

Towards a Pluralist Socialism

Adrian Bua
University of East Anglia

Introduction

Since the 1950's pluralism has become perhaps the most influential theory of the political process in democratic capitalism. Due to pluralism's embrace of capitalist property relations it is not surprising that Marxism and Pluralism are viewed practically as diametrical opposites. Marxists view the pluralist notion of "polyarchy", where apathy is turned into a sign of health for democracy, as a super-structural construct which legitimates capitalist socio-economic structure thus encouraging mass acquiescence to its logic. However, in what could be seen as a vindication of the Marxist critique of polyarchy, pluralism's failure to account for the poor performance of the American political economy in the period following the second world war led major pluralists such as Dahl and Lindblom to call for considerable structural reforms, advocating the need for substantive equality through wealth distribution. They called the American capitalist system itself into question, contending that it "remains both sluggish and feckless in advancing on problems on which it has the advantage of decades of

experience in policy making: poverty and mal-distribution of income and wealth, racial inequality, healthcare, public education, inflation and unemployment and industrial relations, for example” (Dahl & Lindblom in Manley 1983 p 372)

Since then Dahl has increasingly called his own theory into question, reflecting upon the notion that polyarchic democracy is the most the current capitalist system can deliver or allow, “In the twentieth century, the existence of a market oriented capitalist economy in a country has been favourable to democratization up to the level of polyarchy; but it is unfavourable to democratization beyond the level of polyarchy” (Dahl 1996 p 646) Considering this, Dahl’s posed the question “under twenty first century conditions would democracy be better served by some new institutions, that would complement or perhaps even replace polyarchy? (Ibid p 648)

The failure of the “real socialist” alternative in the twentieth century is taken by many to provide a negative answer to this question. The high hopes bought about by the October revolution were undermined by the real socialist system’s incapacity to mediate political difference (cf Held 1999) When politics did not begin to “end” with the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Marx was deemed to have envisaged, Soviet Marxism became wrong footed, leading to many gross repressions. Therefore, with the sudden collapse of much of the socialist bloc in the late twentieth century it became fashionable for free market ideologues to write with a strong triumphalist streak (c.f. inter-alia Fukuyama 1989 & 1992, Friedman 1997) This even led Fukuyama to proclaim that pluralist politics and free market economics constituted the end of ideological history as envisaged by Hegel. Considering the dangerous situation humanity finds itself in at this present juncture, such complacent views are hugely undesirable. They seem more of a case of unsubstantiated theoretical ecstasy than a credible account of the state of the planet. As a sober Alexander Solzhenitsyn warned shortly after the collapse of the Eastern Communist bloc “although the earthly ideal of socialism-communism has collapsed, the problems it purported to solve remain: the brazen use of social advantage and the inordinate power of money, which often direct the very course of events. And if the global lesson of the twentieth century does not serve as a healing inoculation, the vast red whirlwind may repeat itself in entirety” (in New York Times, 28/10/1993) Humanity urgently needs to find a more sustainable, equitable and democratic alternative.

To approach this end the essay will demonstrate how democracy can be improved through a reconciliation of the Marxist focus on the economic structure of society and the pluralist focus on the mediation of political difference. That is to say, I will demonstrate why class analysis is a better critical tool to understand the nature of power in advanced Western societies - laying the groundwork for an improved democratic model for modern societies - and argue that the establishment of a post-capitalist society needs the mediating influence of 'the politics of autonomous groups' if it is not to repeat the mistakes of "real socialism" in the twentieth century, ultimately posing the case for a pluralist-socialism.

The ruling class in polyarchy

The notion of a ruling class is extremely corrosive for pluralism. Clearly, the harmony of interests between competing groups would be completely corrupted by the privileged position afforded to a ruling class. If democracy is taken at its etymological meaning "rule by the people", indicating that the electorate is sovereign, there is not much space to call polyarchy democratic at all if sovereignty is, in fact, possessed by a ruling elite. This is the central notion behind Robinson's (1996) critique of "polyarchic democracy". In contrast, "popular democracy", though it does not enjoy a theory as fully elaborated as its counterpart (thus strengthening the hegemony - in the Gramscian sense - of the polyarchic view) is rooted in Rousseauian-Marxist traditions and places much of the criteria for democracy in outcome. In doing so, "popular democracy" incorporates various considerations of 'social justice', "in which the construction of a democratic political order enjoys a theoretically internal relation to the construction of a democratic socio-economic order" (Ibid p 624). Unlike "popular democracy", by separating the economic from the political, "polyarchic democracy" is able to place the criteria for democracy completely in process eliminating considerations of outcome, thus enabling elites to embrace "democracy" without fearing a challenge to their power. Essentially, in this section I aim to begin to show through class analysis how social outcome can itself corrupt the democratic process. Notwithstanding the liberal separation of economic and politics, the analysis of power (which the essay shall argue to be economically formulated, thus showing this separation to be largely illusory) retains make or break implications for any theory of democracy.

There has been much debate and disagreement as to how power is structured in western capitalist societies. However, C.W. Mill's dismissal of Pluralist theory and its assumed harmony of interests as a "set of images out of a fairy tale" (Mills in Barrow 2007 p 407) was one of inter-disciplinary appeal, accepted by Marxists and elitists alike. Nevertheless, Mills was dismissive of the Marxist notion of a ruling class. Instead he maintained that both practically and theoretically, military, economic and political institutions are a separate source of power, the division of which hinders the emergence of a "ruling class" which would dominate the three spheres. For Mills "ruling class" was a "badly loaded phrase" which presupposed the automatic translation of economic power to political power by joining the purely economic term "class" with a political term "rule". Instead of assuming such "vulgar economic determinism" Mills contended it was more appropriate to talk of the "Power Elite", constituted by institutional trident (economic, political and military) providing separate sources of power.

Mill's dismissal of Pluralism as an adequate description of the way power was structured in American Democracy was well received by pluralism's critics across the political spectrum. However, it is of no great surprise that his separation of the economic, political and military spheres was heavily criticised. Sweezy was the first to elaborate what would become the most popular critique amongst Marxists - "the 'power elite' is overwhelmingly recruited from the upper levels of the class system, the same families contribute to the economic, military and political elites and the same individuals move easily and imperceptibly back and forth from one to other of these 'elites'" (Sweezy in Ibid p 410) Essentially, Mill's own empirical research showed that the "institutionary trident" was controlled by the same social class. Furthermore, Mills failed to appreciate the emerging role of finance capital and financial groups as the emerging vanguard of the capitalist class, which has grown to unprecedented levels at the present. Gore Vidal (born into this class and thus in a good position to know) marks out this 'capitalist class' as the richest 1 percent of American society. He provides an interesting account of how this class rules in the US- "they do get together at Bohemian Grove and they do a lot of picking of Secretaries of State. But they don't have to conspire. They all think alike.... You don't have to give orders to the editor of the New York Times. He is in place because he will respond to a crisis the way you want him to, as will the President, as will the head of Chase Manhattan Bank" (Gore Vidal in Schweickart, 2002 p 106)

Admittedly, it is too simple to say that the ruling class rules by virtue of them 'all thinking alike'. Another basic and crude mechanism in modern polyarchies for political control is the funding of political campaigns, but there is a variety of other ways in which economic power translates into political power. Schweickart notes that ruling class rule is of an implicit and tacit form, "for in capitalist polyarchy, where it is theoretically possible for a political party to challenge the basic institutions of the system, it is crucial that the interests of the capitalist class are well formulated and buttressed by argument and data that will make it appear that these interests coincide with the general interest" (Schweickart 2002, p 108) This is done through an array of private foundations and think tanks (in the USA varying from moderate conservative or "liberal" such as the Ford Foundation to right wing bastions such as the Cato and Hoover Institutes) which draw up legislation, research policy providing a steady supply of "experts" to testify before representatives and appear on the media.

However, the most formidable weapon to make government conform in the capitalist class's arsenal is the "investment strike". Should government seek to instigate policies which are unfriendly to "business interests" or the "free market", contradicting the interests of Capital, this mechanism comes into play. Recession ensues and unemployment increases, especially in poorer nations where the "investment strike" of local capitalists is made worse by the backing of western capital. In polyarchy government leaders are held responsible for economic performance, so as long as production is directed by those who make no contribution to actual production (i.e. as long as investment remains in private hands) governments will automatically cater for the needs of the capitalist class in order to survive. A capitalist economy is structured in such a way that any alternative seems undesirable. As long as the basic institutions required by capitalism remain in place, *prima facie* it appears favourable to everyone to appease the needs of capital. Even if capitalism's blatant deficiencies are crystal clear and a more rational and humane mode of production is possible, once in place, capitalism has an extraordinary ability to perpetuate itself. By limiting democracy to political process polyarchy enables ruling class domination of polyarchic systems, producing an outcome which would be defined by Aristotle as "oligarchy" or "plutocracy" with considerable accuracy.

This is the central notion behind Manley's critique of revised pluralism. What he calls "pluralism II" still denies the importance of class, whilst

contending that “business interests” dominate polyarchy. Furthermore, it attempts to reconcile the need for major structural change through distribution of income and wealth, more social ownership of productive means whilst supporting incrementalism and the continued necessity of “social pluralism” for democracy (Manely 1893 p 369 - 373) The problem is that “Pluralism II” defends and attempts to justify the same system that bought about the need for revision in the first place. Pluralism II is still dominated by the perceived necessity and desirability of a capitalist mode of production, blinding it from the central cause of these inefficiencies within polyarchy, the capitalist economy. Conversely, class analysis “sees the maintenance of inequality under capitalism not as a failure of polyarchy - not as an incapacity or even a perversity - but as the whole point” (Ibid. p 372) Pluralism laments polyarchy’s failure to promote equality but, regardless, still views capitalist production as inherently linked to social pluralism and thus justifies its continued existence, even following reform. However, class analysis transcends this view seeing polyarchy’s shortcomings as part of the larger picture - the political economy of capitalism. Essentially, pluralism II fails to accept that economic transformation is the sine qua non of a radically democratized political system and this incapacitates it from proposing anything new.

Socialism and “TINA”

However, the “failure” of the “popular democratic” alternative in the twentieth century has served to justify such a limited definition of democracy. Karl Marx has long been criticised, with justification, for the failure of his predictions concerning the spread of Socialist revolutions. It is not surprising that his analysis of history is more respected than his ‘futurology’, this is especially so in the contemporary world where alternatives with the potential to mobilise the masses in opposition to the current market capitalist/liberal democratic order seem virtually non-existent (Fukuyama 1989 & 1992) The pervasiveness of the “There is no alternative” (TINA) ideology has even come to dominate discourse on the mainstream left in Western societies, where hopes for a more humane society are limited to ‘taming’ or ‘humanising’ capitalism rather than replacing it. Even the most fervent opposition in Western societies to the current globalised capitalist order, embodied by the anti-globalization movement, at most calls itself “anti-capitalist”, when alternatives are proposed (whether based on “old-left” or “autre-mondiste” thought) they are often convoluted and confused

with fundamental areas of disagreement (Schweickart 2002) Here one can invoke another, somewhat ignored aspect to Marx's predictions, concerning the future of capitalism, which can serve to redeem him from the failure of so many Socialist revolutions - "The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode as self evident natural laws. The organization of the capitalist process of production, once it is fully developed, breaks down all resistance" (Marx in Lebowitz 2006 p 29)

Considering Rosa Luxembourge's stress that "the working class demands the right to make its own mistakes and learn in the dialectic of history" (Luxembourge 1904) whilst adding a Gramscian perspective concerning bourgeois "hegemony" and the creation of "false consciousness" (Gramsci 1971) complements Marx on this point and can liberate Marxist analysis from the crude economic determinism expressed in the quote above. However this essay shall not consider the views, though by no means are they discarded, that Socialism "failed" due to the mistakes of the proletariat and its leaders, or that TINA is a result, not of Liberalism's "victory" but of the ideological hegemony of bourgeois values and the ensuing passivisation of the working class. For now I wish to bring attention to an aspect of the relationship between capitalism and democracy, which is somewhat ignored by Marxism and discourse in general.

Capitalism's corrosive influence upon democracy is an area which has attracted much debate among and between Marxists, Pluralists, Liberals etc. Classic liberal philosophers at times of early capitalism were extremely concerned about the threat to property that an extension of political equality (suffrage) to the mass propertyless would entail. Thus at a time of such capitalist hegemony, where universal suffrage has been the norm in many Western societies for over a century, the dominant "common sense" view that capitalism is democracy's natural concomitant poses a paradox. Aswell as explaining this in terms of "bourgeois ideological hegemony" Marxism should pay more attention to the influence "democracy" has had upon capitalism.

Far from being a tool to passivise the masses, as some forms of "vulgar" Marxism suggest, increases in political equality served to limit capitalism's excesses, in some places more than others, preventing the system from implosion. The application of universal suffrage and the myriad of rights

gained through years of class struggle has served to curb capitalism's tendencies for exploitation. When critiquing C.W. Mill's exaggerated image of "the Power Elite's" (Mill 1956) omnipotence Herbert Aptheker states this in different terms - "Between the will of that elite and its capabilities of implementing that will, stands public opinion... and this public opinion does affect what the elite tries to do and what it does and how it does what it does... in whole areas of life as in wages and working conditions, housing and education... the desires and power of the masses do exert a great influence..." (Aptheker in Barrow 2007 p 415) Arguably it is polyarchic democracy's ability to mediate, even if such mediation is not satisfactory or favours certain forces over others, between the conflict of interests outlined in the excerpt above that curbed or obstructed to some extent (in some places more than others) the dictatorship of property that unbridled capitalism would create. The vehement and justified opposition an unbridled dictatorship of property would entail is something which undoubtedly influenced Marx's predictions. Clearly, the ruling class has consistently looked to curb and undermine the power of organized labour and has been granted a position of privilege and power in capitalist society to do so. Nevertheless, capitalism has survived, not just due to 'bourgeois ideological hegemony' and the failure of the twentieth century Socialist alternative, but also, in no small part due to 'representative democracy' or "polyarchy" itself. To an extent, this enabled the working class to imprint its class consciousness upon many Liberal societies, enabling them to adapt and incorporate 'socialistic' influences, whilst their "real socialist" counterparts became politically stagnant and almost monolithic.

Bill Warren argues this notion reflects an original aspect of Marxism which years of revision has obfuscated and confused, even forgotten. He laments the fact that the established socialist powers of the twentieth century and the organized working classes in Western societies came to support anti-colonial nationalism in the developing world following the Second World War. This resulted in "the domination of the (third world) working class movement by populist nationalism... reinforced by the petty-bourgeois ideology of 'neo-colonialism', which tends to divert and dampen internal class struggles by channelling mass discontent against external alleged enemies" (Warren 1980 xii) The theoretical fulcrum of this corruption of Marxism is the revised/ignored role capitalism has to play as a bridge to socialism. Specifically the capitalist transformation of traditional/feudal agriculture and the encouragement of substantial industrialization thus creating the industrial

working class and laying the groundwork for socialised production. The upshot of this “corrupted Marxism” is a crude and a-historical “anti-capitalist romanticism” which entails a premature dismissal of bourgeois/parliamentary democracy as the best political environment for the socialist movement. Following the Bolshevik revolution, Marxists of the Kautskian tradition became wrongly discredited. To Warren, the success of the Bolshevik revolution in a relatively backward country did not disprove the classical Marxist theory on the conditions for revolution, but damaged the socialist nature of the Russian State by having the it play the industrializing bourgeois role. Essentially, “the view that capitalism could be an instrument for social advance in pre-capitalist societies was erased from Marxism” (Warren 1980 p 8) in what led to a convoluted and mutated return to pre-Marxist Socialist utopianism.

Manley may be correct in his criticism of Dahl for subordinating class to “just another group” (Manley 1983) However, one should not underestimate the extent to which “the politics of autonomous groups” within representative democracy enabled organized labour to compete with other interests (even if business or ‘ruling class’ interests have dominated polyarchies overall) and enabled it to imprint its class consciousness upon society. In no small part, this is due to the Liberal preoccupation with how to secure freedom of criticism and action, choice and diversity and accountability in the face of political power, something Marxist theory has arguably underestimated. Even if the capitalist economic structure denies such freedoms to some and grants it to others. Conversely to the Liberal overemphasis upon the separation of the economic from the political sphere, Marxism’s tendency not to treat political activity *sui generis* (expanded upon in the next section) incapacitated “Real Socialism” from mediating political conflict adequately.

The “End of Politics”

Though the stress upon the concomitance between politics and economics is one of the most useful features of Marxism, especially when providing a critique of Liberal Democracy, the assumption following that thought that politics would “end” with a classless society was perhaps the most harmful aspect of twentieth century Marxism. In Marxist thought this was born out of the subjection of politics to economic structure, a rejection of politics as a

form of activity in its own right, leading to a lack of emphasis upon how politics is managed in a socialist society.

Alex Callinicos is correct in criticising the equation “Marxism = Leninism = Stalinism” (Callinicos in Held 1999 p 285) Indeed, he develops a criticism using classical Marxist theory influenced by Trotsky (1936) to explain the demise of Stalinism through the concept of “state capitalism” and the exploitative relations it created between the bureaucratic/political class and the working class. However his attack upon Stalinism as a complete violation of and departure from Marxist thought is a dangerous one. For, following Rosa Luxemburg, if the project of the working classes is to learn from “the mistakes made in the dialectic of history”, Marxism should incorporate the failure of Stalinism and adapt accordingly. Here, briefly, I wish to suggest how Marxism could begin to learn from this experience.

In order to do this, Stalinism cannot be understood as completely separate from Marxist theory but as one of the possible outcomes, amongst many, which came to dominate the application of Marxist thought to practical reality. By limiting politics to an outcome of the economic structure, Marx did not adequately address just how politics functions in a post-capitalist/socialist society. Indeed, this was in large part due to Marx’s aversion to “utopian blueprints” manifested in his polemic against Proudhon in his critique of “historical action [yielding] to personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones, and the gradual spontaneous class organizations of the proletariat to an organization of society specially contrived by these inventors” (Marx and Engels, 1986, 64) In this light Marx is a scholar of capitalism, it was not his place to tell future revolutionaries how to conduct their post capitalist economy.

Thus Marx limited himself to proclaiming “politics” to be replaced by an “association of free producers” where “the development of each is the development of all” (Marx & Engels 1848) admittedly, vague at best, but never intended to be more than that. It has been argued Marx’s theory doesn’t provide an adequate basis for the realisation of this ideal (Held 1999 p 288) The practical application of Marxist thought in the Soviet Union led to a lack of institutions which could manage differences of opinion, alternate political strategies and difference between social forces - notably the peasantry and the working class. Politics involves discussions and negotiations, thus, when politics did not “end” along with the establishment

of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, Soviet style Marxism became somewhat wrong-footed, leading to some of the most extreme repressions of the twentieth century.

This is due to the Marxism’s underestimation of the Liberal preoccupation with the significance of freedom of criticism, action and the importance of accountability with checks upon political power (Held 1999) In this theoretical vacuum a kind of “faith” in the end of politics following the abolition of private property and the development from “socialism” to “communism” emerged. As experience shows, this vacuum could not be completely filled by the autonomous power of the “soviets” (workers councils) and led to the reification of an already centralised political authority which increasingly coordinated and controlled events (Trotsky 1936) Indeed, Lenin’s theory on the “revolutionary party” (Lenin 1917) was as an attempt to fill the empty space within Marxist theory, between the establishment of Socialism and the “withering away” of the state, with a centralised “political vanguard”. Length constraints prevent a discussion upon how much Stalinist practice followed Leninist theory. Nevertheless, suffice it to say, that for a renewed attempt at a “democratization of polyarchy”, Marxism should learn from the negative aspects of the Russian Revolution and adapt accordingly, perhaps the politics of autonomous groups could replace a “vanguard party” in this respect.

Despite the prophetic qualities that some of its advocates have granted it, Marxism is not perfect or monolithic, it must be open to change. In order to do this crude economic determinism must be left behind, everything does not root squarely into and is not perfectly explained by production alone. Indeed, from very early thinkers from the rich neo-Marxist tradition laboured to remove Marxism from its crude economic determinist implications (Gramsci 1971, Lukacs 1923 cpt 2) However, any proposition even slightly hinting at a Weberian separation of the economic and the political has become an anathema for Marxist intellectuals, attacked as if by reflex reaction as a “bourgeois myth” (Barrow 2007) In response, it could be suggested to “vulgar” Marxists that the expectation that politics would “end” along with a classless society is an ethereal notion, born out of a crude determinism which subjects the political sphere completely to the economic. It ignores the intricate web of relationships which form the political sphere, even if ultimately they are subject to economic structure. More analysis is required upon the relationship between economic structure

and political institutions in post-capitalism. Can it really be expected that politics will disappear completely in Marxist society?

The immediate “end of politics” is not something even Marx envisaged, he accepted the “bourgeois state” would survive into the beginnings of Socialist society, “Bourgeois law ... is inevitable in the first phase of the communist society, in that form in which it issues after long labour pains from capitalist society. Law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure.” (Marx in Trotsky 1936 cpt 3) To which Lenin adds “It follows that under Communism not only will bourgeois law survive for a certain time, but also even a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie!” (Ibid) Even within Marx and Lenin’s account there is a “phase of development” where, under a communist economic structure the old “cultural laws” of the previous capitalist society along with a “bourgeois state” remain. This implies some form of separation between the economic and political spheres, even if this separation is limited to a delayed reaction by political structure to economic change. It would improve Marxism to accept that though the economic strongly impinges on and tends to determine the political, this is not necessarily automatically so, the relationship is more complex.

Conclusion

Pluralism and class analysis have always been viewed as diametrically opposed, competing theses. Nevertheless, Dahl and Lindblom attempted to reconcile their pluralism with “Marxist Humanism” in order to enable pluralism to tackle the exigencies of the American political economy’s poor performance. This is not possible if pluralism does not give a massively increased significance to class analysis (Manley 1983) and the role classes have in the politics of autonomous groups within capitalist society. However, conversely, a revolutionized society under which democratization of polyarchy is achieved through a reconnection of politics and economics, with ensuing substantial decreases in inequality, will repeat the experience of the twentieth century if it does not provide adequate institutions which can mediate political conflict and relies on centralized authority to do so. Dahl himself acknowledged that socialism and pluralism are not necessarily opposed; “if by definition socialism entails social ownership of economic enterprises...and unless by definition it must be centralized, then a socialist economy could be highly decentralized and organizationally

pluralistic” (Dahl in Manley 1983 p 371) Following his thought I propose that Marxism and class analysis should replace Pluralism to democratize polyarchy, whilst Marxism should incorporate “the politics of autonomous groups” to mediate adequately, once polyarchy has been democratized and politics fails to “end”.

This attempt to reconcile Marxism and Pluralism may be viewed with scepticism. It goes against a rich amount of literature placing these theories as diametrical opposites. Clearly, Marxists view Pluralists as apologists for the capitalist system. However this need not be the so. The case has been made for “Socialist Pluralism” before, such thought was a strong current amongst the Czech reformers of 1960’s (Barnard and Vernon 1977, Rustin 1895) The point is not to embrace Pluralism as valid model for democracy per se necessarily embedded within capitalist productive relations, but as a methodology to mediate political conflict, which could serve in post-capitalism. Indeed, C.W. Mill’s dismissal of the “harmony of interests” within pluralist theory as “a set of images out of a fairy tale” (Mills in Barrow 2007 p 407) is correct if accepted that real power lies in the “power elite” formed by a trident of separate political, economic and military institutions (Mills 1956) or in the exploitative power afforded to the ruling class across governing institutions in capitalist society, whether that be due to the nature of the relations between capitalist actors within the state (Milliband 1973) or the inherent nature of state structure (Poulantzas 1976) This influential debate is not entirely relevant to the essay. Suffice it to say that Dahl and Lindblom tacitly accepted the notion of a ruling group when they accepted that business groups are privileged in American “Democracy”. However, since it is unrealistic to expect politics to “end”, under different productive relations that do not create a “power elite” or a “ruling class” and thus do not render a genuine “harmony of interests” implausible, there is no good reason to believe that “the politics of autonomous groups” could not serve as an appropriate methodology to mediate political conflict. This would not necessarily lead to the “withering away of the state” but to its continuation as a space to contend political ends whilst free from economic privilege.

However, Marxism’s credibility as an alternative to the current global order is at a historical low. It is commonly underestimated even ignored in advanced Western societies, attacked as ‘outdated’ or even ‘useless’. Those who harbour such opinions manifest their own ignorance. Marxism maintains

many extremely useful features which could serve to democratize polyarchy, notably its analysis of capitalism and stress upon the relationship between the economic and the political. Dahl himself followed this logic when he suggested that capitalism cannot not allow a further democratization of polyarchy (Dahl 1996) It seems polyarchy cannot be democratized any further without a restructuring of the economic system it operates under. Following the argument expressed in the previous section, that democracy has undermined capitalism (even if capitalism has undermined democracy to a greater extent) in answer to Dahl's question in the introduction, only in a substantial resolution of class conflict, achieved through the incorporation of democratic values into the economic sphere, lies a realistic prospect for a radically improved democracy than that permitted by Polyarchy. The politics of autonomous groups has a lot to contribute if the world's next "October Revolution" is not to degenerate from this goal.

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