards Cuba within the context of the Cold War were a consequence of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Soviet failure to fully realise all their objectives in placing missiles in Cuba.²¹ The missile crisis occurred through the Soviet decision to place nuclear missiles on Cuba.²² Khrushchev's decision has to be seen from the wider perspective of international relations, rather than purely Soviet-Cuban relations. The wider international picture mainly focused on Soviet policy towards the Third World that rested on the encouragement of non-capitalist paths of development that did not necessarily have to be led by communist parties. The Soviet Union saw the potential for a progressive politics in many newly independent states, and it was the duty of communists to support these developments as they suggested an undermining of American and imperialist power. This policy was encapsulated within Khrushchev's interpretation of Peaceful Coexistence, which determined that the struggle between the 'two systems,' led by the USSR and the USA, would not be resolved by war, as Lenin had suggested, but through economic competition and the wider global struggle between the two systems. Facilitating economic and political links with non-communist states that were inclined to national development, and who identified with anti-imperialism, for example

from Eurocommunism in Western Europe.

¹⁹ And also not necessarily pro-Moscow groups.

²⁰ J. Lévesque (1978) p.130.

²¹ For an excellent analysis of the 'Cuban Missile crisis' focusing on the Cuban perspective, see P. Brenner 'Cuba and the Missile Crisis,' in *The Journal of Latin American Studies* Volume 22 February 1990 p.115-42.

²² However, Castro was far from being inactive. Particularly after the 'Bay of Pigs' invasion of April 1961 he was very concerned at further American intervention and pleaded for Soviet assistance. See *ibid*.

through membership of the Non-Aligned Movement would serve to undermine international capitalist power.

Alongside this opening to the Third World and the confident belief that the Soviet Union could either manipulate developments or benefit from them, was the relationship with the United States, which after 1959 came to be channelled through Cuba. Not only was the Soviet Union seeking to undermine American power through its relations with the Third World, particularly by economic and military aid,²³ but it was also more directly using this, and the successes encapsulated in 'Sputnik,' to push the US at the strategic level to concede to Soviet strategic parity, and through this to realise limited political objectives.²⁴ However, the successes in these attempts to project, internationally, Soviet power were not realised as anticipated. The American's did not concede to Soviet demands over Berlin, and to add insult to injury they showed their contempt for Soviet assumptions by jeopardising the 'détente' which was to be cemented by the Paris 'superpower' summit in 1960 between Eisenhower and Khrushchev by continuing U2 surveillance flights over Soviet air space.²⁵

This was the international context of Soviet policy decisions that led to the placing of nuclear missiles in the Caribbean. The importance of Cuba within this broader picture related to both of the issues mentioned: one, Soviet policy toward the Third World; and two, Soviet attempts to secure concessions from the USA through achieving US recognition of Soviet strategic parity. However, what also concerned the USSR was the problem of securing Cuba within the Soviet bloc, but not at the cost of a military confrontation with the USA. Soviet policy had always maintained a careful balance to limit external military commitments.²⁶ Military and economic aid to the Third World did not undermine this. Rather, the logic suggested that Soviet support for these states would increase their autonomy from the West, whilst offering opportunities for Soviet influence. Aid did not mean a military guarantee. Instead it was used to loosen the 'imperialist chain' making it harder for the US to coerce these states.

²³ 'Between 1955-60 Moscow provided military aid to a total of 11 countries, while 6 countries (Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria) received over 90% of Soviet economic aid commitments between 1954-60' See W. Duncan *The Soviet Union and Cuba: Interests and Influence* (New York: Praeger, 1985) p.28; see also W. Duncan (ed.) *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries* (Waltham, Mass: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970).

²⁴ Most notably these included a resolution of the problem of the status of Berlin, and an armaments agreement that would allow the USSR to reduce its overall military capacity. See N. Miller (1989) p.58-9.

²⁵ The shooting down of one such flight in October 1960 was enough to ensure the collapse of the Paris summit.

²⁶ Indeed, initial Soviet military support for Cuba did not come directly from the USSR, but via Czechoslovakia. See Y.

Cuba was different because the revolution's 'socialist turn,'²⁷ not only in the rhetoric of Castro in his describing the revolution as 'socialist' in April 1961 and then himself a Marxist-Leninist in December 1961, was also, more importantly, exemplified by the massive and unprecedented (in Latin America) expropriations of American capital after 1960, that provided an opportunity for explicit and direct Soviet involvement. Initial Soviet responses to this were lukewarm and inconsistent with different official publications in Moscow describing Cuba as 'national democratic,' 'revolutionary democratic,' and 'socialist.' In fact it was not until April 1962 that the Soviet Union finally began to recognise, consistently, that Cuba was socialist.²⁸ The Soviet hesitation derived from the problematic character of the revolution and the risk that an undertaking of support and direct involvement would pose for both Cuba and itself.²⁹

Castro recognised the American threat and was aware by 1960, if not before, that Cuba's confrontation with the USA necessitated international (great power) support.³⁰ This is not to suggest that Castro's turn toward the Soviet Union was an act of pure opportunism, but rather that Castro was keen to maximise the possibility of Soviet support, particularly a security guarantee. For the Soviets, however, a military guarantee was highly problematic because there was little practical possibility of this being realised in a place in a different hemisphere and less than a 100 miles away from the USA. Yet, Soviet military involvement would help secure the revolution at the risk of provoking an American response, but would also provide the *political* means with which to incorporate Cuba into the Soviet bloc and its *discipline*.

Because of this, the Soviet Union decided to accomplish a *de facto* incorporation of Cuba into the Soviet bloc by placing nuclear missiles there that would not only secure the revolution from external attack (if it did not do this, it surely would have made the revolution highly insecure and target of a US attack),

Pavlov (1994) p.9.

²⁷ Castro's radical shift to the left cannot be understood from purely domestic developments in Cuba after 1959. His radical turn reflected internal developments, but more importantly the international conjuncture of American counter-revolutionary hostility and the necessity of securing Soviet support.

²⁸ These debates in CPSU journals reflected the ongoing debates over Soviet policy towards the Third World and the polemics with China. It was only after some months of debate and caution that the USSR finally decided to act. See J. Lévesque (1978) p.30 and Y. Pavlov (1994) p.23.

²⁹ The Soviet's initially downplayed the 'socialist' nature of the revolution in official announcements. See Y. Pavlov (1994) p. 11.

³⁰ The Cubans were very concerned about American hostility and the possibility of a military attack, based on US diplomatic initiatives at the OAS (particularly after Cuba's January 1962 expulsion from the organisation), the tightening of the economic embargo, pressures and calls for an invasion from members of Congress and assessments of the American press. See P. Brenner (1990) p.117-121.

but would also create a political relationship where it was expected the Soviet Union would be predominant. There was also the real possibility that this would serve to directly effect the USA-USSR strategic equation to the benefit of the latter, making it more likely that the US would temper its international hostility not only towards the USSR, but also many Third World states, and move towards an acceptance of Soviet power. In a stroke, then, the successful deployment of missiles was expected to achieve the consolidation of the Soviet bloc through the incorporation of a successful revolution, and also a more direct consequence, the levelling of Soviet strategic power with that of the USA. As Jacques Lévesque remarked:

‘Thus, it was rather to terminate the permanent state of uncertainty and insecurity surrounding Cuba and eventually to consolidate its membership in the socialist camp that a stable means of defence seemed to be imperative.... Khrushchev attempted to achieve a *fait accompli* over nuclear missiles in Cuba... once there and ready there was little the US could do.’³¹

Nuclear missiles, then, became the means for the Soviet Union to formally expand the socialist camp. Although the Soviet Union at this moment and subsequently, provided massive economic aid to Cuba, culminating in the incorporation of Cuba into the socialist economic bloc, the CMEA in July 1972, because of the nature of the situation, this was the only means (military) to secure Cuba from external attack, but also lock it into the discipline of the Soviet bloc. It was the partial failure of this policy due to the forthright American response and the brinkmanship of the United States that, for the Soviet Union meant, the worst of both worlds. Although Khrushchev had secured a form of commitment on the part of the United States not to invade Cuba, because he had failed to fully secure Cuba, politically, within the Soviet bloc *à la* the ‘states’ of East-Central Europe, Soviet political problems with Cuba persisted.

The removal of the missiles, then, also saw the removal of a significant Soviet political presence, and thus allowed an increasing space for Castro’s autonomy. Despite the massive amounts of Soviet economic and military aid to Cuba after the missile crisis,³² because of the Soviet commitment that had secured Cuba from US attack Cuba was able to pioneer an autonomous politics in the

³¹ (1978) p.40. See also Y. Pavlov (1994) p.33.

³² According to Blasier’s calculations, Soviet economic aid to Cuba between 1961-79 amounted to approximately US\$16.7 billion; and military aid in the same period, US\$3.8 billion. In addition to this Cuban debt to the USSR between 1961-79 amounted to US\$5.7 billion. See C. Blasier (1983) p.100; Duncan’s figures state that Soviet aid to Cuba by 1982

region for the rest of the 1960s that clashed and sometimes-undermined Soviet positions. Soviet policy in the limited success of October-November 1962 had put itself in a position where it was financing and arming a revolution that in many respects sought to undermine its (the USSR's) perceived interests, particularly in Latin America.

The Soviet Union after the missile crisis sought to anchor Cuba within the orthodox Latin American 'revolutionary' left. However, because of Castro's humiliation (ie. the perception that the Soviet's) had sacrificed Cuba to appease the Americans, thus leaving her vulnerable, without a formal-public Soviet military guarantee akin to the Warsaw Treaty Organisation)³³ Cuba insisted on following its own path towards international revolution. Soviet policy was reduced to externally assisting Cuba, economically and militarily, but without the forms of direct political influence that a Soviet presence would have ensured. Soviet aid and influence through local communist parties was used to influence Cuba, but because of Castro's autonomy, at least through most of the 1960s, Soviet policy was limited.

Soviet policy towards the Latin American revolution most acutely exposed the contradictions of its policy towards Cuba. This was conditioned by Soviet concerns to avoid a confrontation like the one in late 1962, or at least, if one were to occur again it would be when the USSR was militarily prepared for it. This being the case the USSR sought to reduce international tension and concentrate on cultivating formal links with which to secure for itself economic and political benefits and weaken the 'imperialist chain.' Such a policy was even less consistent than that of its support for Cuba. As had been the case with its other formal ventures with *capitalist* states, because of its form of political rule, the Soviet Union was very limited in developing *political* relations with the non-communist states of Latin America. Such a policy also necessitated a moderation or even sidelining of local communist parties. Indeed, Soviet overtures rested on a trading deficit where it ended up importing more than it exported from Latin

was running at approximately US\$11 million a day. See W. Duncan (1985) p.1.

³³ This was consistent with previous Soviet policy. As Pavlov (1994) p.59 makes clear the lack of a clear and unambiguous public Soviet commitment to Cuba was reflective of a wider Soviet hesitancy to commit itself: 'From 1971 to 1984, the USSR signed treaties or agreements of friendship with twelve 'progressive' regimes in Asia and Africa... All the documents had one common feature: they did not contain any obligation on the part of the USSR to come to the rescue of these regimes in case of aggression.'

American states.³⁴ Moreover, developments like the 1969 Andean Pact and the more substantial period of anti-imperialist politics in Chile between 1970-73 did not lead to any significant and long-term increase in Soviet power in the region. With the military overthrow of the Allende government in September 1973, it was not until the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979 that the left secured a substantial change in the balance of forces in favour of the USSR.

Soviet relations with Cuba, then, reflected the tensions of a form of political rule that was premised on a specific kind of social and material development, which fostered a specific form of international relations. Such relations were characterised by the necessity to ensure internal defence (of the revolution and its political-form outcome), and an external policy that facilitated internal economic growth, which secured the political form of rule. Cuba provided a case where the expectation of a kind of military and economic dependence of Cuba on the USSR, would allow the Soviet Union to maximise the political gains from the undermining of American imperialism in Latin America, and increase the international power of the USSR, thus assisting its internal development. The outcome instead reflected a relationship of tensions, whereby Soviet policy of using the revolution as a base for Soviet penetration of the region for its own internal goals was contested by the separate goals of Cuba. As long as the revolutionary conjuncture in the region provided an opportunity for guerrilla struggle Cuba would continue to maximise its international autonomy. When this had dissipated (by the late 1960s, but rekindled again in the late 1970s), Cuban and Soviet interests became more compatible.

The Soviet form of international relations, then, rested on a limited capacity to either direct Cuba, or influence the wider Latin American scene. Because of its limited political form confined to the economic and military instruments of the form of political rule the Soviet Union could not detach itself from Cuba and have a fully autonomous relationship with Latin America. Because revolutions were the only means for the Soviet social and political form to expand (beyond a direct Soviet military-political presence), the Soviet Union was limited to not allowing Cuba to detach itself from the Soviet bloc, and

³⁴ W. Duncan (1985) p.93-4 gives the figure of a US\$1.5 billion deficit in Soviet trade with Latin America during the early 1970s. By 1981 the USSR exported goods worth US\$178 million to the region and imported goods valuing about US\$2.5 billion.. C. Blasier (1983) p.54-5; and N. Miller (1989) p.15-18.

barring direct political control this could only be achieved through economic and military inducements, and encouragement for a Soviet-style institutionalisation of the revolution. The failure of the Soviet Union to 'expand' (ie. for capitalist social relations to be overthrown and a revolutionary dictatorship led by a communist party) in its relations with other Latin American states reflected the limitations of the Soviet form of international relations to offer a 'politics of expansion.'

3. Vietnam

Soviet relations with Vietnam brought to the surface many of the issues and problems identified with respect to Cuba, but because of the nature of the Vietnamese revolution were also different.³⁵ The principal conditioning factors were the role of China and the American military intervention in South Vietnam after 1960, which became a full-scale military involvement after 1965. As in the Cuban case Soviet involvement in the origins of the Vietnamese revolution were distant if at all.³⁶ The Soviet Union under Stalin premised its international relations on autarchic development and the prevention of military conquest from the West. Despite the ideological links of Comintern, the Vietnamese, because of their geographical and political distance, and the strategic preoccupations of the USSR, were able to manage a relatively autonomous strategy in Indochina up until World War Two.³⁷ The seizure of power in August 1945, and subsequent war with the French did not see any significant Soviet involvement.³⁸ It was not until the Geneva Accords of 1954 and subsequent developments that the Soviet Union would become directly involved in the conflict and Vietnamese revolution.

What then were the principal concerns of the Soviet Union towards Vietnam? The most important concern was to limit and prevent the escalation of American military involvement in South-East Asia generally, and particularly in Indochina. As I have already suggested in general terms, and with respect to the Soviet involvement with Cuba, with the successful expansion of a revolutionary anti-imperialist area, the Soviet Union's main concern was to consolidate it and

³⁵ For a succinct analysis of the history of Vietnamese communism see P. Rousset 'The Peculiarities of Vietnamese Communism,' in T. Ali (ed.) *The Stalinist Legacy: Its Impact on Twentieth Century World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1984).

³⁶ For analysis of the Vietnamese revolution see W. Duiker *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam* Second Edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996); and G. Kolko *Vietnam: Anatomy of a War, 1940-1975* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

³⁷ See A. Cameron 'The Soviet Union and Vietnam: The Origins of Involvement,' in W. Duncan (ed.) *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries* (Waltham, Mass: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970) p.170.

³⁸ The main external influence came from China. The revolution of 1949 and the removal of Kuomintang forces from the

prevent its collapse. This was not all, but it provided the bottom line with which to judge Soviet objectives. The fact that the revolution was led by a communist party, despite the lack of Soviet involvement, did make organisational links between the two states easier to facilitate than with Cuba.

Soviet involvement with Vietnam increased as a consequence of the nature of the Vietnamese revolution. Its emergence within the conjuncture of the end of the Second World War, weakened French international power, and the emergence of US-Soviet political-military hostility conditioned the ability of local revolutionaries to control their own destiny and indeed, that of Indochina. The postwar conjuncture provided the short-lived power vacuum that allowed for the August 1945 seizure of power, and the consequence of developments in China, alongside French political weakness facilitated the successful consolidation of the revolution in the north, what became the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). However, this same conjuncture, particularly as it manifested itself in American attempts to construct a postwar international order, also reduced the ability of the Vietnamese communists to direct their revolution independently.

The Geneva Agreement of 1954 threw light on the local situation of the Vietnamese. Although they were militarily preponderant, especially after the French debacle at Dien Bein Phu, it was far from clear whether they would have been able to consolidate and build a feasible state in Indochina, even after a French military withdrawal. This was compounded by threats of more direct US intervention.³⁹ However, this is not to suggest that the Vietnamese communists did not have the capacity to fight, but with the real threat of more American support for the French, extending to the possibility of direct US involvement, there was no way that they could have continued the struggle, let alone build a new state without Soviet assistance.⁴⁰ Thus, from the outset the Vietnamese revolution was part of the international conjuncture of the Cold War, and this being the case, the

Indochina-China border, alongside significant military aid was to be a major influence on the struggle against the French.

³⁹ The US had been supporting the French through economic and military aid for some years. The level of their commitment to defeating the communist insurgency was registered in the consideration given to the use of 'theatre' nuclear weapons in 1954.

⁴⁰ Fraternal assistance was essential for economic reconstruction in North Vietnam. Aid from China and the USSR was particularly important in this respect. Ken Post's *Revolution, Socialism and Nationalism in Viet Nam Volume One: An Interrupted Revolution* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co. Ltd., 1989a) figures focus on the July 1955 agreement which saw the USSR promise US\$150m and China US\$325m. Post (1994c) p.332 also makes the claim with some justification that aid from the 'socialist camp,' particularly the period 1965-75 in economic and military terms effectively paid for DRV industrialisation. See also D. Papp *The View from Moscow, Peking, Washington* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1981) p.13.

inevitability of US and Soviet involvement was assured. Therefore, both the consolidation of what became the DRV and the process of revolution in the south after 1959 were deeply imbricated with American and Soviet influence.

In many respects Soviet policy towards the Vietnamese revolution was reactive, a consequence of the form and impact of American involvement.⁴¹ And in this respect Soviet policy was again limited by the concerns in the US-Soviet relationship.⁴² Soviet and Chinese pressure at Geneva on the DRV to accept at least a temporary partition reflected their concerns that to not accept this would have made it easier for the Americans to intervene, militarily, in South-East Asia. Both China and the USSR wanted to avoid this. Thus, Soviet policy was concerned to limit the autonomy of the DRV, particularly when it threatened to raise the possibility of American military intervention and pressure for a Soviet counter-response. Despite the agreement between Peking and Moscow at Geneva, with the unravelling of the USSR-China relationship it became easier for the DRV to manoeuvre between the two communist powers.

As with Cuba in Latin America, Soviet policy towards Vietnam and South-East Asia was concerned not only with Vietnam, but how to consolidate the Vietnamese revolution, incorporate it into the Soviet bloc, and use it as a base from which to cultivate wider anti-imperialist relationships in the region. Thus not only reducing American and British power in the area, but also interfering (indirectly) in the principle American regional goal, the postwar development of Japan as a regional power. In this respect Vietnam was to be a potential asset in the region, especially as a counter to Chinese revolutionary designs in the area, and how these differed from Soviet concerns. However, Soviet policy towards Vietnam was caught in the contradiction of wanting to expand Soviet influence in the region, thus diminishing imperialist power, and helping secure concessions from the West by facilitating Vietnamese links with other non-communist and

⁴¹ Thus, there were Western intelligence reports that the USSR dispatched over US\$550m in military aid after the launching of 'Operation Rolling Thunder.' See D. Papp (1981) p.65.

⁴² From 1954 onwards, as highlighted in the Geneva Agreement through to the Paris Agreement of 1973 that effectively ended US military participation in the war, the USSR walked a contradictory and sometimes inconsistent path between supporting the DRV/NLF's national liberation war in South Vietnam, and pressing the DRV leadership to enter into negotiations with the US and offering the US the possibility of a negotiated settlement. Both Papp (1981) and I. Gaiduk *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996) stress the latter over the former, to the point where the Soviet Union sometimes appeared as a reluctant ally, and at other times an obstacle to the DRV cause. This, I would contend is a slight simplification that fails to fully appreciate the limitations of the Soviet form of political rule and its international relations. Although Papp and Gaiduk are correct to highlight the tensions within Soviet policy, by failing to look beyond the immediate relationship between the USSR and the DRV, they fail to appreciate the broader international picture and Soviet international objectives not only in relations with the USA/West, but also in terms of South-East Asia. If these are considered alongside both internal factional disputes within the CPSU and the ongoing Sino-Soviet split, then

non-aligned states in the region (for example Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, and possibly even subverting the pro-Western dictatorship in Thailand and elsewhere), but also becoming involved in a conflict that led to the massive commitment of American military power, that had the effect of seriously undermining the possibilities of extending links with anti-imperialist groups.

Soviet policy, then, was concerned to influence decisions in Hanoi as a way of not only influencing the 'construction of socialism' in the DRV, but also to direct regional policy, by limiting Chinese room for political manoeuvre/autonomy, and by fostering a 'revolutionary' policy that would consolidate 'socialist' gains and prevent a major American military involvement in the region. This it obviously failed to do. Because of the situation within Vietnam (north and south) and the autonomy of the DRV between the USSR and China, after 1959 an insurgency began to develop in the south that was to soon draw in the USA. These events were compounded by other regional developments that rested on Chinese activity in the region that undermined not only Soviet influence, but objectives as well.

The form of Soviet involvement with Vietnam limited the possibilities for a more flexible strategy. Military and economic assistance, which some commentators claim only became significant after 1964,⁴³ was confined to the international relations of the Soviet form of political rule. Thus, the USSR was not able to facilitate either the emergence of separate or alternative currencies within the politics of the DRV, or distance itself, politically, from the regime and its revolutionary strategy. As in the case of Cuba, the Soviet Union became directly associated with the DRV and its objectives, despite not being totally in accordance with them. Soviet influence, then, was limited to the Vietnamese Communist Party. Once the commitment had been made, particularly the military one, it was difficult for Moscow to withdraw. This was even more apparent with Chinese involvement. The potential for Chinese 'political expansion' in Asia was itself enough to have forced a Soviet commitment to the Vietnamese revolution. Had the Chinese been able to successfully marginalise the Soviets, then the Soviet Union's position in Asia and the wider international communist movement would

Soviet policy appears less inconsistent and, though at times contradictory, logical.

⁴³ I. Gaiduk (1996) p.5. Daniel Papp (1981) p.16 cites Bernard Fall and claims that Soviet aid to the DRV between 1955-61 amounted to only US\$365m.

have been severely weakened. However, mainly because of the form and substance of the American commitment to the Republic of Vietnam (RV), Soviet support became essential for the DRV. Without that support, the costs, and thus possible success of the 'war of liberation' would have been much higher and less likely.

This was certainly the case in the latter stages of the revolution, particularly when one considers the form of the revolution's conclusion in April 1975. The *coup de grâce* to the Southern regime came through the armed forces of the DRV, and not a National Liberation Front (NLF) led uprising. The DRV military had been equipped by the USSR, and it was the military defeat of the RV that concluded the revolution. This was an outcome of the destruction of the social and material infrastructure of the NLF in the countryside, which was brought about through the devastating impact of American military power. With the increased militarisation of the revolution, as highlighted with the 1968 'Tet offensive,' the military costs of securing an American departure could only be sustained by external support, because the local human and material resources in South Vietnam had been exhausted during and after 1968.⁴⁴

Soviet relations with Vietnam, beyond the regular briefings and international communist party meetings, were mediated through economic and military aid. Along with Chinese aid, this came to play an increasingly significant role in the Vietnamese revolution,⁴⁵ particularly as the application of American military power increased after 1965. Indeed, it was only during this period that one could consider Soviet aid to be significant to the DRV.⁴⁶ The amount of aid was calculated according to the situation on the ground, particularly in relation to the type of military power used by the Americans. Although the Soviets were generous they did not go so far to provide the DRV with any sort of military or nuclear guarantee, and they remained detached from any obvious direct

⁴⁴ See G. Porter *Vietnam: The Politics of Bureaucratic Socialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) p. 20-21.

⁴⁵ K. Post *Revolution, Socialism and Nationalism in Viet Nam Volume Three: Socialism in Half a Country* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co., Ltd., 1989c) p.160 claims that 'socialist accumulation' in the DRV was deeply influenced by external aid from socialist allies. He calculates this to have accounted for over 45% of investment in industrial development between 1961-64.

⁴⁶ For example, Gaiduk (1996) p.40-58 citing US intelligence sources states that in May 1965 (after the commencement of 'Operation Rolling Thunder') the Soviet(s) delivered 100 armoured personnel carriers (essential for mobile offensive warfare) and 15 MiG 15/17s. Gaiduk also claims, this time drawing on Soviet sources that overall Soviet aid to the DRV/Vietnamese revolution steadily grew between 1965 and 1968 (the most intense period of US military power in Indochina): 'Moscow sent to North Vietnam industrial and telecommunications equipment.. trucks, medical supplies, machine tools, iron ore, and non-ferrous metals (for war production)... By 1967 overall socialist aid to the DRV accounted for approximately 1.5 billion Roubles... Moscow's share was 36.8%... as the years passed Soviet assistance grew to over 50%, and in 1968 accounted for 524 million Roubles.'

participation. This is not to suggest that Soviet aid was not important, at times determining. It certainly was. Without Soviet aid (not only military), the ability of the DRV to endure and then go on the offensive against the world's most advanced war machine would have been severely curtailed, possibly making the military factor all the more telling. The application of purely 'Maoist' tactics in many respects would have been futile. Indeed, by the late 1960s, especially after the 'Tet Offensive,' the political-military infrastructure of the NLF had been virtually wiped out, which led to an increasing role for the DRV's People's Liberation Army (PLA). Thus, Soviet military technology helped limit the military damage caused by American firepower, and ultimately provided much of the logistical and organisational support that facilitated the rout of the RV's army after the American military withdrawal.

However, the application of Soviet military and economic aid was not purely an act of altruism. As in the Cuban case, there is good cause to see Soviet military aid as a means with which to determine political-military developments 'on the ground.' Soviet military support, particularly its strategic nuclear counterweight to American military power was a real source of externally imposed limitation on American war strategy. But this also provided a major source of friction in the 'socialist camp,' particularly in relations with the Chinese. As Ralph Smith has argued, the role of military power in the socialist revolution and the struggle against imperialism was a major theme in the ideological disputes that surfaced in Sino-Soviet relations after 1956 that had a direct bearing on Soviet relations with the DRV. The role of military power, particularly nuclear weapons, was a source of Soviet political advantage and dominance in its relations with China. For China, nuclear weapons were a potential means to ensure political autonomy to underline its ideological, social and economic autonomy emphasised by the 'Great Leap Forward,' from both the USSR and the USA. Nuclear weapons, then, because of their political potential were a major source of friction between the USSR and China that reflected the limited form of politics and political friction and conflict between these forms of state that ultimately descended into outright conflict by the late 1960s. One of the central issues was that of military co-operation between socialist countries 'in an age of increasing complex technology and continuing confrontation with the

West.⁴⁷This issue provided both a major source of conflict between the triad of the USSR, China, and the DRV, but also, for the Soviets, the principal political means with which to determine events in Vietnam. However, [^]the tension that existed between the Soviet Union increasing its military involvement in the war, and from this, extending its political control, and how this might provoke the United States into a more offensive strategy.⁴⁸ Again as Smith suggests:

‘From an ideological point of view, however, there was a certain danger in extending the sphere of military collaboration beyond the group of countries that could be held together ideologically... Russians may have been afraid of a situation where Yugoslavia and China might collaborate with one another independently of the *discipline* of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, and that may explain Soviet willingness to enter into a technical argument with Peking in October 1957...one of whose provisions was to provide the Chinese with nuclear weapons technology.’⁴⁹

Soviet political-military guarantees, as with Cuba, only came with direct Soviet military control of the means of that guarantee and thus a severe limitation on the political autonomy of whatever country concerned, China or Vietnam. Indeed, an increase in Soviet involvement in the Vietnam war would have come at the cost of direct Soviet interference in Chinese internal affairs,⁵⁰ something that the majority of the CCP leadership would not tolerate. Equally, the DRV was concerned to maintain its autonomy *vis-à-vis* China and the USSR, knowing full well that Chinese offers of more extended military assistance would have come at a political cost.⁵¹The Soviets, then, sought to use military power to not only assist the DRV/NLF against American military attack, but also to secure political concessions with which to help determine policy in Vietnam. However, even this

⁴⁷ R. Smith *An International History of the Vietnam War Volume One: Revolutions Versus Containment, 1955-1961* (London: Macmillan, 1983) p.124.

⁴⁸ This was not the only consideration for the USSR. As Antoni Carlo has argued (though in a rather too determinist fashion), wider Soviet international relations, were premised, to a large degree on the Soviets being able to secure material concessions/aid from the West with which to help sustain economic growth within the Soviet Union. This for Carlo was consistent in Soviet foreign policy since the mid-to-late 1950s: ‘In the Khrushchev era the interests of the economic structure obviously asserted themselves in foreign policy, and limited the negotiating room of Soviet delegations. The demands of the economy, which once again raised the question of expanding trade with the West, formed a constant. The margin of tactical elasticity which had previously existed (under Lenin-Stalin)..was drastically curtailed..’ ‘Structural Causes of Soviet Coexistence Policy,’ in E. Jahn (ed.) *Soviet Foreign Policy: Its Social and Economic Conditions* (London: Allen & Busby, 1978) p.66.

⁴⁹ (1983) p.125 (emphasis added).

⁵⁰ Soviet military proposals of April 1965 suggested as much. See R. Smith *An International History of the Vietnam War Volume Three: The Making of a Limited War* (London: Macmillan, 1990) p.90. See also K. Post *Revolution, Socialism and Nationalism in Viet Nam Volume Five: Winning the War and Losing the Peace* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co., Ltd., 1994b) p.12.

⁵¹ See K. Post (1994b) p.332-4. The problem of external but fraternal interference in the internal politics of Vietnam was to be mirrored in the political relations between the Vietnam and the wider Indochinese revolution, notably the tensions that emerged between Vietnam, and Cambodia and Laos after the 1975 seizure of power. While Vietnam was concerned to limit the ‘Asian Revolution’ of the CCP, Vietnam, itself, was not so careful to limit its direct political involvement in

aspect of Soviet relations was not free from tensions. To have involved itself more directly in the revolutionary war would have potentially exposed the Soviets to direct military conflict with the USA, something which, post-Cuban missile crisis, they were very concerned to avoid. Thus, the policy that was settled on was to ensure that the DRV could withstand American military power and remain autonomous from Chinese political influence.

In pursuing such a path the Soviet Union maintained some influence on the DRV, and ensured, in the long-term, the support of an ally in the region with which to counter China, and act as a means to facilitate alternative international relations from the American dominated SEATO.⁵² This was not all. In terms of the conflict with the United States, and the realisation of the successful 'war of liberation' with the collapse of the RV in 1975, Soviet aid, because it was limited to a particular form helped maintain and consolidate the DRV form of political rule, as a more autonomous political form, which the RV was manifestly not, and because of this when the form of American support changed, it collapsed.

Soviet international relations with the Vietnamese revolution, then, helped realise a successful war of national liberation and contributed to the biggest military-political defeat for the US during the Cold War. This was at a relatively, and comparatively small cost.⁵³ Soviet military involvement ensured that the DRV could maintain the strategic and political offensive despite being heavily bombed, and also limited, ultimately, (alongside the Chinese conventional military threat) the possibility of a US political victory through military power. Soviet militarisation at the strategic and conventional level served to undermine American military omnipotence post-Cuban missile crisis. The ability of the

the Indochinese revolution to Vietnam.

⁵² As Ralph Smith *An International History of the Vietnam War Volume Two: The Struggle for South-East Asia, 1961-1965* (London: Macmillan, 1985) p.354 notes Soviet strategy differed from China in the sense that Vietnam was identified as being worthy of political-military support, even if it meant jeopardising Soviet-US détente, because, like Cuba it was viable as a 'socialist' state and a revolution that could provide the basis of a regional alternative to American power and local allies through direct Soviet international relations with a number of either non-communist or non-aligned states in the region. This followed the main features of the Soviet policy of Peaceful Coexistence in that it limited Soviet policy to supporting a revolution rather than revolution *per se*, when in many instances (like in Latin America) at that particular conjuncture social revolution was not a viable political option for the whole region. This was particularly the case for Indonesia (which the Soviets and Chinese were in accordance, despite Peking's rhetoric). Because of the nature of the United Front and Sukarno's sympathy for the PKI, there existed the possibility of engineering a 'progressive' politics in the economically, politically, and strategically important Indonesia without a social revolution that would have led to a massive reduction of US power in the region. This was the wider Soviet goal, which, partly because of Soviet strategy (but more particularly Chinese, because of the PKI-Sukarno's closer links with Peking) collapsed in 1965 with a military coup and decimation of the PKI. Thus, Soviet policy of failing to encourage full class mobilisations based on autonomous sources of power, and failed to overcome the Marxist-Leninist straight-jacket imbued within the Soviet Union over the ability of the CPSU to speak for and lead the international revolution.

⁵³ D. Papp (1981) p.207 suggests the figures of approximately US\$1 billion cost per year for Soviet involvement and as high as US\$30 billion per year for the USA.

USSR to manage to maintain a strategic influence in Vietnam, which in the long-run helped ensure a US military defeat, appeared to reflect that the US, for a number of reasons had finally recognised the strategic-military weight of the USSR, and acted accordingly. Victory in Vietnam served to undermine American and Chinese power in South-East Asia. It also seemed to reinforce the Soviet form of an international relations of expansion whereby the Soviet Union would consolidate and expand internationally through the successful transformation of social relations through social revolution, premised on Soviet strategic and political protection. The international vanguard of the USSR had appeared to have been realised in the successful conclusion of the Vietnamese revolution.

However, because of the nature and form of the 'extra-territorial expansion' of the Soviet Union, which resulted in, like Cuba, Vietnam joining the CMEA and then signing a defence agreement with the USSR,⁵⁴ although the Soviet Union led this 'bloc' and subjected it to its political discipline, the internal strains on the USSR proved to be very costly. The Soviet Union was concerned to prevent Vietnam from being too autonomous, because that would prevent the USSR from securing the maximum amount of political-strategic advantage from the United States. However, the political-economic costs of maintaining such a disciplined system that rested on directly political links meant that the USSR had extended itself as a form of political rule. This served to exacerbate the existing economic tensions within the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc mainly over the course of economic reform (and how this related to links with the West), which was problematised by the political edifice that the USSR had constructed in the Cold War. Political equated to economic links, and thus economic reform when it came (under Gorbachev) saw the eventual severing of the political and thus economic link. The Soviet Union's internal ability to resolve its economic problems was recognised as being compounded by its international relations. The successes of the past highlighted the limitations and the burdens of the present.

4. Conclusions

This chapter has sought to provide an historically-focused sketch of the international relations of the USSR in its relations with the Cuban and

⁵⁴ But without a formal public declaration of this being a military alliance. The Soviets did not intervene in support of the DRV in the late 1970s in the Sino-Vietnamese war.

Vietnamese revolutions. In doing so, the principal objective has been to show how the Soviet Union sought to influence and determine political outcomes in these revolutions. The source of this influence in the international relations of the USSR lay in the social constitution of its form of political rule. The preceding analysis has shown how the internal social constitution of the USSR conditioned its international relations.

The abolition of the sphere of privatised production (and politics) in the USSR limited international relations to the political form, and the 'politics of expansion' to specific forms of political agency: either the Red Army or social revolution. Because of this form of international expansion the Soviet Union was *dependent* on social revolution for a *means* of political expansion, but also threatened by it. The threat derived from the potential impact international social revolution had on the internal social relations and form of political rule in the USSR, and also how social revolution, and the relations between Cuba and Vietnam threatened to undermine the strategic policy *vis-à-vis* the United States. The Soviet Union attempted to consolidate social revolution in Cuba and Vietnam within the Soviet bloc, to ensure an augmenting of political power within the USSR, and the wider international communist movement, but also as a means with which to undermine American imperialism. The undermining of American imperialism through social revolution offered the USSR access to regions otherwise 'off-limits,' and in so doing challenged the global logic of American capital. Thus, it was hoped that these developments would lead to both material and political benefits from a more globally orientated Soviet international relations, and possibilities of forcing through armaments reductions with the USA.

However, instead of securing political extensions of the Soviet bloc that would undermine American and Western power, the increased international role of the USSR actually increased the tensions and thus fissures within the USSR. Internal material development while becoming increasingly reliant on international relations became more problematic, as the Soviet Union had to contend with not only the fissures within the socialist camp, but also the material and political costs of links with other revolutionary states. The coalescence of the 'political' and 'economic' form in its international relations facilitated close

relationships with social revolutions, but because of the lack of an autonomous agency and currency of relations, made the political commitment to these 'states' much more costly from the wider perspective of the Cold War. The inability to cultivate alternative forms of relations obviously determined the substance of these relations, but more importantly limited the USSR to an international relations that was limited to the political-military sphere. Thus, the Soviet Union was hesitant because it did not want to provoke a stronger American military response, something that the USSR could not reciprocate. This not only determined the need to make revolutions politically and military strong themselves, but also the wider relations of the USSR to the point that *all* of the major crises of the Cold War, from the 1946 Soviet occupation of northern Iran, the 1948 Berlin Blockade, the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the war in Vietnam involved the international contention derived from the Soviet form of international relations.

Chapter Seven

The International Relations of the USA in the Cold War

Whilst Soviet international relations were unified, politically and economically, in the political form of the Party-state, the US capitalist separation of 'politics' into the spheres of the state and economy distinguished American international relations. The capitalist social relation provided the form for an historically and socially distinct form of politics and international relations. Because of the division within capitalist forms of political rule between private production, distribution and exchange of commodities, and the social relations that followed from them, the form of politics was not limited to the 'politics of the state.' Capitalist social relations, and their 'relative separation' from the form of political rule permitted a specific form of politics to be realised that did not rest on a directly sanctioned form of political power. This means that the understanding of international relations as the relations between states is in itself a slippage that fails to fully conceptualise the specificity of the form and substance of those relations. Rather, the legal and diplomatic relations between states reflected a specific form of the international capitalist social relation, which was mirrored by those relations (and their impact), derived from social and economic transactions.

The international relations of the United States rested on different internal social and political arrangements, and thus reflected a different form of international relations. The international relations of the USA saw an international expansion of the 'unity in the separation of the spheres of politics and economics' of the capitalist social relation. Whereas the Soviet Union was confined to a politics that rested on direct political power and a physical-material presence, the United States, because of its capitalist nature reflected the expansion of commodities and social relations through these commodities that did not always rest on a direct, obvious and coercive politics. Rather, American international relations rested on a tension derived from within the capitalist social relation between the appearance of politics as represented in the instruments and currency of the political form (the state), diplomacy, law, financial aid, and military power, and the informal or 'privatised politics' of commodities, the 'economic form of politics' derived from capital. In this sense American international relations, how the USA related to other states and social forms, not only rested on a politics of

the state and the *ultima ratio* of direct military coercion, but also the politics and the expansion of political forms that follow from the expansion and consolidation of capitalist social relations. Capitalism not only expands through direct political expansion, as in formal imperialism, but also through the more subtle and less direct means of commodities and the social relations that are imbricated within them.

1. The International Relations of the United States, and the Cuban and Vietnamese Revolutions

This section will attempt to highlight the specific form of American international relations in the Cold War, and how the USA related to the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions. It will focus on the role of the different forms of American capitalist power: economic, political, legal, and military in American attempts to contain and overthrow the Cuban revolution and intervene against the Vietnamese revolution. The argument is that the American capitalist form of international relations rested on a political contradiction that derived from the capitalist social relation itself, in the sense of how the capitalist social relation originally penetrated a particular society, and how those social relations were consolidated, expanded, and ultimately, were contested and overthrown. The contradiction rested on how capitalist social relations were reproduced out of class-based antagonism and how this conflict was conditioned by the international. The projection of American capitalist power in the Cold War, in both its commodity and military form, deeply influenced the reproduction of capitalist forms of political rule in both Cuba and Vietnam. Their contestation and overthrow posed a fundamental question about the form and nature of international capitalism, and how the capitalist United States could relate to revolution, and the problems that such a form of politics posed for the realisation of American objectives.

With the overthrow of capitalist social relations and the abolition of the private political sphere of capitalist production the United States was limited to a politics and international relations that could only affect Cuba or Vietnam directly *via* the revolutionary state. Because of this limitation on American capitalist power, the USA was forced to base its international relations on other sources of politics that could best contest revolutionary politics, but in so doing served to

problematise the wider reproduction of capitalist social relations. Revolutions, then, because they rested on a rupture in the international capitalist order and the construction of alternative forms of politics, obviously questioned the pre-existing form of capitalist international relations making it incumbent on the United States to posit an alternative form of capitalist social relations (and politics/international relations) to both contain and overcome revolutions.

This was what happened with American responses towards the Cuban revolution and Vietnamese revolution/war of national liberation. American responses to these revolutions reflected a concern to reconfigure capitalist social relations internally within the revolution, and more widely in the region, be it South-East Asia or Latin America. In pursuit of these objectives the United States sought to contain and/or overthrow the revolution and address those issues that it saw as being problematic. With respect to Vietnam, the problem derived from the colonial nature of the form of political rule, and the necessity of ensuring either a French withdrawal and/or the earnest construction of the basis of a formally-politically independent capitalist state tied to an American led security system. This was not limited to Vietnam, but the whole colonial edifice in the region. The replacement of formal-colonial capitalism with American capitalism, based on independent states. However, unlike Cuba the situation in Vietnam was compounded by the wider strategic situation, particularly the concern to contain Chinese power in South-East Asia. US policy towards the region as a whole after 1949 centred on preventing an expansion of Soviet or Chinese-backed regimes in the area. Vietnam, like Korea was to be a frontier in South-East Asia for the containment of communism that had already expanded in China, North Korea and North Vietnam. Because of the coupling of the political (and the military) with the economic in China and the DRV, the undermining and possible collapse of South Vietnam was a concern that was as much military-strategic as it was economic.

In Cuba and Latin America the problem that confronted the USA was all the more profound for a number of reasons that had to do with Cuba's geographical proximity to the USA, its close historical political-economic ties with the USA, and the potential for its spread to other parts of the region. This being so the USA was limited to what it could do, internally in Cuba, but because

of the pre-revolutionary relationship commanded a wide variety of resources to intervene 'from the outside' in Cuban revolutionary affairs. However, because of the political form of post-revolutionary Cuba, the USA was not able to intervene internally through capitalist social relations, it had to confront (ie. overthrow) the Cuban revolutionary state to effectively influence Cuban internal politics. Because of this, the role of commodity relations could only have an external influence rather than directly influencing internal politics in Cuba, and because of this the possibility of an externally induced change in Cuba could only come through the pre-requisite of a reconstitution (ie. overthrow of the revolution) of the Cuban form of politics. American international relations, thus, attempted to force such a change, but because of the form of external pressure (the economic embargo) and the problems associated with other (military) forms of influence, American pressure was frustrated.

Revolutions, then, provoked American attempts to redraw local political and economic realities to consolidate existing states' power, and prevent the political contestation of the local existing political order. However, in so doing, American international relations were forced to focus not purely on the expansion and growth of American capital, but rather on the consolidation of state power in these regions, through the 'Alliance for Progress' in Latin America and SEATO in South-East Asia. Thus, American international capitalist relations were concerned with state building and the elimination of revolutionary threats that came to rest on the projection of the varied articulations of American capitalist power. However, because of the form of politics that social revolutions were based upon, US responses were forced to focus on the limiting and/or removal from political power of the revolution, which could not be achieved by the 'battering ram' of commodities alone, but instead rested on applications of military power. It is this tension and limitation within American international relations towards the social revolutions of Cuba and Vietnam that the following will try to explore.

2. Cuba

American relations with Cuba were formative, pre and post-revolution. With a

substantial if not dominant presence within the Cuban social formation in 1959,¹ the United States had good reason to be concerned with developments, but also, because of its political and economic presence was confident that it had instruments to ensure its interests were not threatened. The Americans confronted a situation in Cuba in 1959, which, though far from clear-cut in terms of the political direction of the new government, was a cause for concern because a political change had occurred in Cuba without the direct support or influence of the United States. The new leadership² was in no way tied to the United States, politically, culturally, economically, or militarily.

Previously, and this was something of a pathology of the Cuban polity, politics and governmental change had bore the mark of US interest and sometimes direct sanction.³ However, this notwithstanding, because of the nature of the Cuban social formation the United States was going to be determinate, in one way or another, for post-revolutionary developments in Cuba. The structural economic links persisted, despite the severing of the formal political link.⁴ These came in the form of the annual sugar quota, which reflected many commentators' description of Cuba as a 'monoculture economy,' and extensive US investments in public utilities, infrastructure, banking, oil, property, tourism and manufacturing. Indeed, the Cuban economy was, *de facto*, a part of American capitalism.⁵

¹ Leland Johnson calculates that the 'book value' of US enterprises in Cuba at the time of the revolution was over three times the value for the rest of Latin America. See 'US Business Interests in Cuba and the Rise of Castro,' in *World Politics* Volume XVII no.3 April 1965 p.441.

² This was despite the presence of some 'moderates' like Manuel Urrutia and José Miró Cardona in the first post-Batista government.

³ This was certainly the case in the first Batista coup in 1933-4. See L. Pérez *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990) for a history of the American impact on Cuba.

⁴ One of the main, if not dominant links between the USA and Cuba was the military one. The United States had maintained this after setting up the Cuban army after 'independence' from Spain. Military links continued up until the end of 1958. The US obviously recognised the institutional and political power of the army in Cuba, an institution that seemed to offer the best hopes of maintaining some kind of social order and defence of private property, and a close link with the US. However, the State Department and the Congress were concerned with developments within the army, particularly its cohesiveness and ability to function politically, especially during 1958 in the conflict with the guerrillas. Under the leadership of Batista the army terrorised the population and failed to effectively counter the guerrilla threat. With the failure of the 'summer offensive' of 1958 the US embargoed military aid to Batista to show its displeasure, and also as a means to press Batista, or other senior elements within the army to pursue an alternative strategy against the guerrillas. However, by this time the US, in time honoured fashion, had begun to question not only the viability of Batista remaining in power, but also whether they could seek an alternative political leadership to quell the anti-Batista unrest (which had spread to the middle classes), and offer a stronger opposition to the guerrillas. The end of military aid, did not, however, completely sever US military links with Cuba. They remained through the military assistance programme representatives tied to the US Embassy. See M. Morley *Imperial State and Revolution: The United States and Cuba, 1952-1986* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p.58-65; and W. Smith *The Closest of Enemies: A Personal and Diplomatic Account of US-Cuban Relations Since 1957* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987) p.17.

⁵ The American dominance of the Cuban sugar economy was but one of a pervasive domination of the wider economy and social relations. In the 1950s 40% of raw sugar production was US owned, 23% of non-sugar production, 90% of telephone and electrical services, and 50% of railways. US Department of Commerce figures quoted in D. Wood 'The Long Revolution: Class Relations and Social Conflict in Cuba, 1868-1968,' in *Science and Society: An Independent Journal of Marxism* Volume XXXIV no.1, Spring 1970 p.17.

Because of the nature of the political change ushered in by the events of early January 1959, many of the traditional levers of US influence were not operational. The lack of American influence at the time was reflected in the rapid departure of Earl Smith the anti-Castro US Ambassador. He was replaced in March 1959 by Philip Bonsal who had the reputation of being more 'tolerant' of 'nationalist attitudes' in Latin America after his time in Bolivia.⁶ However, despite the disintegration of the only cohesive institution of Cuban politics, the army, and the political initiative resting with a guerrilla army, the US, because of its economic presence within Cuba had a major source of political influence with which to both promote its interests and secure political influence and/or concessions from the new government. For the initial period,⁷ then, US relations and political influence on the Cuban revolution were to be through the social relations of American capitalist power on the island. The American capitalist presence on the island offered a potential means with which to alter the political direction of the revolution through a combination of pressures and inducements.

The context of American policy toward Cuba after 1959 is important in considering US reactions towards Cuba and also the wider political-economy of the region. US policy in the region had undergone a degree of change in the mid-1950s. This came about through a recognition that the US had a direct role to play in terms of the economic development of the region, which a number of Latin American leaders had pressed for. This 'policy initiative' rested on going beyond military links and relying on the military to maintain social order, and if necessary US interests, to an increased use of economic aid to assist development projects in the region.⁸ The Cuban revolution obviously highlighted the problem of economic development in the region, the best means with which to ensure capitalist economic development, and the safeguarding of US interests. The traditional vehicle of the local military was not an option, and in many respects this was recognised as part of the problem by elements within the US

⁶ See R. Welch *Response to Revolution: The United States and the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1961* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985) p. 29.

⁷ We could date this period from January 1959 (when the US recognised the new government) up until early-mid 1960, when the US began to consider alternative means of influencing political developments in Cuba. It did not, however, ever stop using its economic power in one way or another against revolutionary Cuba.

⁸ See R. Carr 'The Cold War in Latin America,' in J. Plank (ed.) *Cuba and the United States: Long-Range Perspectives* (Washington D.C: The Brookings Institution, 1967) p.168-9; B. Kaufman *Trade and Aid: Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy 1953-1961* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); M. Morley (1987) p.44-6.

leadership.⁹ Politics and the international relations of the US with Cuba rested, then, on the social relationship of American capitalism in Cuba. Unlike any other form of 'state,' because of the political and economic nature of capitalist states, the 'political' form (the state) is not limited to its form in realising a politics and political influence. Neither is it limited to the traditional 'political' means of international influence in terms of the territory of the American state. The American capitalist social form, in its economic incarnation was present within Cuba despite the absence of its corresponding 'political' form.¹⁰ With the removal of the Batista government there was a possibility that the Cuban capitalist political form might altogether collapse, thus allowing if not encouraging economic seizures that would amount to a redefinition of politics in Cuba, and a full severing of the American capitalist presence there.

The Cuban capitalist political form had, up until the 1959 revolution, reflected a semblance of bourgeois democracy, but in reality rested on the coercive instruments of the state, particularly the army, which the revolution had successfully smashed. Moreover, the political form was also tied to the United States. Despite the abrogation of the Platt Amendment in 1934,¹¹ the American state provided the international and political guarantee to Cuba and Cuban capital, but this had been weakened if not completely cut through the revolution.¹² American capital, then, in early 1959 faced a potentially serious political threat to its continued existence in Cuba. However, from the other side of the Florida Straits the continued presence of American capital on the island was to provide the principal means with which to achieve a full and complete restoration of bourgeois legality and political order, which would not only have protected

⁹ Kennedy's 1961 'Alliance for Progress' initiated at the March 1961 OAS Conference at Punta del Este reflected these concerns over economic development and democratisation. The 'Alliance' was obviously a response to the revolution, though it could be seen as a more public continuation of developments that had begun under the previous Eisenhower administration. See R. Carr (1967) p.168-70; and M. Morley (1987) p.116.

¹⁰ I mean by this that the capitalist social form not only consists of the 'economic' features of private ownership and production of commodities, and the existence of a class of people who do not own their own means of production (the working class), but also in political and legal institutional forms that allow this separation of spheres within society. The state, the capitalist political form ensures the separation of spheres and protects private property from collective appropriation. Without the presence of the 'political form of capital,' there is nothing, legally or politically, to prevent the interruption to or seizure of the private means of production. Law and the coercive apparatus of the state are the final defenders of capital in this respect.

¹¹ An US amendment to the Cuban constitution of 1901 that secured the legal right for US political and military intervention in Cuban internal affairs. For details see L. Pérez (1990) p.109-10.

¹² This was also the case in the immediate period before Castro's seizure of power. This reflected a major contradiction in American policy towards Cuba, based on the dominant economic influence and lack of a cohesive autonomous Cuban bourgeoisie and the limitations imposed on the political-institutional order through military dominance. Thus, as Morley (1987) p.70 comments: '... the advanced state of disarray and de-mobilisation within the Cuban armed forces following the failure of the summer 1958 offensive against the guerrillas and Washington's lack of any significant internal political or social base of support sharply limited the US government's room for manoeuvre.'

American capital but ended the temporary hiatus of Cuban politics and led to the return to a form of bourgeois political order on the island.

The 'economic leverage' was supported by the offer of constructive engagement suggested by the new ambassador, Bonsal. Indeed, up until the full-scale expropriations of American property which took place after October 1960, US policy, through its ambassador, sought to engage Castro in negotiations and compromises that would ensure structural reform of the Cuban economy, but *with* American support. One of the important areas in this respect was agriculture. This was important for a number of reasons. One, was the place of agriculture in American objectives of the capitalist modernisation of Latin America that were to be cornerstone of the later 'Alliance for Progress.' Another was the heavy American investment, direct and indirect, in sectors of Cuban agriculture, from tobacco, to sugar and ranches. Thus, the issue of agriculture highlighted the goal of modernising the Cuban economy, and the role of American agro-capital. But it also related to what were conflictual class relations in Cuba, particularly involving the rural poor and the rural proletariat, who had provided one of the major sources of support for the revolution. The United States, then, publicly endorsed the goals of agrarian reform, but was concerned to ensure that reform did not lead to expropriations and socialisation. As Cole Blasier comments on Bonsal's talks with the revolutionary leadership:

'.. Bonsal was less concerned about the impact of the application of the Agrarian Law on US interests than damages inflicted on those interests in the *absence of legal authority*. There was a concern about the numerous acts of arbitrary despoilment that victimized Americans in Cuba at the hands of INRA (Instituto Nacional Reforma de la Agraria).'¹³

The US favoured reform, but focused on productivity rather than ownership and class relations, and in doing so, consciously or not, sought to limit the revolutionary nature of the changes in agriculture. Blasier rightly focuses on the legal aspect, but fails to fully 'politicise' how the legal protection for American property, within Cuba, *by* the Cuban state was an example of the political form of the capitalist social relation. This was also the case with respect to wider economic relations, and the subsequent clash because of Cuba's attempts to secure economic, and thus political autonomy through developing economic links

¹³ *Hovering Giant: US Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976) p.90 (emphasis added). See also M. Morley (1987) p.83.

with the Soviet bloc after February 1960, and also in terms of the internal social transformation, which rested on the abolition of the separate sphere of capitalist production.

Corresponding to the changes in American policy towards Latin America in the mid-1950s already mentioned, US economic power was to be used to ensure that economic development was realised in the region, and in so doing, this, it was hoped, would ensure domestic social peace, stability, and a spur to democratisation¹⁴ and an increase in Latin American-United States links. This being the case, the USA, almost immediately sought to use its economic presence within Cuba to facilitate political relations with the new regime and thus ensure its continued 'allegiance' to the OAS system.¹⁵ The visit by a Castro-led delegation in April 1959 before the implementation of first piece of major social transformation (the Agrarian Reform Law in May 1959) to the United States provided the first of many opportunities with which the United States sought to determine the long-term political outcome of the revolution through the capitalist economic form.

Although Castro was clear that his delegation's visit was not to solicit economic assistance from the US, American and IMF officials did raise the issue with members of the Cuban delegation. The United States, then, through its offers of engagement sought to limit and orientate the revolution towards specific goals that rested on what were perceived as 'mutual' economic interests.¹⁶ There has been much discussion of the early days of revolutionary Cuba's relations with the

¹⁴ For an extended discussion of the role of democratisation in American foreign policy towards Latin America, see A. Lowenthal (ed.) *Exporting Democracy. The United States and Latin America: Themes and Issues* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991a).

¹⁵ The 'OAS system' was heavily imbued with American political and economic influence. It rested on an assumption that the states of the Western Hemisphere were bound to organise themselves in such a way that allowed free trade and did not permit, what were identified as 'foreign ways/ideologies,' to develop in the region. This obviously meant socialism, and with the US response towards Guatemala in 1954, it was clear that the US would use the OAS as a vehicle to ensure the exclusion of radical forms of politics in the region. It had used the OAS to isolate Guatemala, which helped legitimise the CIA inspired coup that overthrew the Arbenz regime. However, one of the pillars of the OAS system which was enshrined in a number of postwar treaties and realised in Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbour Policy' was that of non-intervention. United States relations with the states of Latin America, in the postwar period, were based on the outlawing of direct (ie. military) interventions in the internal affairs of any member of the OAS. This obviously limited American policy options, but it came with an acceptance from the ruling classes of Latin America that they themselves would be against any 'foreign ideologies' or interventions.

¹⁶ This is an important point and deals directly with both critics of American responses to the Cuban revolution and also debates about the nature of the revolution. In the former the point is that, had Cuba accepted the offers of co-operation from the United States in terms of economic modernisation and aid, this would have been on the basis of an acceptance of the capitalist social form and the politics that flow from that. This would have inevitably (even with all the best intentions of the 'progressives' in the US administration and capitalist class) led to a structural limiting, politically and legally, in what the revolution could have achieved. Thus, co-operation also meant the acceptance, ultimately, of a continued American capitalist presence in Cuba. The latter relates directly to this and suggests that the revolution did indeed come to rest on forms of class mobilisation and conflict. The rejection of the American offers (not all of which were obviously disciplining) shows that, even in the first year of the revolution Castro was concerned to limit if not crush American capital.

US. For example Blasier makes the well-justified claim that:

‘US responses to the seizures of US property in Cuba were politically most significant during Castro’s first year in office, that is before the sharp deterioration set in with events beginning in early 1960. In the first few months particularly, the US responses to Castro’s policies affecting US property were potentially significant indicators for the prospects for later collaboration between the two governments.’¹⁷

However, what this really shows is the conflict between the complete unravelling of capitalist social relations in Cuba, and attempts by the American capitalist political form to help ensure the protection of American capital in Cuba, and thus the continued capitalist nature of Cuba. Although American policy was not limited to the ‘economic sphere’ alone initially, economic co-operation was seen as the best means of preserving Cuba as a capitalist state, and thus the American presence, and not breaking the OAS line on non-intervention.

The negotiations that took place in mid-1959 and continued on/off until the severing of economic ties by Cuba in late 1960 revolved around the American commitment to provide a loan to Cuba, and what Cuba had to do (or not do) to secure it. The economic situation at this juncture was difficult to say the least. Castro had inherited falling economic growth and high levels of unemployment coupled with heavy American debt.¹⁸ According to American officials because of these persistent economic problems, Castro faced a critical choice:

‘Castro could “limp along for a few months,” the American officials admitted, “but a day of decision is coming.” They predicted that the point would be reached in October-November 1959. Castro would then have to make up his mind about coming to terms with the US for a loan...if... Castro is to get large-scale aid for his.. problems, he will have to agree to a stabilisation program.. this would chiefly involve credit restraint and a balanced budget..’¹⁹

This seems to suggest that American offers of aid were tactical devices that had been used before,²⁰ in similar cases in Latin America, to limit the political nature

¹⁷ (1976) p.90.

¹⁸ This economic situation and the impact it had on the Cuban poor and working class underlined the concern for Castro to ensure that his government would be anchored in a social (class) constituency that would most benefit from revolutionary changes, and most importantly provide a means of social mobilisation against American hostility. The class nature of the Cuban revolution, then, was soon apparent, particularly when the economic changes pursued by Castro needed class support and mobilisation. For a survey of working class attitudes pre and post-revolution see M. Zeitlin *The Revolutionary Politics of the Cuban Working Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); S. Mintz ‘Foreword,’ in R. Guerra y Sanchez *Sugar and Society in the Caribbean: An Economic History of Cuban Agriculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

¹⁹ Quoted in W. Appleman Williams *The United States, Cuba, and Castro: An Essay on the Dynamics of Revolution and the Dissolution of Empire* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1962) p.100-101.

²⁰ *Ibid* p.101 points out that the Americans had similarly used economic aid to limit the possibility of radical social transformation in Argentina in December 1958-January 1959.

of the socio-economic transformation. The international relations of the United States towards Cuba, then, in the early period of the revolution highlighted the international nature of the capitalist social form. In particular it showed the international political nature of the economic presence within Cuba, and how capitalist states have the ability to influence, in 'economic' ways the politics of other states, including those going through a period of revolutionary transformation. Moreover, revolutions bring out the tension between the spheres of formal politics and economics within states, and expose the contradictions and class nature of the economic form and how it is co-defined by the political form.

With Cuba not willing to enter into formal negotiations with the US on economic aid, alongside the assumption that even if they had, negotiations would have quickly foundered, the United States pursued a more coercive 'economic' strategy to influence the revolution. This was centred on the annual sugar quota. If anything represented the structural capitalist dependence of Cuba on the US it was this relationship. Cuba had a guaranteed but limited export market for its principal product, which facilitated a stunted and distorted form of economic development and provided a useful economic lever for the US to apply at will. The subject of the future of the sugar quota had come up in discussions between the two countries after January 1959.²¹ What was most striking in the case of the sugar quota was how the political leadership of the American state initiated and organised the drive to use this as an instrument with which to try and pressure Cuba. It was the US administration that forced through the necessary changes to the sugar quota legislation that allowed Eisenhower to unilaterally abrogate the quota in July 1960.²² However, because of the nature of the US-Cuban 'sugar relationship,' the cutting of the quota only served to consolidate the revolution, particularly when the Soviets offered to purchase the surplus Cuban sugar. The severing of the 'sugar link' undermined capitalist social relations, because it unilaterally withdrew the political support that had always been fundamental to the agreement. Without that political link (through the economic agreement of the annual quota), the Americans obviously sought to economically discipline Cuba by removing a substantial portion of needed hard currency, but in politically using the 'sugar weapon' had exposed its political nature and impact on Cuban politics.

²¹ M. Morley (1987) p.83.

²² *Ibid* p.107-13 for an extended discussion of this.

With the accelerating process of contention and conflict in the US-Cuban relationship, because of the increasing moves towards expropriations of private property within Cuba that began to sever¹ the political link through the economic form, it was becoming clear that the capitalist presence (and thus, the American presence, 'political and economic') was about to be completely removed. This being the case, the ability of the US to determine political developments in Cuba was becoming seriously circumscribed. The economic form of its international relations was losing its ability to influence the politics of Cuba, because the new Cuban revolutionary state was politically limiting its autonomy by displacing the 'relative autonomy of the economy' through direct political control. Because of this, the American state took it upon itself to orchestrate international relations through American capital to put pressure on the Cuban regime. This manifested itself through the removal of key and technical personnel, the non-delivery of spare-parts, and ultimately the complete obstruction and non-acquiescence to Cuban government demands.²³ This was most marked in the US oil companies in Cuba, and their refusal to refine Soviet crude oil in June 1960. Again, in the same way that the cutting of the sugar quota politicised the economic relationship, this economic but also political act also brought to the surface the contradiction of international capitalism that was resolved with the socialisation of the oil companies. By October 1960, Cuba had seized² to be a predominantly capitalist state. The distinction between the spheres of production-distribution and the state had been removed with the direct control of the economy and the removal of the American political-economic presence.

Thus far I have focused on the economic form of American international capitalist relations. However, even in the early stages, indeed, even prior to Castro's seizure of power, the political form was seeking ways to intervene against and/or limit the power of Castro. This manifested itself, ultimately, in the American organised debacle at Playa Girón in April 1961, with the defeat of the exiles' invasion. The background to the 'Bay of Pigs' obviously lies in the faltering attempts by the US to secure, politically or economically, a political presence on the island with which to check the revolution. The military option in

²³ For extended discussions on these developments, see the following: M. Morley (1987) p.105; C. Blasier (1976) p.191; L. Bender *The Politics of Hostility: Castro's Revolution and United States Policy* (Hato Rey, Puerto Rico: Inter American University Press, 1975) p.13-31; E. Baklanoff *Expropriation of US Investments in Cuba, Mexico, and Chile* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975) p.118-9; L. Johnson (1965) p.440-59.

terms of a direct United States invasion was highly problematic in the context of regional politics. Because of this the United States sought, alongside the 'economic' levers, to use legal and political means²⁴ to isolate and pressure Castro into compliance with 'hemisphere politics' and then to contain the revolution. The 'legal option' was combined with continued economic pressure and the provision of a more coercive option.²⁵ The US sought to expand the 'Cuban problem' from a purely American concern, to one of the region as a whole by attempting to include the OAS and the wider international system in the conflict with Cuba. Through securing OAS support the US would have found it much easier to not only isolate, and thus contain and pressure the revolution, but also increase the autonomy of its own political-coercive options in dealing with Cuba.

The OAS however, failed to provide the assumed platform for American attempts to discipline Cuba. Although the OAS after 1959 was far from sympathetic towards Cuba, the traditional concerns of all Latin American states, radical, moderate, and conservative alike with an over-mighty American presence and influence was enough to undermine US attempts at hemispheric unity of action. Indeed, the US was continually frustrated in its attempts, beginning with the August 1960 OAS declaration of San José that failed to outrightly condemn Cuba on the basis of international communist influence in the region. Even the qualified success of the OAS Conference at Punte del Este in January 1962 that saw Cuba's expulsion from the organisation was not unanimous.²⁶ The international legal setting, then, though succeeding in isolating and condemning Cuba, which provided the basis for its long-term containment, because of the pervasive power of American capitalist international relations, which was recognised by other states in Latin America, failed to provide the US with a legal

²⁴ These are typical of capitalist forms of international relations. Although not limited purely to capitalist states, the Soviet Union and Cuba have both argued for the international legal norm of non-intervention, use of international law and legal sanctions are quintessentially capitalist in the following sense. They rest on the bourgeois separation of the spheres of politics and economics, whereby the legal norm is anchored in the realm of the state as a subject and object of law. Because of this, states appear to be subject to international law separate from their internal social and political constitution. For example, the supposed illegality of Cuban actions against the US rested on what were identified as breaches of international law, when such a law is bound up, intrinsically with capitalist social relations. This being so, international law, because it rests on the political separation of politics and economics, and the domestic-international distinction, deliberately fails to question capitalist social relations which are both national and international, political and economic. Ingrained, then, within the norms of international law, even in the norm of 'non-intervention,' is the ignoring, and thus acceptance of capitalism, which implicitly limits the internal politics of 'states.'

²⁵ Indeed, US vice-president Nixon was quite clear early on, on the necessity of a military option to deal with the Cuban revolution. Nixon, after meeting Castro in April 1959 suggested using the military option to remove Castro using armed Cuban exiles. See L. Bender (1975) p.17.

²⁶ Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, and Ecuador voted against the American proposal. The Americans were more successful in the July 1964 meeting of the OAS in Washington, which established sanctions against Cuba on the basis of Venezuelan claims of Cuban intervention in its internal affairs. See L. Bender (1975) p.27; and H. Dinerstein (1976)

and thus political platform with which to militarily overthrow the revolution. International law, and the US attempts to foster a multilateral response to Cuba stumbled on the contradictions of wider US-Latin American relations. The legal sanction served to discipline Cuba, but also defend it, by reducing, because of the other regional political interests, the freedom of political manoeuvre for the United States.²⁷

The limitations of legal sanction reduced the autonomy of the American political form, which was left to sponsor and organise an exile-led invasion. The invasion plans and organisation went back to late 1959, though the final decision to authorise it did not take place until early 1961.²⁸ The failure of the invasion reflected the limitations of the political aspect of American international relations. Because of the limitations on the projection of American military power in the hemisphere, which derived from the legal-political relationship, for America to have intervened militarily, would have been illegal, and would have jeopardised wider international relations. The invasion failed not only because of its bad organisation, planning and lack of co-ordination between the relevant agencies of the American state, but because it did not have direct American military support. That support was constrained through America's commitment to the legal and political system of the OAS. This obviously offered political and economic benefits in terms of American capitalist power in the region, but it also limited the legal sanction for military power, because of the wider political interests in the region. To have committed military power would have clearly and politically exposed the lie of political-legal equality in the region. There was formal political equality, which was vested in the OAS Charter, but in reality, there was American political power, but not in an obvious 'political' form. Political power did not necessarily come from the 'barrel of a gun,' but from the wider and deeper social relations of American capital that dominated the region, but were aloof from legal and political sanction. Direct military intervention would have scuppered this.

Thus far I have mainly focused on the form of the international relations of the American response to the Cuban revolution in terms of US-Cuban relations. I would like to close the discussion by looking at the wider international

p.161.

²⁷ As Dinerstein (1976) p.97-8 suggests: by organising the OAS as an instrument of the Cold War against international communism, the US was concerned not to undermine it, by breaking its charter that an invasion would have done.

²⁸ C. Blasier (1976) p.191.

relations of the political and economic form in Latin America that were encapsulated in the Alliance for Progress and developments in the relationship between the political and economic forms in US foreign economic policy. The events in Cuba raised a number of broader issues than purely American relations with Cuba. The broader picture mainly concerned the role of democracy in American foreign policy, and how this related to economic change and development; the role of military power as the best means with which to protect American interests; and the role of the state as a social relation of capital in American economic relations with Latin America. As Morley correctly argues the Cuban expropriations were:

‘... not simply a function of the size of the American economic stake in Cuba. Rather, the cluster of economic relations between the two countries was part of a larger set of forces that could infect the whole continent.’²⁹

I will look at the role of the American state in terms of its relations with capitalist economic expansion. After the Cuban expropriations of American capital, the US government sought to set up an international legal framework whereby the state was directly responsible for international protection of US foreign investments.³⁰ This was a consequence of developments that had been simmering within the Eisenhower administration, and were given political impetus by the concern of another ‘Cuba’ occurring in Latin America. The development of the Inter-American Development Bank, and more importantly, the ‘Investment Guarantee Programme’³¹ highlighted US government concerns to both protect American property in Latin America, but also to encourage US private investment in the region to consolidate capitalism in the region and facilitate capitalist economic growth. As Neumann Whitman suggests, American private investment had a tendency to prioritise domestic over foreign investments,

²⁹ (1987) p.114.

³⁰ The American state had, prior to the Cuban revolution set up a number of bodies to protect and/or encourage US private investment in Latin America, as in the case of the International Finance Corporation set up in 1954 to encourage and ‘...support private enterprises in underdeveloped countries.’ See R. Wagner *United States Policy Toward Latin America: A Study in Domestic and International Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970) p.130-4. However, the establishment of such forms of state involvement in the international economy were not free from controversy and problems, even within the United States, with sections of the state questioning the public-state infringement on the private-capitalist sphere. See B. Mattocks *The Establishment of the International Financial Corporation and United States Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1957). The issue was resolved, because of the political necessity for the USA, pressured from Latin American governments, to assist in the development of the region, something which American capital, alone, seemed hesitant to do.

³¹ The IGP was established after the Cuban revolution as a political response to the concerns of US capital for the security of its investments in the rest of Latin America, and the risks associated with future investments. It provided public funds (financial guarantees) for US overseas investment where the state would compensate US companies that had been expropriated and not compensated by the foreign government. For an extended discussion of the sanctioning of coercive legal and political measures to protect US property invested overseas, see C. Lipson *Standing Guard*:

partly because of the risk involved in foreign investments.³² Thus, the US government directly intervened to ensure the security of investments and strengthen economic links with the rest of Latin America through trade and investment.

These policy developments were not limited to Latin America but focused on the Third World as a whole.³³ But their regional focus was to try and boost capitalist economic development, but also protect US private investments by directly involving the political form in the economic relations between American capital and a number of Latin American states. As Blasier recognised, with the IGP:

‘... the US government formally became a party to expropriation controversies and itself a potential claimant under the provisions of inter-government agreements.. the Chilean expropriations (in 1971-3).. show how the IGP intimately links US public and private interests, raising fiscal and political complications for the US government..’³⁴

The IGP and the other forms of economic assistance direct to Latin America, and indirectly, through encouraging direct US private investment highlighted the economic aspects of the political form, that displays the relative autonomy of American capital, and where the capitalist state deploys particular strategies with which to politically direct economic investment and politicise its relations. Although these developments could not, physically, stop expropriations of American capital in Latin America, they did legally obstruct it, and thus, politically, reflected a direct American political intervention in the social relations of many states.

Through these political initiatives the US sought to utilise the ‘unity in the separation of politics and economics within the capitalist social relation’ to provide direct American legal-political protection to capital in Latin America, which reflected an expansion of the international political capacity of American

Protecting Foreign Capital in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

³² M. Von Neumann Whitman *Government Risk-Sharing in Foreign Investment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) p.10.

³³ Another source promoting more aggressive American ‘economic’ penetration of the Third World was the concern to respond to growing Soviet initiatives. See W. Duncan (ed.) (1970). M. Wilkins gives the figures: ‘.. by 1963 the US had bilateral treaties (with clauses protecting private property) with 41 different countries... US government guarantees became particularly important and popular for US business after the ... Cuban revolution.’ *The Maturing Multinational Enterprise: American Business Abroad From 1914 to 1970* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974) p.328-31.

³⁴ (1976) p.98. Blasier also states: ‘Since 1959 the US has signed agreements providing for investment guarantees with most Latin American governments. By June 1971 US\$5.6 billion of guarantees had been issued in Latin America, nearly US\$2.6 billion of which covered expropriation risks. About one-sixth of the nearly US\$16 billion of US investment in the region was then covered by expropriation insurance.’ See also E. Baklanoff (1975) p.143 on the problems that the Allende governments posed for the US government’s foreign investment insurance programme.

capitalism and a more obvious and direct, but legal, presence in Latin America. This was not enough to stop expropriations of US property, but it did limit the capacity of many Latin American states to be fully political independent. The political ability of states that entered into these legal regimes was limited. To exercise full domestic 'economic' sovereignty states had to break legally-binding agreements and risk incurring the more direct political wrath of the United States.

In terms of more direct political interference in US economic investment that sought to discipline states that expropriated or penalised American capital, the 1962 Hickenlooper Amendment is defining of the 'separation but unity' in the capitalist form of international social relations. This legislation became binding on the American state to seek full and speedy compensation from expropriating governments. It also included clauses to immediately cancel bilateral aid.³⁵ The 'deterrent effect' of the legislation was meant to deter governments from intervening in the operations of American capital with the immediate prospect of the involvement of the American state. The pre-emptive nature of the policy was an obvious and direct political intervention into the economic sphere of capitalist social relations. This was a response to the failure of political intervention through the economic form that had characterised the initial American response to the Cuban revolution.

The importance of these 'political' initiatives did not only ~~lay~~ in their impact on American foreign investment and the direct capitalist political interference ~~on~~ Latin American states, but also ~~on~~ the programme of the Alliance for Progress.³⁶ The Alliance was launched in August 1961,³⁷ reflecting the anti-Cuban and supposedly capitalist modernisation credentials of the new Kennedy administration. In some respects the Alliance Charter reflected a 'progressive liberal' response to the Cuban revolution in that it recognised some of the major economic problems of Latin America, which implicitly were present in Cuba, and contributed to the revolution. These were encapsulated in the Alliance's advocacy of democratisation and land-reform. However, what characterised the history of the Alliance, and the impact it had on Latin America were a set of

³⁵ See C. Lipson (1985) p. 200-26 for discussion of this piece of legislation. Lipson makes clear that the Hickenlooper Amendment was written as a response to Cuban communism.

³⁶ The Hickenlooper Amendment contradicted many of the provisions of the Alliance. As Lipson (1985) p.210-12 highlights, the reaction of the United Fruit Company in Honduras towards a 1962 government land reform, using the provisions of 'Hickenlooper' forced the government to back down.

³⁷ R. Packenham *Liberal America and the Third World: Political Development Ideas in Foreign Aid and Social Science*

contradictions that centred on the politics and political consequences of economic reform, and how democratisation would effect the political-economy of American capitalist relations with the region.

As Morley suggests, many of the governments that signed the Charter were deeply opposed to many of its stated aims. This and the limited political intervention that was proposed to ensure the realisation of political and economic reform was further compounded by the necessity of American private capital spearheading capitalist modernisation. Indeed, much of what followed did not result in any marked economic improvement in the region, but rather an expansion of export drives for American capital through tied loans etc.³⁸ The major form of political intervention in the region was epitomised by Johnson's invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 to quash a leftist rebellion, which reflected the augmented role of American military power in the region. American counter-insurgency policy was the principal political intervention in Latin America under the auspices of the Alliance. This rested on forging even closer links with local militaries, which served to undermine any hopes of democratisation in the region.³⁹ American counter-insurgency policy involved training of local militaries and the provision of equipment.⁴⁰ It reflected the political concern of the consequences of economic and land reform, and also the Cuban inspired increase of guerrilla activity throughout the continent.

The Alliance, then, though channelling over US\$20 billion to Latin America by the end of the decade,⁴¹ failed to engineer structural reform and substantial democratisation. What it did do, however, was to encourage the militarisation of much of Latin America,⁴² and through counter-insurgency programmes helped contain a number of insurgencies. The military form of American international relations served to consolidate and deepen the links between the political forms of the capitalist social relation, which, throughout the 1960s, increasingly undermined the autonomy of the economic form, and led to its contention, politically. By pursuing a military form of capitalist international

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) p.217.

³⁸ M. Morley (1987) p.127.

³⁹ See M. Klare and C. Amson 'Exporting Repression: US Support for Authoritarianism in Latin America,' in R. Fagen (ed.) *Capitalism and the State in US-Latin American Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979) p.143.

⁴⁰ This also included official discouragement of what were seen as either 'wasteful' or inappropriate military purchases of certain kinds of weaponry that were not part of counter-insurgency strategy, but rather reflected more conventional military concerns. See *ibid* p.148.

⁴¹ T. Smith 'Alliance for Progress: The 1960s,' in A. Lowenthal (ed.) (1991a) p.72.

relations the United States exposed many Latin American states to not only a more visible politicisation of the economy and production/class relations, but also a closer identification with the United States.

3. Vietnam

There has been much historical and theoretical reflection on the United States²⁾ involvement in Vietnam. Much of this work has focused on the reasons for American intervention, the nature of the war, and why America 'lost.' Obviously, in a section of this length, I cannot hope to do justice to this literature and to the many questions and issues that it raises. Instead, I will address those issues that relate to the specifically capitalist form of the international relations of the United States in Vietnam. In doing so I hope to bring out the tensions and problems of this form of international relations, and how it had an impact on the Vietnamese war and revolution. This being the case, many of the issues that the wider historical and theoretical literature raises, will, tangentially be addressed.

United States intervention in Vietnam began soon after the end of the 'Pacific War.' It rested on a number of issues that with the spectre of the Cold War in Asia came to conflict with each other. The principle American goal was to encourage decolonisation and the building of a new political, and economic edifice that rested on the twin foundations of incorporation into the world economy to facilitate capitalist modernisation and links with local political leaderships through military-security relations. With the collapse of Nationalist China in 1949, the main pole of American strategy rested on the postwar reconstruction of Japan⁴³ to provide the basis for a new American inspired capitalist regional entity. America, then, sought to restructure the international relations of Asia through trade and economic assistance, regional security through the projection of military power, and this was to be achieved by the transformation of local political forms from colonial 'states' to formally independent states.

The essence of American policy was concerned with facilitating a change in the form of political rule. Through this new ruling classes would emerge based

⁴² See R. Wagner (1970) p.181 on the military coups that followed the Alliance.

⁴³ See A. Iriye *The Cold War in Asia: A Historical Introduction* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974); and S. Lee (1995).

on different social and political constituencies, and with the removal of the colonial edifice, 'independent' relations with the United States would be realised.⁴⁴ Vietnam came to be paradigmatic of this project and the problems associated with it. The problems for American policy rested on the intertwining of a number of war-related and Cold War-related issues that the US confronted in South-East Asia. The principal ones were: the emergence of nationalist liberation movements some of whom were communist led/dominated; the expansion of international communism after 1945, in North Korea, North Vietnam, and most importantly China; and finally the continued presence of colonial military and political structures.

It was the combination of these factors that provided the main 'external' limitations on the realisation of American goals. With respect to Vietnam, the whole American project was problematised by the return of French colonial power after the Japanese surrender and the 'August Revolution.' Because of initial French intentions, and more importantly, the importance of France to American concerns in Europe,⁴⁵ American policy towards Vietnam was fractured along a divide that was to be, ultimately, impossible to bridge.

American relations with Vietnam began with its support for the French re-occupation, and subsequent war against the Viet Minh.⁴⁶ The problem for the United States was that a consolidated French presence, although it guaranteed a western and capitalist presence in Indochina, prevented the United States from directly influencing events there. Instead, the Americans, particularly after the 1949 Chinese revolution, were concerned to prevent a Viet Minh victory that would have had serious repercussions for the rest of South-East Asia. The immediate communist threat, then, forced the United States to aid the French in

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the differing approaches to 'imperialism' see P. Darby *Three Faces of Imperialism: British and American Approaches to Asia and Africa, 1870-1970* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁴⁵ The formation and content of American policy towards Vietnam after 1945 rested on the tensions within the emerging 'Atlantic Alliance' and the Cold War. Because of local French preponderance, America was committed to working with French colonial power. However, it soon became apparent that American long-term goals clashed with the French. The problem for the Americans was that their ability to influence developments in French Indochina were complicated, to say the least, by the perceived necessity of French co-operation with the US in Europe to meet the Soviet threat. This problem was finally 'resolved' (unsatisfactorily) by the 1954 Geneva Agreement that secured a French withdrawal from Indochina. For extended discussions of this see G. Kahin *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) p.3; 54-5; W. Duiker *US Containment Policy and the Conflict in Indochina* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) p.2;43; L. Gardner *Approaching Vietnam: Through World War Two to Dienbienphu, 1941-1954* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988) p.14; S. Lee (1995) p.15-28; *passim*; P. Joseph *Cracks in the Empire: State Politics in the Vietnam War* (Boston: South End Press, 1981) p.82.

⁴⁶ As Kahin (1986) p.8 notes: 'Within two months of the Japanese surrender, American ships... were carrying French forces to Vietnam.'

the war.⁴⁷ This immediate concern, the containment of international communism, came at the cost of the American objective to facilitate a new form of politics in Indochina. Because of the French presence, and US support, the Americans were, in effect, preventing the emergence of an autonomous national capitalist politics in Vietnam, and instead contributing to a weakening of the anti-communist *national* political order.⁴⁸ As Lee puts it:

‘The underlying contradiction between, on the one hand, the US attempts to foster an indigenous Western-orientated power grouping in Vietnam and, on the other hand, its need to control and shape the political, economic, and military development of that state... The irony of the American containment strategy for Vietnam was that it required an increased formal presence to achieve it.’⁴⁹

Because of the political limitations incurred through supporting France, the US was confined to an international relations that was not able to determine events in Vietnam. The long-term goals of a capitalist political and economic transformation of Vietnam were seen as being conditional on weakening if not completely destroying Viet Minh-communist power. However, such a policy limited American influence to supporting the French colonial form of politics, despite American demands over the need for decolonisation and the building of a local nationalist leadership. The lack of an American political presence in Vietnam, either in the ‘economic’ or ‘political’ form served to reduce American flexibility.⁵⁰

The conjuncture of American involvement in Vietnam between 1945-54 highlighted, in one aspect, the problem of formalising American postwar international relations within a socio-historical context formed by a *different* and continuing form of capitalist presence. Although the Americans did not want to

⁴⁷ As I have already mentioned, US policy was not only determined by events in Asia. The importance of France to America’s concerns in Europe, were equally important, more so up until 1949. In terms of American aid to the French in Indochina, this was substantial. The US, in effect, especially after 1950 financed the war. *Ibid* p. 36-8 notes the importance of the ‘Lisbon Programme’ launched in early 1952 which provided an initial US\$200 million for purchases of war matériel, another US\$500 million in 1952-3, and US\$785 million in 1953-4. This was accompanied by the Mutual Defence Assistance Programme (MDAP), which provided 532,847 tons of military equipment, valued at US\$334.7 million between June 1950 and December 1952. By 1954 the US was financing over 78% of the French war effort. J. Montgomery suggests that over 60% of the US\$3.5 billion of American aid to French Indochina in 1950-54 went on military aid. See *The Politics of Foreign Aid: American Experience in Southeast Asia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962) p.22.

⁴⁸ As Lee (1995) p.28 comments: ‘The US wanted the French to work towards an informal empire in Vietnam, but American strategy was dictated to a large degree by the French colonial presence and by the inability of Bao Dai to attract popular support.’

⁴⁹ *Ibid* p.115.

⁵⁰ The limitations of American policy were also shown in the inability of the US to mobilise international (Western) support for military escalation in the region in support of Vietnam. The America attempts through ‘United Action’ to internationalise the war in Vietnam thus allowing a more substantial projection of military power, but legitimised by Anglo-French involvement (similar to the international coalition gathered to ‘defend’ Korea) failed. See G. Kahin (1986)

see a French defeat in Vietnam, it was only with the political defeat formalised at Geneva in 1954, and the creation of a political entity south of the seventeenth parallel that the United States could begin to determine events there.⁵¹ The estrangement between the American position and France was evident in the Geneva talks, notably with the refusal of the Americans to participate in the closing negotiations and be a party to the stipulations over unification elections in 1956. This reflected the interwoven concerns of the internal political nature of Vietnam and the wider American strategic anxieties in South-East Asia. Because of the expansion of communism in the region, the strategic-military situation was imbued with the political economic. Capitalist modernisation and 'state building' were contingent on military security. And the only way that communism could be contained was through strategic containment. It was this problem that was internal and external to South Vietnam that dominated US policy.

The evacuation of French power from Vietnam⁵² came on the agreement of a cessation of the war and an end to Viet Minh military activities south of the seventeenth parallel. The temporary end of hostilities and the French political and military disengagement from Vietnam produced a political vacuum that the Americans were quick to fill. Indeed, as Kahin notes:

'Rather than working through the French to support the Bao Dai regime, which claimed authority over all Vietnam, the US took on the mission of establishing a separate non-communist state in the southern... zone prescribed by the Geneva agreements.'⁵³

This development reflected the American concern, as suggested above, to facilitate itself, the construction of a new post-colonial political order based on capitalist social relations. However, this intervention also highlighted the major structural problems that confronted American policy in Vietnam. Because of the nature of the French colonial political form, Vietnam was without a cohesive political leadership, nor class structure that could provide the foundations for a stable and effective 'independent' form of political rule. Thus, the Americans took it upon themselves to act as an almost surrogate form of political form in Vietnam by supporting one of the many contending political factions in the South (Ngo

p.44-8; W. Duiker (1994) p.163-70.

⁵¹ The US, however, had sought a more direct involvement in the war, either through providing air power support at Dien Bien Phu, and/or committing troops not under French command and the offer of training and equipping local anti-communist forces in 1954. See M. Gujral *US Global Involvement: A Study of American Expansionism* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1975) p.162.

⁵² Within months of 'Geneva' South Vietnam had severed economic and financial links with the French. See R. Smith (1983) p.25.

Dinh Diem) to secure political supremacy in the south as the basis for the construction of a southern state. Initially this rested on securing Diem's military supremacy, internally and also externally through the September 1954 Manila Pact (SEATO).⁵⁴ Once Diem was militarily secure (from other non-communist factions) the US set about a policy of state building in South Vietnam.

It was this project, the construction of an 'independent' political form assisted by capitalist modernisation and American military protection that the US had tried to facilitate through the French, that was to be the principal objective of American international relations with Vietnam after 1954. The American commitment to this end, economically and militarily, was mammoth and unprecedented in the Third World. Douglas Dacy has calculated that between 1953-61 this amounted to US\$1.545 billion in economic assistance and US\$0.572 billion in military assistance, and between 1962-74 US\$5.770 billion in economic assistance and US\$15.566 billion in military assistance.⁵⁵ The United States took it upon itself to facilitate the construction of a capitalist state through its military and economic support of the Diem and subsequent regimes.

American policy in identifying Vietnam as being politically important should not be considered, however, in isolation from the region (and the Cold War) as a whole. As Ralph Smith has argued it is important to locate American policy towards Vietnam within a broader international context in explaining American policy, particularly some of what came to be crucial decisions. He identifies the situation in Indonesia between 1958-65 as being of critical concern to the US that not only affected US policy toward Indonesia, but also Vietnam.⁵⁶ US policy here, as in Laos and Cambodia, was conditioned by the dominance of a revolutionary-nationalist leadership. Despite the communist sympathies of Sukarno and his links with the Chinese, because of the power of the military and other non-communist factions in Indonesia, despite anti-Western rhetoric, the US maintained a political and economic link with Indonesia which was rewarded after 1965 with the military coup that toppled Sukarno and led to

⁵³ (1986) p.66.

⁵⁴ This form of American intervention to secure an 'independent' Vietnam, internally and externally, set a precedent, particularly in terms of the military form of that intervention. As Lloyd Gardner (1988) p.353-4 has remarked: '...having accepted a measure of responsibility for changing the Vietnamese government-one may dispute the degree-it was impossible to disengage.'

⁵⁵ *Foreign Aid, War and Economic Development: South Vietnam, 1955-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986) p.245.

⁵⁶ (1983) p.113.

the decimation of the PKI.

Vietnam was important in this respect because it provided a major opening with which to intervene in the region and act as a beacon of stability in an otherwise unstable and volatile region susceptible to communist subversion.⁵⁷ The American commitment to Vietnam was not, then, limited to Vietnam itself, but rather the whole of South-East Asia, and the wider goals of incorporating the region, under Japanese leadership into the capitalist world economy.

What of the form of American international relations towards Vietnam? I have mentioned the American military and economic commitment to Vietnam, but in what ways was American influence determinate on the Republic of Vietnam? And how did the form of American international relations contribute to, and detract from the goal of state building in Vietnam? In short, how did the American capitalist form of international relations work itself out in Vietnam?

American international relations with Vietnam were initially manifested in the 'political form' of the international capitalist social relation. This in many respects reflected the capitalist form in Vietnam. Because of the nature of French colonial rule, the only significant capitalist class was that of the French, and because of this French capital was tied to the colonial regime, its guarantor. In all likelihood, without the legal and political protection of the colonial state, with or without the Viet Minh, local nationalists would have sought to limit if not expel the French capitalist presence. The Indochinese social formation was, then, characterised by the structural linkage between the political and economic forms. Although this was not all-pervasive⁵⁸ it was enough to ensure French political dominance. Because of the nature of the social formation, and the lack of any other autonomous-semi or otherwise-international class or political forces, any

⁵⁷ As Smith (1985) p.142 notes: '... the purpose of military intervention in Indochina was therefore not *merely* to prevent the total collapse of other 'dominoes' at a later stage, but also to ensure sufficient stability in Indonesia and Malaysia in the short-term as well as the longer term to allow investment and economic growth...' (emphasis in original) and p.203 '... in so far as South Vietnam represented a diplomatic rather than a purely military problem, it could not be divorced from the problems of Laos, Cambodia, and of Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia... during the next year or so the various conflicts of the region would become more closely intertwined, creating a far more complex situation than that envisaged by the 'domino theory' of the 1950s. Any US decision to negotiate military withdrawal from South Vietnam depended to some extent on the solution of those other problems.'

⁵⁸ French capitalist penetration, in terms of material production and social relations, was inconsistent, variegated and centred on specific areas. Much of the rest of the land was a rural-based economy that though effected by commodity circulation and capitalist social relations were not characterised by the same kind of class and political relations as elsewhere. This being the case, the principal local class forces were not open to external relations. All political relations were mediated through the French colonial state, but the imprint of French rule was not consistently the same throughout Indochina. See M. Murray *The Development of Capitalism in Colonial Indochina (1870-1940)* (London: University of California Press, 1980) and N. Wiegarsama *Vietnam: Peasant Land, Peasant revolution. Patriarchy and Collectivity in the Rural Economy* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988).

political influence had to be channelled through the colonial state.⁵⁹

American international relations, even after the French political withdrawal still confronted the structural problem of not only the lack of a state, a political form, but also, and symbiotic with the aforementioned feature, the lack of a national capitalist class. Vietnam was, then, a 'non-political' entity, a political and economic vacuum, that faced disintegration and civil war in late 1954. This was obviously recognised by the US and explains their non-acceptance of the unification clauses of the Geneva Agreement. It seemed quite evident to them (and probably the Viet Minh too) that without some form of external intervention the southern zone would either dissolve into civil conflict between the contending political factions,⁶⁰ or be quickly subsumed, politically or militarily by the North.

The Americans quickly sought to construct a viable political entity in the South by extending military support⁶¹ to the Diem faction,⁶² and providing economic assistance.⁶³ The American intervention in support of the Diem faction quickly turned into a form of quasi stewardship of the RV. With the *de facto* emergence of a southern state, the south soon received legal and diplomatic recognition as a 'formally independent' state that had independently solicited aid and assistance from the United States with which to facilitate economic development and military security. The Republic of Vietnam was formally independent, but in practice dependent, economically and militarily, on the US.

This situation provided the fundamental political contradiction of US international relations with Vietnam. Though not a colony, and with American sensitivity to avoid the development of colonial-type relationships, the USA-RV relationship was undermined by the necessity of quasi-colonial forms of relations. This is not to suggest that the RV was a colony, it was not, nor that the RV was

⁵⁹ Indeed, as Gareth Porter (1993) p.6 has argued, the French presence transformed social relations not only in terms of the subordinate classes, but also with the political de-capitation of the traditional indigenous ruling class. The landlord class became dependent on the colonial state for their own social and material reproduction, which provided a political disincentive for politically challenging French authority. The only autonomous and significant political movement were the communists, who were able to seize power in August 1945 at the *international* conjuncture of Japanese surrender, French military weakness and the lack of any local political alternative.

⁶⁰ The French had set up a local political leadership under Bao Dai. However, he was far from being politically competent to resolve Vietnamese problems, though he claimed a mandate that covered all of Vietnam, and he did not control the majority of the country.

⁶¹ As Kahin (1986) p.71 states: 'The US quickly displaced France's political and military presence in the area, taking over as paymaster to Vietnamese civil servants and soldiers who had collaborated with the French, providing American training and advisers to the previously French officered army.' Ken Post (1989a) p.225 notes that both Diem and the US recognised the importance of military superiority in the South, which was facilitated by the setting up of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), in 1955.

⁶² Diem secured himself politically in the South with a dubious referendum victory in 1956.

⁶³ G. Kahin (1986) p.85: '.87% of the initial US grant to Diem of US\$327.4 million in 1955 was channelled through the CIP (Commercial Import Programme), and thereafter, from 1955... 1961 Washington provided Diem's government with

politically autonomous from the USA,⁶⁴ but rather, that the relationship swung between these two poles, whereby the RV had political and legal jurisdiction, in form, but in content, that 'politics' was imbued and anchored in American dollars and GIs. One could consider the politics of Vietnam as reflecting the presence of two contradictory political forms, one represented by the RV state and the other, the international expression of the American state. In form and content there was a blurring of the political boundaries that reflected the tensions between American capitalist power and the weak, but *not* absolutely dependent political edifice of the RV. We should be clear about this, because, despite the American capitalist presence, this was not sufficient to completely undermine the 'political autonomy' of the RV state. Through Diem onwards, with respect to a number of questions, from land reform to democratisation and taxation, and the efficiency of the RV state apparatus, the RV political form maintained a degree of autonomy from American power.

The presence of two political forms, however, served to undermine the overall political viability of the South. Although the RV was not 'run by Washington' it could not survive without the American capitalist political and economic presence. The RV state was, then, parasitic on the American economic form though it vied for 'political' supremacy with the American political form. The lack of a cohesive local national capitalist class, despite American economic aid⁶⁵ undermined the potential of the Vietnamese political form, which was economically structurally tied to the American presence. This was partly a result of American policy, particularly the operations of the Commercial Import Programme (CIP), but also the anti-democratic and corrupt nature of the RV state. The CIP served to ensure that the 'middle class' would remain either loyal or at least passive towards the RV state, through the provision of consumer goods and improved living standards.⁶⁶ The CIP provision of dollars effectively financed the bulk of state spending (with was concentrated on the salaries/wages of civil

a total of US\$1,447 million in economic grant aid.. mainly through CIP.'

⁶⁴ The US had a role in nearly all the changes in government, through military *coup d'etats* after 1954 in South Vietnam. The removal of Diem in November 1963 has received the most attention, but either through acquiescence or encouragement, the US acted to politically undermine the RV leadership, by seeking to ensure the political leadership in the south was compatible with Washington's political-military goals. See G. Kahin (1986) p.132-3; 183-205; 294-5; 300-5 for more on US involvement in the many coups in the RV.

⁶⁵ A provocative, but sympathetic critique of American policy in South Vietnam that focused on American aid provision which highlights the 'stagnatory' effects of US policy with respect to the development of the local economy is D. Dacy (1986).

⁶⁶ See J. Montgomery (1962) p.87.

servants, police and soldiers), but because this programme went 'through' the RV state, it resulted in an inflation of the state and a direct economic presence of the political form in the local economy. This was through the RV state's control of import licensing of the importing of US goods. The RV state in effect, reduced the autonomous sphere of local private capital, and was facilitated in this by the American channelling of aid through the RV political form.

The South Vietnamese *urban* economy was characterised by the lack of an autonomous, self re-producing capitalist class,⁶⁷ and instead a form of economics that rested on the direct presence of the RV state in the economy, through its control of import licences and distribution of American aid. But although the RV political form was 'dominant' in political-legal terms, this was only the case because of continuing American support. The American economic form, that is, the political application of economic aid was not, then, concerned with the private economy as such, but rather the RV state.⁶⁸ US economic aid, along with increasing military support after 1965, was aimed at consolidating the Vietnamese state as a viable political form, *not* the development of a private-capitalist economy. This would emerge only with a viable and independent RV state.

The problem in this strategy was that it served to 'swell' the state, but did not facilitate a *Vietnamese* capitalist political-economy. Instead the political form, though attached through its presence in the local economy, was not paralleled by a Vietnamese economic form.⁶⁹ Indeed, there was no significant alternative local 'politics' except that involving the NLF. The RV state sought to destroy or incorporate any alternative sources of politics, be they derived from a religious (the Buddhists), ethnic, local, and/or economic source. Thus, the ethnic Chinese community that dominated petty-commodity trade and much of the local

⁶⁷ See K. Post (1989b) p.84-5 and *Revolution, Socialism and Nationalism in Vietnam Volume Four: The Failure of Counter-Insurgency in the South* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co., Ltd., 1990) p.46. on this.

⁶⁸ Without the construction and consolidation of a state form in Vietnam, the operation of a capitalist economy was to be problematic. This obviously related to the ability of the state to protect property through legal sanction and force. But it also related to the consolidation of a specific form of capitalist politics that rested on a specific form of state and its relationship to society. Without the securing of a political order in South Vietnam, the further penetration of capitalist production relations would have founded on continued political contestation that included a contesting of a commodity-based economy.

⁶⁹ Indeed, as Montgomery (1962) p.88 comments: 'America's long-range plan for encouraging large-scale private expansion... was hampered by a... combination of political considerations and administrative rigidities, both American and Vietnamese. Capital goods costing over US\$1/2 million could not be imported under the CIP without special permission from Washington..... A more basic problem arose out of the disagreement about the proper form of ownership for new enterprises: the US permitted capital equipment to be imported under the CIP only for privately owned and operated enterprises, while for its part the Vietnamese government was unwilling to permit any basic industries to be controlled by French or Chinese, demanded the right to majority stock in all important enterprises. This

importing were confined to urban ghettos and politically disenfranchised.⁷⁰ Following this, though the state commanded a presence in social relations, it was detached from the 'politics' of society, in the sense that it was undemocratic, authoritarian, corrupt, and insulated from wider Vietnamese society.⁷¹

American capitalist international relations prioritised the political form in South Vietnam, and ended up distorting capitalist development despite the provisions of the CIP and the amount of money invested in South Vietnam. Instead, South Vietnam was characterised by a set of social relations characterised by widescale petty-commodity trading tied to the political form, and a stunted capitalist sector. The state was inflated but not necessarily strengthened. With the increasing intensity of the military conflict, which reached a peak by 1968, the RV state was increasingly reduced to an appendage of the American military machine. But in terms of the effective projection of American military power, the US was limited not only by the external constraints of possible Soviet and Chinese retaliation and/or intervention, but also the problem of contending with the, at times, rival political form of the RV state. In one sense, then, because of the form of American intervention in Vietnam, the economic form helped support and sustain the political form (rather than cultivating capitalist modernisation and a developed capitalist class) of the RV state, but in doing so problematised the politics of the war. By helping to sustain a degree of autonomy for the RV state the Americans, in effect, made it more difficult to prosecute the war.⁷²

The contradiction in American international relations that were identified in the nature of its capitalist presence in South Vietnam extended to the place of the military conflict in the struggle in South Vietnam. Because of the nature and dominance of the political form, particularly as it manifested itself in the military struggle with the NLF/DRV, the conduct of the war was insulated from the transformation in rural social relations through land reform. Despite American

conflict of principles seriously weakened the CIP as a device for building up the industrial sector.'

⁷⁰ The ethnic Chinese participated with the Vietnamese in the CIP, however, as Post suggests, though CIP did facilitate the emergence of a local capitalist class, it was one: '... which was not involved very heavily in production activities and was highly dependent on state patronage in the form of CIP licences and contracts; in return, payments were made to senior bureaucrats, politicians and army officers.' (1990) p.348.

⁷¹ Particularly the peasantry, the most important social constituency in Vietnam. Instead it was legitimate in the eyes of the coercive-administrative elite and sections of the middle class, but not society as a whole.

⁷² This is not to suggest that the United States intervention in Vietnam would have been assisted by an even weaker state form, to the point where the American presence was, in effect, the state. This problem underlines the contradiction of American policy that I mentioned earlier. The counter-factual ideal would have been the presence of a strong local capitalist state, which could secure more than the depth of legitimacy, independent of external support than the RV. Because this was not the case the American effort was constrained by the necessity of maintaining the legal-political jurisdiction of the RV.

calls for reform, they were not able to ensure this change because of the rival political claims of the RV state and its social constituency. Thus, the war against the guerrillas was abstracted from the social content of the war. The killing of guerrillas was the killing of guerrillas rather than social revolutionaries who were instrumental in the social transformation of Vietnamese rural social relations. However, despite the failure to offer a genuine social alternative to the communist forces, the sheer scale and intensity of American military power did manage to destroy the social and military infrastructure of the revolutionaries, which was enough to transform the final years of the war and revolution. The American projection of capitalist military power, as a technical formula, detached from social content nearly 'won' the Vietnam war by decimating the South Vietnamese peasantry. Through direct slaughter or forced migration, the countryside was almost removed of people. In this sense the nature of American capitalist power was fully apparent. The unleashing of technical-military power as an attempted solution to the social and political crisis in Vietnam. The logic of this military abstraction was that South Vietnam would remain non-communist, but that South Vietnam would not have a viable rural population or economy.

The form of American capitalist international relations toward South Vietnam reflected the tensions within the capitalist social relations between the economic and political forms as projected internationally. This was compounded by the lack of a mature and/or indigenous capitalist presence with which to secure a non-state form of politics. The US from the beginning of its relationship with South Vietnam was limited to, above all else, creating and then securing a state. Once achieved however, American international relations had to work through the political form to determine not only the politics, but also the economics of South Vietnam. By not being able to undermine the RV state, the US was locked in a framework of its own making of supporting the RV state, though that state, to a degree, obstructed autonomous capitalist development and burdened the war effort. The only area of 'political autonomy' was in the military sphere with the US between 1965 and the late 1960s directing and dominating the war. However, because of the limited political nature of the military effort and because of the contentions with the RV state over wider political goals (eg. land reform, peasant migration etc.), the military effort was reduced to an abstracted technical solution

that served to destroy the rural economy and decimate the peasantry, directly or through forced urban migration.

4. Conclusions

The international relations of the United States with the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions were concerned with limiting, and then destroying the revolution in Cuba, and preventing revolution in South Vietnam. The principal issue in these examples was how the 'unity in the separation of the political and economic forms under capitalism,' manifested themselves in American international relations with Cuba and Vietnam.

Because of the nature of American capitalist international relations, with respect to the Cuban revolution, the United States attempted to facilitate political change through the economic form. Although the success of this policy obviously related to the political situation within Cuba and the unity and strength of the revolutionary leadership, it was also related to the political nature of the American economic form in Cuba. This became quite apparent with the abrogation of the sugar quota and other politically-directed acts from Washington that exposed the political nature of the American economic presence. However, what was important in this regard was the fact that United States actually had a political presence within Cuba with which to influence the revolution despite no formal political influence. With the complete expropriation of capitalist property in Cuba after 1960, the US lost its political lever from within, and was forced to adopt a policy of externally influencing Cuban developments through more obviously 'political' sanctions. The 'economic' expropriations exposed the political nature of the 'economic' form, and also laid bare the economic necessity of capitalist production and social relations having recourse to legal and political protection. Without a legal-political structure with which to protect it in Cuba, the United States had to resort to an alternative currency based on directly political and military power.

The situation in Vietnam was different, because at the outset of US intervention there was no cohesive or national political form in South Vietnam. The project of constructing a viable state preoccupied the USA, and became the focus of political and economic aid. This was obviously underlined with the

eruption of a full-scale insurgency after 1960. The political form in Vietnam, the state, was the object of US policy through both military protection and economic assistance. However, with the concentration on making the RV politically viable, the economic form was reduced to an appendage of the RV state, which only served to undermine its long-term viability. With the increase in the insurgency and scope of social revolution in the South, the United States, because it competed, politically, with the RV state, was unable to institute economic reform, and instead detached its military policy from the wider social relations of the war. American international relations with Vietnam reflected the contradictions of the political limitations of the economic form, as a form of international relations divorced from the American political form, and the problems of applying military power abstracted from the wider social context of Vietnam. The physical destruction of the NLF's rural infrastructure also served to destroy the basis for an alternative capitalist rural South Vietnam.

Part Three: Conclusions

Chapter Eight

Conclusion: Understanding the Cold War and Its End

This thesis has sought to provide an alternative understanding of the Cold War based on a reconceptualisation of existing theoretical categories through an engagement with history. This chapter will be devoted to bringing out and summarising the main arguments of the thesis outlined at length in the preceding chapters. As well as outlining the main contributions of the thesis, the final section of this chapter will explicitly relate what has been said in the preceding chapters to the end of the Cold War.

The scope of the Cold War, in terms of temporal projection, geographical spread, and the intricate minutiae of the events, from the realms of high diplomacy, the conduct of war, to the ideological mobilisation of the masses is, arguably, beyond any single thesis. Necessarily, because of the necessities of length, structure and argument, the complexities and intricacies of the Cold War are reduced, simplified, or even ignored. This thesis has been guilty of these failings as any other work dedicated to an understanding of the Cold War.

Because this thesis has been both theoretical and historical, it may have lost the strengths of either. The elegance and parsimony of theory has been cluttered by the need to locate concepts in empirical debate. The 'evidence' and events of history have been selected into conceptual schema. However, despite the problems of matching 'theory' and 'history,' one of the central assumptions of this thesis has been the need, in any understanding of the Cold War, for the grounding of existing conceptual categories in the context of the historical uniqueness of the Cold War.

An alternative understanding of what the Cold War *was* obviously suggests an alternative focus for what needs to be explained. Thus, if the Cold War is understood as a conflict between states, then it presupposes the need to interrogate the abstract-conceptual category of the state. Such an investigation is necessarily historical and empirical. It also involves not only history, but through history, an analysis of how the reality of the state is conditioned by, and conditions other forms and currencies of human social life.

Following such a method, this thesis has put forward a number of objections to the existing understanding of the Cold War in IR theory, and proposed alternative positions. The objections were concerned with the temporal definition of the Cold War, and through this, the fixation with the appearance of the transhistorical mechanism of the balance of power as the singular explanatory formula for US-Soviet hostility. The location of the origins of the Cold War in the collapse of the wartime alliance and filling of the political vacuum in Europe after 1945 in the form of military power suggested the timeless logic and currency of state power. Through this, the Cold War was reduced to a conflict between the relative (military) strengths of each 'superpower,' and its end came with the collapse of the USSR as a viable political and military opponent of the USA.

The conceptualisation of the Cold War then within IR theory, did *not* amount to an historical recognition of the unique conjuncture of 1945, and also did not recognise the uniqueness and international impact of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. The conceptual categories that understood the Cold War, the state, military power, politics and economics, were all unqualified in the sense that they did not register the historical uniqueness of the Cold War. The dominant understanding of the Cold War located it in the emergence of militarized international relations between the USA and the USSR in Europe after 1945.¹ Despite the concerns to locate blame on American imperialism or Soviet totalitarianism, which obviously amounted to an analysis of each side's domestic politics, the core focus was the logic of state power in a competitive international system.

This lack of historical recognition was accompanied by the conceptual abstractions of state and politics. The inability to widen the definition, and meaning of politics and international relations reflected the concern to insulate the economy from the polity, and the domestic from the international. In so doing, existing theorisation overlooked the formative relationship between the state as a form of political rule, and the wider social order derived from the human relations (and conflicts) of social and material production. This should not be seen in reductionist or determinist terms, *à la* the economy determined the polity. Rather, it suggests the need to qualify what we mean by the state and politics, because

¹ This theme is followed, though at a critical distance, in the work of Robert Latham (1997) who has tried to provide an alternative explanation of why these relations became militarized.

such concepts are located in relations where their own internal nature cannot be isolated from wider social relations. How the state relates to the economy is not the only conditioning factor in the determination of state policy, but through its preservation of economic relationships, a particular kind of politics results. And such a kind of politics will determine the form of how the state, the USA or the USSR relates to other 'states' and currencies in international relations.

This is also most pertinent to the question of how the international helps determine the domestic politics of the state, and is particularly so with respect to the politics derived from within the capitalist social relation and the exchange of commodities. The state is part of a wider social and political fabric that goes beyond the formal conduct of politics via the currencies of military power and diplomacy. Moreover, not only is the state embedded in 'society,' it is also *superseded* by the social relations of capitalism. Whereas the political form of the state is confined territorially and legally to the currency of an international relations of the state, the social relations that flow from the capitalist production and exchange of commodities are not territorially or *politically* bound to the confines of the state. The logic of capitalist production and expansion is not reducible to the state, but to the accumulative drives for profit derived from the competition between capitalist firms. States obviously interfere in this, but competition and expansion are not reducible to a politics of the state, conventionally understood, but the 'relative autonomy of the economy.'

The fixation on the state-as-politics and the 'superpowers' was combined with the attendant geographical focus on Europe. The Cold War began and ended here. Although central to the understanding of the Cold War because of the juxtaposed locations of Bolshevik socialism and capitalism in Europe, the Cold War was also found in the social relations of the colonial and later Third World. Even in Europe the apparent static nature of the 'stand-off' underplayed the challenges to the existing social order on both sides of the 'iron curtain.' This obviously tempers any understanding of issues related to the 'how and why' of the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet bloc after 1989 with the extinguishing of Soviet political 'occupation' and dominance in East-Central Europe, and then the later disintegration of the USSR itself, obviously signalled a pronounced and swift termination of the alternative politics of international

bolshevism, but these events, *alone*, did not end the Cold War. Because the Cold War was more than just an international conflict between the 'superpowers' based on relative military strengths, its end, though anchored in the collapse of the Soviet bloc reflected, not only the end of Soviet socialism, but also the closing of a politics of contestation based on the historical experiences of the USSR. If this is taken seriously, then the Cold War began not in 1947, but in 1917, and did not end in 1989, but rather saw a series of ends, that although related to the position of the USSR were mainly about the viability of anti-capitalist politics in different parts of the world.

This is the critique of the existing understanding of the Cold War; what has this thesis offered as an alternative? The main argument has already been alluded to, in the need to recognise the historical uniqueness of the Cold War, and from this derive new conceptual tools with which to analyse it. This is a central epistemological premise of Marx's work,² that concepts are historically contingent. Abstract categories may have a general historical application, but to derive understanding and explanation, concepts can only be applied historically when the historical and empirical evidence allows. What follows from such a methodological and epistemological foundation is that the categories and currencies applied to the Cold War need to both historicised and located within a wider empirical setting.

The preceding chapters have sought to develop the argument over the historical uniqueness of the Cold War through a conceptual-based focus on the state as a modern (and capitalist) form of political rule, military power as a specific currency of politics, and social revolution as a unique response to capitalist expansion. The conceptual schema was then applied to more historically engaged analysis of how the 'superpowers' related to and determined the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions.

1. Politics and the State

Beginning with the state, the thesis put forward an argument that the state, as conventionally understood in IR as an institution autonomous from the empirical character of society, is in fact a modern form of political rule directly associated

² See D. Sayer *Marx's Method: Ideology, Science and Critique in Capital* Second Edition (Brighton: Harvester, 1983) and (1987) for an extended discussion.

with the emergence of capitalism and the expansion of capitalist social relations. All those entities that are called 'states' in international relations are then, historically and empirically unique, where the *general* historical rule has been how political forms have been conditioned by the expansion of capitalist social relations. What this means is that the modern state form is imbricated with the social relations of production, or how surplus is expropriated from the direct producers.³ All states, then, are singularly conditioned by the relationship between material production and political rule.

With this, the state is embedded as a political-institutional arrangement within the social relations of production. However, because of the exploitative and contradictory social relations of production under capitalism, the state is subject to continuous pressures derived from the horizontal relationship of competition between capitals, and the vertical *conflict* between labour and capital. This amounts to a contestation of political rule where the boundaries over what is designated as political or public, and economic (non-political) or private is subject to constant change. This contestation over what politics is, is not only an internal affair between capital(s), labour and the state, but also international, particularly when much of what constitutes the internal (especially of many colonial and Third World states) was conditioned by an international presence, be it directly political or indirectly so, through a capitalist-economic presence.

The state as a political form, then, is not static or fixed in terms of its domestic and international relations, but is subject to *processional* change, that at certain conjunctures is more intense and problematic than others. The most pronounced moments of the contestation of the political rule of the state, indeed, what that political rule amounts to and its institutional form, was social revolution. This saw a transformation in what the state was, and most importantly a transformation in the relationship between what constituted the public (politics) and the private spheres. These convulsions amounted to a reconstitution of politics and the writ of the politics of the state. The Bolshevik revolution was an obvious case of such a transformation, and from this, this thesis has argued, the politics and international relations of the 'superpowers' were different precisely

³ See J. Rosenberg (1994) for an extended discussion of this.

because they were founded on different relationships between the political form and the economy.

Because of the different internal relationship between the state and the economy derived from the politicisation of the economy by revolutionary social transformation, the distinction between the spheres of public-private, political-economic were abolished. With this, the politics of the Soviet Union and other revolutionary states were *reduced* to a politics of the political form or the state. The private political capacity of the economy of private capitalist production and competition was abolished. The Soviet Union was characterised by a distinct conception and realisation of internal politics, which determined the *form* of its international relations. Because the USSR and other revolutionary states did not have a private economy characterised by a politics associated with capitalist social relations, it did not have the internal capacity to relate to the international system through such a currency of relations. Economic relations were directly tied to the political form, and these were, in effect, political relations. The economy did not function autonomously from the state.

This self-limitation of politics to the political form obviously inflected the meaning of 'politics,' and meant that the international relations of the USSR were quite visible, in the sense that without a direct Soviet presence in the form of Communist Party and/or the Red Army, then the USSR could not cultivate any substantive international relations. The Soviet 'expansion' into East-Central Europe after 1945 typified this in that the USSR could not offer an alternative means of determining the politics of these states. Without an explicit Soviet commitment and presence there was no way that the USSR could be sure that its objectives could be realised in the region.

The Soviet form of international relations, then, suggests that the Soviet state was unique both in its own internal relations with Soviet society and also in its wider relations with the international system. The relationship between politics and economics was determinant. However, it goes beyond this to the point that the USSR was characterised by a distinctive form of international (extra-territorial) expansion. Expansion was singularly political, because the economy was not autonomous. The economy did not operate according to the competitive drives of the market based on 'anarchical competition.' Instead, the economy

functioned as an appendage of the Party-state. Its logic of production, distribution and consumption was not decided on the altar of competition, but rather through the *political* decisions of state-planning authorities. Because of this, the form of expansion was always political, directly related to the Soviet state. Whether the USSR would sell products, invest, or buy goods and so forth was not decided economically but politically. And this being the case, expansion, or the extension of Soviet 'social relations' rested on the political decisions of the Party state. The logic of international relations and expansion were directly related to the internal political form.

Because of the coupling of the political form with social and material production, the distinction between the domestic and international spheres was blurred. Moreover, because the Soviet form of international expansion was limited to the state, the only alternative means for the 'expansion' of a Soviet politics was through direct political relations with other revolutionary states. The logic of Soviet international relations, then, had to rely on social revolution as the only possible means (beyond a direct Soviet political presence) to increase Soviet international power and undermine Western capitalist power. However, this relationship between the USSR and international revolution was tempered not only by American containment policy, particularly the deployment of American strategic-nuclear power, but also between how Soviet international relations would influence the internal social relations and contradictions within the USSR. This centred on the relationship between the political project of augmenting the material base of the USSR, and how this was to be achieved within the existing form of political rule, which rested on an alienated politics of the Party-state. International relations, then, because they were confined to a single currency had the ability to undermine *and* bolster the internal form of politics by securing social and material improvements that helped ensure Party-state unity, and also the continued passivity and loyalty of the Soviet people. What this amounted to, in terms of the uniqueness of Soviet international relations, was that they were *constituted* in the *interaction* of the domestic form with the international system, where the *form* of relations was *determined* by the internal nature of each, and the *content* was determined by the relationship between the domestic and international.

This was also the case with the international relations of the United States in the Cold War. The domestic constitution of the USA, as a capitalist state characterised by a qualitatively different set of social relations and relationship between production and rule, determined the form of international relations, where the substance of those relations were determined by the interaction of the domestic with developments in the international system not reducible to the capitalist nature of the USA. The most important (defining) feature of capitalist forms of international relations is the parcelization of authority (politics) between the economic and political form. Capitalist international relations, exemplified by the USA in the Cold War reflected this in that the form of how the United States related to the international system mirrored the internal private political capacity of a politics derived from the social relations of capitalism.

This amounted to a politics that was not always or directly tied to the manifestation of the political form. Thus, the USA could secure an expansion of its politics through the expansion of the social relations that follow, and were embedded within, American commodities. This private political capacity was partly determining of American international relations during the Cold War, alongside the role of more obvious manifestations of American political power as in directly coercive power. Whereas the USA could cultivate an international politics through capitalist production and exchange relations, as occurred in Western Europe and elsewhere after 1945, the USSR could not. The expansion of American capitalist social relations did not appear as a politics of expansion, as it did not require a direct political presence. American interests could be realised without the necessity of a direct and coercive intervention.

The distinct nature of American international relations that reflected the division derived from the capitalist social relation within the USA was also present with a distinct form and logic of international expansion. Political expansion was not reducible to the creation of alliances or treaty commitments (though these were not always separable), but also consisted of an economic form of political expansion that was not reducible to a politics of the state. Because of the anarchical and competitive nature of capitalist production derived from the secular logic of accumulation, economic expansion through the competition between capitals served a political purpose in the increasing circulation of

commodities and the material capabilities that followed. American political influence, although it appeared in the international private sphere still amounted to a politics. Politics, as it is conventionally understood in terms of rule through the political-legal entity of the state, only became an issue when it was directly contested, when the conflicts located in the social relations of capitalist expansion surfaced as direct challenges to formal political authority (ie. when the social-class antagonism could not be confined to the private sphere), but only resolved through the direct participation of the state, either in its political transformation or use of directly coercive power. This final distinction, then, between the international relations of the USA and the USSR was that the former's international relations did not rest, *systematically*, on a directly and coercive formal political presence. This coercive presence obviously relates to military power, which I will turn to next.

2. Military Power as a Currency of Politics

The role of military power in the Cold War directly related to the constitutive nature of those political forms that dominated the Cold War. Military power, this thesis has argued, cannot be separated out from its own social and material production within a specific social order, and the politics that flow from such an order. How military power was determinant for the international relations of the Cold War, then, obviously related to the role it played in the realisation and reproduction of American capitalism and Soviet bolshevism. This has been alluded to already in the argument concerning the forms of politics associated with each 'superpower,' and how far each was constituted by the necessity of a direct and coercive political presence. Military power was the *ultima ratio* of such a politics, and in comparison was visibly more constitutive of the Soviet political form than the American.

Military power was more visible as a currency of politics in the USSR and its international relations than the USA. This was evidenced not only in the militarized nature of the USSR but also in its form of international relations, particularly in the necessity of military power (through physical occupation) in East-Central Europe after 1945. The USSR, then, was much more reliant on coercive-military power in securing political objectives than the USA.

Paradoxically, however, this reliance did not make the USSR a militarist power in the sense of the aggressive use of military power in the Cold War. The USSR was singularly cautious in its use of military power, particularly as compared to the USA. This is not to suggest that the USSR was pacific or benign; when it did use military power it did so brutally and effectively. Rather, it suggests the impact of the international military context that was dominated by American strategic power.

Despite the augmentation of Soviet military power through the defeat of Nazism, Soviet military power served as a political policing instrument in 'occupied' East-Central Europe. It was not until the December 1979 intervention in Afghanistan that the USSR mounted what was seen as an offensive military act in the Cold War.⁴ Soviet military power, then, was seldom used as a political instrument outside of the recognised Soviet sphere of interest. This reflected the inability of Soviet international relations to have a logic of expansion beyond a direct political form, and it also reflected the concern to not provoke a military counter-response from the USA. The irony in the role of military power in the Cold War, was that despite the removal of military power from the direct servicing of the social order, both within and between the advanced capitalist states, the fact that American international capitalist power did *not* rest on a systematic application of military power, the United States projected military power more readily and aggressively in the Cold War than the USSR. This projection of military power reflected general American military preponderance during the postwar period, and the fact that because of the contradictory and antagonistic expansion of capitalist social relations, the rule of political forms was frequently challenged.

Military power and its projection deeply inflected the international system during the Cold War. Because of the form of the contestation of capitalism (principally in the Third World), US capitalist power in its military form was, at specific conjunctures, used to contain or suppress revolutionary upheavals, with mixed success. However, the general military posture of the USA, was enough to caution any possible Soviet attempts at direct political expansion through military power. Although Soviet military power was equally

⁴ In terms of the direct deployment of Soviet troops and command within another sovereign state that was not part of a Soviet military alliance.

effective (particularly when approximate strategic parity had been reached by the late 1960s) in deterring any escalation of the use of military power in particular conflicts, Vietnam being the most important case.

The role of military power in the Cold War did serve, then, as an important determinant of the relative international strengths of the USSR and the USA and revolutionary social transformation and capitalist expansion, respectively. It should not, however, be decoupled from the wider social relations of each social order. Although military power and strategic victories were important for each 'superpower' during the Cold War, such issues were tied up with each one's internal form, where the space for politics was greater in the social order that could realise itself without the necessity of using military power. This was especially the case, when the rational use of military power was circumscribed by the devastating potential of nuclear war.

Military power, however, should not be seen from a purely 'strategic' perspective. Its role within the Cold War was not only as a means to secure strategic objectives, but also (and influenced by strategic developments) in the internal reproduction of each social order. In this respect, the costs and benefits incurred by the production and development of the *materiel* of military power were not evenly shared by the 'superpowers.' Although the militarisation of the American economy during the Cold War may have served, in the long-term, to undermine the overall competitiveness and health of the US economy vis-à-vis its capitalist competitors, it also managed to provide a number of economic advantages. However, despite the financial costs to the US of maintaining such high levels of military spending, because the US was in a unique economic position throughout most of the Cold War, and because it could draw on international credit, its economic strength and capacity for military production was not *confined* to the American economy alone.

The contrary was the case with the USSR. Although Soviet internal and international politics were largely embedded in coercive-military power, the main contradiction and dynamic within the USSR concerned the development of productive forces. This was both an internal and international issue, in the sense that only through a continued expansion and growth in the Soviet economy could the problem of maintaining an alienated form of political rule be addressed.

Economic problems (more so in East-Central Europe) were explicitly political both within the leadership of the Party-state, and between the form of political rule and the Soviet people. Military spending undermined the social and material goals of Soviet bolshevism to the point that the USSR sought to use its increased military power to press the USA into formal negotiations to demilitarise, and thus allow resources devoted to military production to be used in the civilian economy.

This problem was also associated with the theoretical paradigm of Soviet bolshevism that predicted the surpassing of capitalist levels of the development of the forces of production. Continued military spending reduced the possibility of this. This was compounded by wider international developments, particularly the USSR's revolutionary commitments as leader of the international communist movement, and its project of reducing American-capitalist power. Because of its limited form of international relations, and also because of the American military threat towards other revolutionary states (Cuba and Vietnam being exemplary), the USSR had to carry the burden of offering military support and protection, which not only undermined its own economic capacity to service its own material development, but also exacerbated it by provoking the USA into a military response. The impact of military power in the long-run, then, could be seen to have exposed the inherent contradictions within the Soviet social form, whereby the international project was limited to a reliance on military power that served to undermine the defining political relationship within the USSR between the form of political rule and the social relations of social and material production.

3. Capitalism and Revolutionary Social Transformation

The issue of what constituted 'politics' and how this related to military power in the Cold War was most acutely reflected in the episodes of revolutionary social transformation after 1917, but particularly after 1945. A focus on these historical conjunctures highlighted the redefinition of the forms and substance of state and military power in the Cold War. The crucial point in this regard was that revolutionary conjunctures were moments, where specific (and unique) forms of class-based forms of political agency sought to renegotiate the relationship between politics and economics, and between the domestic and international.

They were the outcome of ruptures derived from the contradictions between the existing relationship of the state and the social relations of social and material production. These contradictions, however, were not only derived from the class-based conflicts between the state, as a social relation of production and the economy, but were explicitly located in the politics that accompanied the penetration and absorption by international capitalism of these social forms.

Revolutionary social transformation emphasized the international nature of capitalist social relations and the distinction between the (trans-territorial nature) of the economic form and the (limited legal-territorial nature) of the political form. Revolutions were attempts to sever the political from the economic form, and through that to reconstitute a national politics. By expelling or expropriating international capital, revolutions provoked a political response from the advanced capitalist states because the 'politics of the economic form' had been combined, directly, (using military-coercive power and class-based mobilisations) with the political form of the state.

These convulsions were conditioned by the general international climate of the Cold War, and indeed fuelled that climate. The expropriation of private property, and the conscious attempts to pioneer alternative class and national-based forms of social organisation and political authority necessarily rested on a conflict with the advanced capitalist states, and the possibility for expansion of Soviet international influence and power. Because of the limitation on, and then complete abolition of the private political sphere, the source of a capitalist 'economic politics' was extinguished, exposing the only alternative form of a capitalist politics, a direct political presence. Because revolutionary states renegotiated the relationship between political authority and the social relations of economic production, and also between the international and domestic by suppressing the international politics of the capitalist social relation, they forced capitalist states, and principally the USA to use direct and mainly coercive forms of politics to determine things. The only way that capitalist states could condition the internal politics of the revolutionary states was through directly undermining them by attempting to expose and cultivate alternative currencies of politics within those states. Because this could not be achieved through the economic

form it had to be achieved, coercively using military power through the political form.

Whereas capitalist states saw their space for manoeuvre and cultivating influence limited, the USSR, because of the nature of revolutionary social transformation, and the nature of the form and content of Soviet international relations saw the potential for expanding Soviet international power. Because of the transparency of Soviet international relations, and the fact that it had to be via the revolutionary state there was no question or possibility (particularly for those states that did not border the USSR) of the USSR nurturing an alternative form of politics based on replacing the organisational form of the revolutionary state.⁵ However, the basis of this extension of Soviet international influence did not rest on Soviet policy, but rather on the outcome of contradictions found within international capitalist expansion. The expansion of Soviet international power through social revolution was dependent on the successful (revolutionary) transformation of specific conjunctures of capitalist crises. Although the USSR could be decisive, especially in the provision of military support, what was *always* determinant was the strength of the local revolutionary political leadership and the class-based support that it could secure.

It was not only the Soviet form of international relations and how it related to revolutionary states that facilitated closer relations, but also the content of both the objectives of revolutionary social transformation and Soviet international objectives. Because of the limited possibilities for Soviet international 'political expansion,' social revolution, through its abrogation of capitalist politics provided the only alternative means for the reduction of international capitalist power, and the possibilities for the construction of nationalist or 'socialist' forms of material development and social relations. Although Soviet relations with other revolutionary states were far from cordial all the time, they were the only means of extending an area of anti-imperialist politics with which to challenge American international power. However, despite the mutual concern with American hostility, because of the form of the relationship between the USSR and revolutionary states, the content of the relations, particularly ideological disagreements, had the potential to have

⁵ However, this is not to suggest that the USSR did not attempt to determine the internal politics within the revolutionary state by focusing influence through a particular faction within the revolutionary state.

profound domestic and international consequences. The restricting of the currency of politics, though transparent, did not allow political-ideological discord to be easily overcome.

The extension of anti-capitalist international relations depended on successful class-based revolutionary social transformations. These were the only coherent forms of removing internal capitalist power and laying the foundations for a 'socialist politics.' However, because of the local necessity of a strong and independent revolutionary leadership, it undermined the possibility of the USSR getting its way. Whereas 'national' revolutionary transformations did not see the possibility for long-term and entrenched 'Soviet-type' positions, those social revolutions that did, ended up in many cases challenging Soviet international authority. The possibilities for Soviet expansion through international revolution, then, was not a 'one way street,' as Cuba and Vietnam highlighted, they exposed the USSR to as many problems as benefits.

4. The Ends of the Cold War

The historical developments associated with the contradictions within, and contestation of capitalist social relations that social revolution was but one of, directly relate to the dynamic of the Cold War and its end. The events in Europe in 1989 were part of this dynamic, as they clearly reflected the internal contradictions and problems within the Soviet bloc and its form of political rule. The internal collapse of the Soviet dominated political order was due to the emergence of alternative currencies of politics within it that challenged the supremacy of the Party-state. Whereas in the past these forms of alternative politics had been quashed, with the official sanction of the Soviet leader Gorbachev they were allowed to flourish.

The ending of the 'Brezhnev doctrine' effectively reduced the political power of the local party-state by withdrawing its defining currency of politics. With this opening alternative currencies, within society at large and also within communist parties, emerged to challenge the existing political form with an alternative (Western-derived) conception of politics. However, what is important in these developments, was that just as revolutionary social transformation (imposed by the USSR after 1945) had abolished the distinction between public

and private, political and economic, so the changes initiated by Gorbachev, and manifested in East-Central Europe in 1989 served to re-negotiate those boundaries. It was not only this, but the relationship between the domestic and international was also reconstituted.

Because of the justified hostility to the authoritarian-coercive nature of the existing political form, the focus of peoples' concern was to remove the obvious political authoritarianism of Party-state rule. However, this internal political goal was infused with the renegotiation of the relationship between the domestic and international. The subsequent redefinition of politics, then, that saw the decoupling of the private (economic) sphere from the state went alongside the opening of this private sphere to the international. This came not only in the import of capital and commodities from the West, but also in terms of travel and the lifting of other restrictions on the freedom of the individual.

The result was that the foundations were laid for the penetration of capitalist social relations in the Soviet bloc. This is not suggest that this was an even and determined process. There were great variations between different countries. But the institutional and organisational foundations were laid for the separation of the spheres of political rule and social-material production. With the removal of Soviet military power and the coercive apparatus, the state, because it had become so alienated from wider social relations was left detached and without *active* support. This made it easier for alternative currencies of politics to emerge and grow, particularly when the internal political vacuum had been pierced by the influx of Western-capitalist influence.

The situation within the USSR was slightly different. Gorbachev's internal programme of *reforming* the relationship between the Party-state and the economy was also premised on renegotiating the international position of the USSR. This, for Gorbachev, was an admission that the USSR's international relations of the Cold War could not facilitate continued material development. Gorbachev's reforms highlighted the linkage between the internal politics of the USSR and its international relations. The change in one realm could not be achieved without change in the other.

Because of the nature of the USSR's form of international relations, a new form of international relations, not based on a coercive-military politics,

rested on the need to redefine the relationship between politics and economics within the USSR. Without this the USSR would not have been able to offer an alternative form of international relations not solely derived from the political form of rule. Gorbachev recognised, then, the need for a reconstitution of the currency of Soviet politics. The form of Soviet international relations was *determined* by its internal constitution. However, to be able to do this not only rested on positive internal changes, but also the transformation of the content of those relations, without which there was little likelihood that his hope of demilitarizing Soviet international relations could be realised. This amounted to a public commitment to ensure the USA that the USSR would not try to expand its international influence through supporting revolution and thus challenging American power. With this, the ideological and political link that had defined Soviet foreign policy since 1917 was broken, and with it the form of Soviet international relations. The USSR committed itself to instituting conventional international relations with all states, rather than seeking to prioritise unique relations with specific kinds of state.

The severing of the link between the USSR and international social revolution, effectively, terminated the possibility of the USSR continuing to offer an international political alternative to Western capitalism. This was a reflection of the internal material costs that such a link had helped produce for the USSR in the Cold War, particularly when that link was most pronounced in political-military relations and how this impinged on the USSR's own internal material goals. However, it went beyond this to include the wider contestation of the American capitalist-led international order. The Cold War finally ended in 1989 with the USSR closing the department of the Party-state dedicated to fostering links with international revolutionary movements. However, this focus on the events of 1989, important though they were presupposes the definition of the Cold War as a conflict between the USA and the USSR.

Although the 'superpower' relationship was at times conditioning of the Cold War, the dynamic of the Cold War actually lay in the politics of the contestation of the postwar international order, particularly the conscious attempts by specific forms of left-wing political agency to challenge the international capitalist order and reconstitute alternative forms of politics. If this is taken

seriously then the Cold War may have finally ended in 1989, but these events should not be seen in isolation from the 'ends' in terms of the failure or containment of 'leftist' and socialist alternatives to capitalism that were reflective of other parts of the world. Such ends were directly tied up with the conduct of the USA and the USSR, particularly in Western Europe after the Second World War, where the organised Left found itself within a social and historical conjuncture favourable to radical social transformation. It was the actions of the United States, principally, in Western Europe using its direct political and economic presence to support local non-communist forces that had a major impact on subsequent developments in Western Europe. In this sense, the hopes of radical social and political transformation in Western Europe were to be lost by 1947-8, with the isolation of communists and other radicals, and was not helped by Soviet actions in the East. The internal 'revolutionary' challenge to the capitalist order in Western Europe had been either incorporated into the institutions of the status quo or effectively marginalised. In effect the Cold War within Europe was over with the internal political defeat of the radical left.

This, however, was not the case elsewhere. With decolonisation and the transformation of political structures throughout the world, political power was contested and with this the relationship between political power and the economy. These challenges were not temporally or geographically confined, but reflected the power of class-based movements, and the forces of the status quo, usually supported by the USA. The Cold War continued from one 'theatre of conflict' to another, in one area being decided by force of arms, in another by democratic procedure. Whereas the Cold War ended in Western Europe by the late 1940s and East-Central Europe by the late 1980s, it ended in Chile in 1973, and in Indonesia in 1965. It depended on the local strengths of the radical Left and the existing state opposing it. Whereas for most of the post-1917 period the international radical left could look to secure some guidance and support from the USSR, with the transformation of the USSR under Gorbachev the legacy of 1917 was finally laid to rest.

The 'ends' of the Cold War defies a single temporal and geographical position. Yet the collapse of the Soviet bloc was a monumental conclusion to the failure of the revolutionary left to foster an alternative internal and international

politics. Although the Cold War in Latin America, Southern Africa and South Asia was about the *local* political conflicts that were generalised as challenges to the local and international capitalist order, their long-term strength and viability was partly conditional on securing degrees of economic and military support from the USSR. With the collapse of the 'politics of the USSR,' not only did the USSR withdraw from contesting international politics itself, but also the local manifestations of that politics, in terms of ideology, organisation and strategy, disintegrate. Thus, despite the fact that international revolution was *not* reducible to either the policy or form of the Soviet bloc, it *was* reducible to the actuality of its international existence and the social and political relations that it instituted. Without the Soviet bloc, as a material, social, political and military presence, there was no international alternative to capitalism.

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