

Group Dynamics and Marxism ¹

Bernhard F. Pesendorfer

THE QUESTION

Group dynamics and Marxism have in common that they were both born out of a need to provide helpful alternatives in new and still unmanageable times. However, there is a very wide range of differences between them. Whereas Marxism considers the largest social unit – from the class society to mankind – as the subject of world history, group dynamics concentrates on face-to-face primary communication. Yet, as the historical nemesis among other things has shown, the one can forget about the other only at the cost of its own extinction.

This chapter sets out to show, first, that some of the elements of Marxist theory can only be understood from what we are doing in group dynamics, and second, that experiences in group dynamics confirm and supplement the social scientific statements of Marxism.

GROUP AND ORGANIZATION

Group dynamics has undertaken the task of inquiring into and improving relations between people in groups. Both of these aims are easier to achieve the more actively those concerned are engaged as much in the study of themselves as in the planning and construction of their social structure. But although the participation of all those concerned (like the family, a company, or a city) is getting more and more necessary, at the same time it is increasingly difficult to organize. Social formations in which everyone can join in the discussion about anything that concerns them and take part in the decision-making process are small and demand strong emotional participation. On the other hand, they are of limited range, complexity, and flexibility. All energy is invested in the narrow family circle or the tribe, or some such group that is of easy compass. Nothing is left for the nearby village, or company, or country. The tighter the reference group, the more threatening is felt to be the confrontation with those who are different and alien. Only by crossing group and tribe borders – with all the conflicts involved – will more far-reaching communication be possible for organizations, as well as division of labor, specialization, exchange of people and goods. The small social unit is then incorporated in a comprehensive structure of economic, political, and cultural interdependencies. Essential functions, such as defense, trade, and science, are taken over by the next most central unit. This protects and guarantees the fertile one-sidedness of divided labor and the exchange of surplus goods whose production is made possible by this one-sidedness. The price for enjoying this organized division of labor and differentiated consumption is dependence on the central coordination of this variety. (For further exploration of this problem, see the chapters by T. A. Lindner and G. Schwarz in this book.) A group can no longer define for itself its system of needs; it can no longer decide for itself how its members shall think or act or how they want to die. Instead the organization

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fixes the norms, regulates the ideology, defeats the enemy, makes the laws, and limits the area of freedom of the subsystems.

THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

With the industrial and world-trade revolution, the bourgeoisie succeeded for the first time in introducing a really universal economic and political system that surpassed every previous system in its complexity, range, and flexibility. Thus, whether he wanted to or not, man became a world citizen, certainly protected by international law but almost totally anonymous, emancipated by force from all his former ties: from the patriarchal family structure, from the security of the village church and community, from his local vernacular to a national standard language and from this to a (foreign) world language, and so on. F. Kafka called this total isolation and alienation "sea-sickness on dry land". There were a number of more or less unsuccessful attempts to find a new protective unit. While the Holy Alliance thought that they were saving the old monarchies, the aspiring bourgeoisie collapsed totally in the meantime and left behind **class** differences deeper and more universal than ever before.

In old Austria for instance it was the military that kept together the aging monarchs, the aristocracy, the sparse bourgeoisie, the many nationalities, and the vast number of the proletariat who flocked into Vienna. For this reason some still see the military as a model for cooperative leadership that can bridge class differences.

Mass society has become a fact today. And these mass societies even pretend to be democracies. But do an election and voting formalities alone make for a democracy? To insist on the necessity of representation, and to doubt this as a way to use power legitimately, are today almost one and the same.

In addition there is the impossibility of administering the needs of the masses in any other than an institutionalized way – through bureaucracies. Therefore, many conservatives say: When so many entrepreneurs in the economic field desperately defend the right secured by civil law to capitalize and dispose of property and in this way try to keep politics out of the self-regulating economic circle, who knows, after all, if this isn't better than to throw property into the maw of a disinterested bureaucracy? Within these alternatives there is no longer a place for democracy.

THE INFRA-SUPERSTRUCTURE THEOREM I: MOBILE AND CONSOLIDATED FREEDOM, FREEDOM AND ORDER RESPECTIVELY

It is the peculiar characteristic of man that he can act freely. But this freedom is no fixed dimension available at any time and independent of all other circumstances. The question is rather: How can we guarantee that progress made in the field of technology or the realm of human relations is not lost but continues through time and commands general support within the social order? We have learned to recognize what goes beyond the day and beyond the area of direct communication that exists in the family or tribe. This we know as the standard, the norm, law, custom, contract, and so on. This superstructure reflects at best the

variety of social life and provides us with a secure framework without which nothing would develop beyond a savage free-for-all. The superstructure is therefore always conservative: congealed experience, preservation of that which has been tried and proved, truth delivered from the past and preserved for the present. Pragmatically, the superstructure is the means whereby the number of conflicts threatening the individual, groups, and maybe the state may be reduced to a minimum. People who hate each other will nevertheless greet each other, wish each other a happy birthday, give way to each other politely. In prehistoric times they would already have killed, poisoned, mutilated, or enslaved each other. Today they do so in a substantially more temperate manner.

But what happens when social antagonisms occur and a satisfactory solution can no longer be found by holding onto the established norms? When the old armor no longer protects but rather restricts and stifles? Then – says Marx – the social and contradictory aspects of life will always take precedence over the corset of the past. Then the superstructure must accept that it will be examined, without regard for its dignity, as to how it can justify itself in the face of this new situation. But – as history has shown again and again – it is only that part of the superstructure involved in the actual conflict that is questioned. The majority of norms and standards quietly continue their influence without anyone being aware of them. Peace is not restored until the conflict has been resolved and new norms and agreements for a new law have been established, a law that is accepted and considered binding by all those concerned. Thus every step forward needs the firm ground of preserved freedom. The old ground is, however, rendered superfluous as soon as the new ground has become firm enough. There is a historical example of this. No sooner had the modern national state emerged from the struggle between the churches and confessional creeds than the differences between creeds shrank to an unimportant game; thus also the anachronistic rituals around a possible ecumenism end up in a trifle. (See Karl Rahner, S.J. *Experiment Mensch, Schriften zur Theologie*, Band 8, Benziger Verlag, 1967, pp. 260-285.)

THE INFRA-SUPERSTRUCTURE THEOREM I: (FREEDOM AND ORDER) AND GROUP DYNAMICS

When a department in a company is not functioning well, it is customary in hierarchical thinking to hold the head of that department responsible. When the situation does not improve in spite of disciplinary measures, this person is replaced. In some companies up to five different departmental heads have been fired for such reasons before anyone got the idea that perhaps the reason for the failure was to be found in the structure or objectives of the department.

In group dynamics, which, as we practice it, goes far beyond sensitivity training, the participants get a clear idea of the interdependency of the behavior of individuals and the norms and standards that the group consciously or unconsciously promptly installs. Since the others, the strangers,

are threatening in their strangeness, the individual borrows extremely creatively from all Possible generally accepted patterns of behavior, introduces them into the group, and thus succeeds in getting safely through the new situation – in fact by playing an old game over again. Here the old analytic finding is proved correct in that many prefer to repeat a

familiar misfortune rather than to venture on an unknown fortune. With the help of constant analytic attention to the social process, the following become evident to the participants:

1. That a social process conforms to its own laws, which are only marginally influenced by the intentions and wishes of the participants.
2. That the participants can more easily differentiate between what is their own responsibility and where there is a role allotted by the group that is to be taken into account. Usually this is accompanied by considerable relief, as it reduces many anxieties and feelings of guilt and leaves the way open to new creative energies. We must certainly not forget that either consciously or unconsciously we often seduce a group into giving us a role we have already played with success somewhere else. When we are refused our old roles and are expected to play new ones, it is a painful way to learn; but it does enable our ego to grow and develop.
3. That insight into the group process is possible only when those concerned are actively involved in gaining it. This experience of group dynamics has totally upset the old system of the social sciences. The picture drawn by the natural sciences of a finished reality that is to be described, measured, and cast in moulds is no longer acceptable. Man considers as real and essential so much more than the dry categories of natural science can possibly comprehend.

It can be said that people define reality by the way they live together. As mentioned previously, we mostly subject ourselves to the logic of currently accepted norms. This logic only very rarely becomes conscious, in fact only where it ceases to be logical, where it collides with other logical structures, or where it no longer helps to solve problems in an old, established way. In such cases we are forced by the social infrastructure to leave the superstructure of fixed behavior patterns and go back to the infrastructure to examine the problem all over again. But in most cases the infrastructure, when faced with these new conflicts, lacks language to express them. The new conflict must first "find expression."

It is said that metabolic change from social infrastructure to institutional superstructure could, in former times, take much longer. All we know is that today it must take place more often and more effectively than we are capable of handling. The misery of fossilized bureaucracies demonstrate this very well. The methods of group dynamics are resources to accelerate this change from a life of antagonism to a secure and stable situation. This applies as much to the compass of a small group as to an organization. Consider what we are doing when we give advice to an organization: We make a structural analysis based on the statements of those concerned with the help of depth psychology and sociometric and other methods, and compare this analysis with the official objectives of the employer, investor, employees, the market, or whoever it may be; and mirror this analysis back to all those involved. When antagonistic interests and groups come to light, which is to be expected, we provide catalytic discussion situations in order to give those concerned a chance to grasp how to compare the actual with the desired situation and draw out the contradictions. This helps the organization to design and realize for themselves the conceptual structure that is most appropriate to their particular goals and capabilities.

THE INFRA-SUPERSTRUCTURE THEOREM II:

THEORY AND PRACTICE

This theorem states that *the way we live* defines *the way we think*. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." "Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in a word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?" (K. Marx, Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy; Manifesto of the Communist Party*; in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 181.51.)

Art, religion, philosophy, and all sciences follow the established social circumstances and justify them as beautiful, divine, rational, and true. In so doing, they are always right to a certain extent, as long as the institutional and normative power, sanctioned in this way, can in fact manage the central contradictions for a time. When it can no longer do so, the superstructure phenomena that legitimize this power will become an impediment to development.

Societies or sociocultural systems serve the reproduction of social life. Definitions of life are, of course, changing insofar as they depend on structural systems. What is accepted as social life is culturally defined in terms of world pictures which represent the reference system relevant to the interpretation of compelling needs.... Repression (as the renunciation of desires in order to achieve something in the larger community is continuously exercised in the shape of institutionally established normative power. The exercise of normative power is in constant need of justification, either through a powerlegitimizing world picture, the validity of which is linked to the condition of systematic restriction of volition-forming communication, or through unconstrained and unrestricted practical discussion. (J. Habermas, "Exkurs über Grundannahmen des Historischen Materialismus, 1970, " in J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie*, Suhrkamp 1971)

THE INFRA-SUPERSTRUCTURE THEOREM II: (THEORY AND PRACTICE) IN GROUP DYNAMICS

Social truth can only be attained as the result of free discussion between individuals and groups challenging each other. There is no theoretical access to social truth, only the consensus of those concerned. If this is nevertheless pretended, we may simply describe this as an illegitimate exercise of power. Have we not again and again heard somebody in a group say: "But we all agreed that . . ." even before all of them had had a chance to speak? There is of course truth that is known before we act. Nevertheless, its confirmation does not go beyond applying past practice to the future.

With group dynamics the twentieth century has found an instrument whereby the origins and effects of social interdependencies in small groups can simultaneously be experienced and analyzed. The question of authority in a group may serve as an example.

Whereas in the middle ages, in the final analysis, authority was derived from God – who assigned everybody his place *in ordo mundi* and made it every man's task and duty to fill this place – in more recent times quite a different principle was discovered: that an individual's freedom, achievement, and work should determine his place in society and before men (see

John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, 1689). With World War I the old divinely ordained empires collapsed. Thereafter a leading personality had to have as an individual all those qualities for which in former times an office or selection *praedestinatio* were required: charisma, wisdom, talent, farsightedness, decisiveness, and so on. When we look at our management-training centers in Europe, we often find that it is exactly these qualities of leadership that are held out to a manager today as the final goal of training. Modern history is full of examples that show where the close link between authority and the individual leader personality leads: fascism and the cult of personality.

In group dynamics the old question about the qualities of a leader was finally settled. The key emerged from the new question: "Which functions must be taken care of by a group to attain its ends?" Now it suddenly became clear why the same person could be accepted as an authority in one situation, while in another he would be without any influence. Personality characteristics could hardly have changed so quickly, but the needs of a group do.

Authority could now be redefined as the total potential of problemsolving energy at a group's disposal, which might be administered by one or more group members as an explicit or unconscious task. This new method of group dynamics of involving those concerned in the analysis of the social structure made it possible to question naturally evolved or constructed power structures in a group as to their functional capacity on the one hand, and their acceptability on the other. Often group members see the underlying collective needs of a group only when they notice this seemingly accidental distribution of power. Naturally there has always been misuse of power. It can be defined as "private exploitation of public communication energy." But continuous analysis quickly reveals such misuse. This also explains why the analysis of situations exposes dominance and at the same time rejects it, why analytic procedure is often equated with destruction. When the distribution of power and roles is accepted in a group, the accumulation of pressure motivating the analysis of a situation will not occur. Furthermore, it is easy to see that this pressure more often occurs among the underprivileged members of a group or of a society. They feel they are insufficiently represented or considered in the "prevailing opinion," which is always also the "opinion of those who prevail." However, a group will only seldom try to change a situation before its possibilities are fully exhausted. (Compare K. Marx: "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces which are available within it have developed; nor do new, better conditions of production appear before the material conditions for their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume*, p. 182).

Only when the homeostasis of the existing situation is considerably disturbed and can no longer be maintained by any compensatory sacrifice will social asymmetries or power structures become the subject first of analysis, then of action. Social analysis, when it is carried out by those concerned, urged on by growing dissatisfaction with the situation as it is, is always emancipatory. Even when the traditional forms of discussion come very close to the reproduction of this social asymmetry in the discussion itself, a real antagonism will always run through the language and the conversation.

Seen in this way, every social analysis of group dynamics and organizational psychology provides bricks to build the foundations for an adequate theoretical superstructure. This should offer us patterns of thinking and talking that will facilitate and not hinder us in the understanding of our time.

THE INFRA-SUPERSTRUCTURE THEOREM III: ECONOMY AND POLITICS

It is certainly one of the most eminent achievements of the bourgeoisie to have procured for us in the industrial type of production and the corresponding organization of capital the most effective instrument to eliminate scarcity in the history of man.

First, two concept explanations: The mode of production is determined by:

1. productive forces
 - a. the work strength of the producers
 - b. technically useful and applicable knowledge and production techniques
 - c. organizational knowledge, coordination, and so on;

2. conditions of production. These form the social structure which

decides on the disposal and utilization of resources, labor power, and acquired wealth.

Marx assumes that the capitalist mode of production constantly increases its achievements as a result of continuously revolutionizing the productive forces, while the conditions of production constantly lag behind. Obsolete information systems, decision-making systems, and systems of property and law prevent an adequate revolutionization of the total area of social life. Thus the Social-Democratic Minister of Finance once asked a group of Austrian entrepreneurs: "Which is my primary task when I want to further the economy in a purely capitalist spirit: – to protect private ownership of the means of production by whatever means as it is the basis of private capital? or to keep the capital flow mobile enough to enable it to be directed quickly to where the greatest profits can be expected?" (The polemical short version of this runs: Where there is wit, there is also capital, but where there is capital there is not always wit.)

The social structures in the economic world, that is, the conditions of production, are today as in the past under constant pressure to adapt. This is definitely one of the sources of the demand for group-dynamics methods in the economy. The traditional, hierarchical decision making by one person no longer produces the necessary quality. It requires well-functioning groups, organizations, and institutions to utilize all the resources of information, imagination, creativity, and identification. Thus far group dynamics, like any other management techniques, simply serves the improvement of capitalism.

However, the unavoidable distribution of decisions to lower levels in the hierarchy, the necessity of having far-reaching planning decisions made by groups (perhaps even in expensive consensus proceedings) has a very significant side effect. It is not possible to limit the distribution of the power to make decisions simply to one particular area; it has far-reaching effects on the disciplinary situation throughout the company. A person who is listened to on technical questions, who is, in fact, used to carry the weight of the decision, will no longer accept being treated as a child in questions concerning the social order of the company. In short: The delegation and widening of responsibility for decision making implies not only greater

efficiency but also increased sensitivity toward and a desire to question the social structure, the decision-making procedure, and the capital structure of the company as a whole. The hitherto established scaled distribution of authority would be flattened out by economic pressure, thus bringing about a substantially higher degree of political cooperation. This is one view of the socialization of the means of production in the way it was intended by Marx – as not simply a formal nationalization leaving the structures unchanged and only replacing an egotistical management with a stupid bureaucracy. Therefore, the postulate of necessary socialization is valid not only for the means of production but also for the bureaucracies of the state – of countries, cities, and communities. The council system which Marx so admired in the Paris Commune of 1871 included in its program decentralization, constant renewal and replacement of the representative bodies, far-reaching federalism, self-government of firms, and so on.

This is perhaps the right place to do away with an old misunderstanding, that is, that in Marxism economic conditions constitute the very center of life. The mode of production is, of course, a powerful factor in the entire social life of people, but in no case its objective. Economy and the management of it is a means to live and of organization for survival. But the purpose of life is not sheer survival; it is the "good life" as the political organization of the coexistence of men. In other words, the goals of coexistence cannot be derived from economic necessity – to which we submit ourselves in order to be able to banish it. Paradoxically, the only ones to believe in that today are old liberals, pragmatic managers, and vulgar-materialistic political functionaries, who all invest exclusively in economic conditions. In the management of the economy we are dealing with objects, even when these objects happen to be people. We need and use each other, no matter whether we respect or despise each other. As beings who eat, drink, live, breed, and die, we cannot avoid this estrangement. Furthermore, work in the meaning of "necessary work" has no value beyond this. It is simply a necessary evil to acquire what we need. The conclusion that "we have clearly much more than we need, therefore we work meaninglessly and too hard," is absolutely right. But obviously to many people work represents a minor evil compared with the difficulties of self discovery and of communication that a family, girlfriends, or political activity in the community and state bring with them. (Necessary) work or labor does not make one free, as can be read on the door of Auschwitz; it simply leads away from life.

Marx therefore differentiates between *necessary* work and *creative* work. In the field of necessary work or labor I use myself and others as objects and means to live, and must accept being used as such myself – in the most rational, wise, and subtle way possible. "Labor . . . is restrained desire . . . it shapes and forms." (Hegel). Labor shapes and forms the object as well as the laborer. In creative work, however, I see myself and others as human beings and ends in themselves, and want to be seen by others in this way. Injustice is not generally the outcome of necessary work that is part and parcel of the life of any being who is mortal and in need. It is the result of the social and political conditions under which this work has to be carried out. Injustice prevails when the burden of necessary work is not distributed equally among the different social groups. And the *key* to distribution is not to be found in the hard logic of economics, but rather in the prevailing social and political conditions. Whether someone may take part in discussion about the organization of society, the distribution of necessary work, his own place in that society, and his opportunities for development within it, or about his share in the realm of freedom, is a political issue. This is seen in the fact that in our hemisphere the current issue is not the amount of work one has to contribute in order to survive physically. This would presumably be rather little. Today the issue is much more: What does each one of us have to

do in order to remain a member of our society? This is certainly not a problem that can be finally answered with commodities.

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and other expedients ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to keep himself alive and to reproduce, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all kinds of societies and under all possible modes of production. As civilized man develops this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his needs; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these needs also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist that socialized man – the producers in cooperation with one another – regulate their material change in accordance with the laws of Nature, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by a blind force, and achieve this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it will always remain a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which however can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its foundation. (K Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, Moscow, 1974, chapter 48, p. 820)

The immediate conclusion drawn by Marx from these considerations, that "the shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite," was at that time fully justified. But it remains as only a first and negative postulate – like the claim for the abolition of private ownership of the means of production: "Reduce the necessary time of labour for the benefit of creative and political life!" and "Do away with the ownership conditions which are suffocating further economic as well as political development!" Beyond this, Marx deserves high credit for not being carried away and depicting a utopia; but, faithful to the materialist-dialectic way of thinking, he leaves the whole process from the sharpening of contradictions to the formulation of the qualitatively new to evolution itself. However, quantitative shortening of the working day does, of course, not abolish alienation or estrangement, neither during the working day nor during subsequent spare time, which is spent just as meaninglessly.

When, after a hundred years of struggle, the unions have not gone beyond demands for old privileges, higher wages, and a shorter workingday, they have become anachronistic impediments. They are certainly right in saying that redistribution is in no way completed, and that a worker solidarity that extends beyond individual companies is required more strongly than ever before; but the hierarchic, bureaucratic manner in which these interests are defended often perverts the original intention into quite its contrary. To a large extent the trade unions have migrated into the superstructure, and here they support the other just as fragile hierarchies of entrepreneurs and state, instead of introducing the unrest of the infrastructure into these hierarchies. For just as the proprietors under liberalism kept the state as an official servant to defend their property, the "social partners" today keep the state for the same purpose. Consequently the corresponding governments are social-liberal, and in no way social-democratic. Thus the old basic evil is again visible: that the meaning of life is defined by the means of life and not the other way round.

THE INFRA-SUPERSTRUCTURE THEOREM III: (ECONOMICS AND POLITICS) IN GROUP DYNAMICS

The socialization not only of the ownership conditions and the mode of production but first and foremost of the bureaucratic state, demands ways of communication that we simply have not yet at our command. Since this task can be delegated neither to the hard logic of economics nor to the most clever communication science, there remains only one way: to support the attempts of those concerned to organize themselves with all the refinements of the social sciences and social technology, so that the organizational principle of representation (representation of the absent by the present) once again deserves its name. This can be illustrated by an example from group dynamics:

It has again and again been discussed how "deep" one should or could go in the work of group dynamics: for example, where to draw the line between group dynamics and group therapy; to what extent individual and private history should or should not be included; whether the private sphere has to be dealt with in order to understand the social process; and so on. If we take as an example a one-week T group whose participants do not know each other and are most probably not going to work together afterwards, then this sets clear boundaries. It is not very sensible when the group turns the week into a ritual feast of intimate decompensation. So-called "group addicts" have doubts about the possibility of a satisfactory common life "out there," and therefore allow themselves every now and then the one-week or weekend illusion that somehow it could be possible. The hangover gets worse every time. And it is certainly an illusion to think that people really get closer in this way. It is only that the boundaries are more easily denied.

Nor will the participants learn anything if they go to the other extreme and totally hide behind prescribed rules of behavior or subordinate the variety and multiplicity of different connections, all happening at the same time, to one central task, and thereby run away from each other. In the first case privacy would be totally wiped out, in the second absolutely untouched. Communication – which on every occasion is an act of crossing over a boundary – will not take place in either case.

What can take place in groups and can contribute to social learning is that someone from time to time can announce freely in open discussion what he thinks about the other participants and about the situation, and his own feelings about being in that situation.

Not everything can be brought out in this way, partly because the participant is not aware of it himself, or the others are unable to see it, but also because any participant is always a member of other groups as well – groups that necessarily will be partly "private," that is, out of bounds. This privacy is protection of the member's identity from the collective pressure of one single reference group. For if the only alternative to his sole reference group is total isolation, then the group can force him to do almost anything. However, there is another form of privacy that kills any communication, which occurs when a member keeps his observations to himself and does not say how he is being influenced by the other members and by the atmosphere in the group. He then keeps private and secret what the group needs to know in order to decide its own policy. Then it can never be tested whether the group structure is accepted or rejected; whether decisions are supported by everyone, by a few, or by just one person; and so on. The general competitive situation that forces us to feel dissatisfied with the present and to wish to be *more*, stands in massive opposition to public discussion. If this discussion does not take place for some reason, then individuals and groups are totally subjected to the hard logic of

economies. The inquiry into its social impact does not take place; the management of the political situation at work is surrendered to seemingly unpolitical economic necessity.

Those who are familiar with how the phases of a group-dynamic process develop will know what an enormous struggle it is for a group to pave the way for any solidarity between its members. The common flight into introduction rituals, external topics, and prescribed role playing is often followed by an even more vigorous struggle for leadership and influence. The group will often allow influence only to the official leader or trainer, but to none of the members, as this influence is immediately interpreted as dominance and authority. There is a fantasy that unconditional equality, equal validity, and equal estimation of all members will provide protection against differences and conflicts and that this protection will be guaranteed by authority. This is the "cling" effect, which gives warmth and comfort to the group members but at the same time prevents any confrontation among the members of the group. They are all so close to each other that they cannot (and will not) see those around them, nor how they are seen themselves by these others. The sworn faithfulness of shy young lovers shows in this context the same characteristics of attempting to avoid conflicts that can be seen in the oath of loyalty of fascist organizations. Both of them prefer maintained internal harmony to any confrontation and conflict. Any cause, any structure, any leader is good enough to guarantee such pseudo-unity, as long as the members' equality is secured and absolutely safe group membership is guaranteed to all.

This blind security, however, can only be guaranteed when the drive and energy to communicate is perceived as coming from a central position of power. No one will ever deny that division of labor and variety of needs can only blossom where there is a concentration of knowledge, power, labor, and capital all at the same time. But the bigger and the more complex the economic space, the harder it is to carry through the primary goal (the political) against the means (the economy). As is proved by multinational concerns everywhere, international economic communication functions according to the law of the jungle better than according to international law – stuck fast in the wrangling of the individual national states. Without international laws, however, the primary goal of world politics as against world economy will always be an illusion, because the multinational companies must otherwise operate in a lawless field, almost in spite of themselves. The same holds true in the microcosm of the group. When the differences of its members are not accepted and the conflicts caused by these differences are not mastered, a situation will never arrive that allows for complexity of relations adequate to the needs of group members and of the entire group, whereby influence would be possible through mutual communication and understanding and through supporting and being supported. Then it becomes obvious that equality cannot consist of uniformity, but of accepting the differences between rather different people, the different relations in their lives or – if you like – their inequalities. Democracy is therefore that way of living together in which the security of the system lies in permanent alert insecurity in the face of new contradictions and conflicts and the interchange between infrastructure and superstructure takes place faster than in any other system.

What has this to do with the relation between economy and politics, between group dynamics and Marxism?

The decisive point is that situations of dominance stop people from influencing each other and from learning from one another. Dominance is private possession of what is public, private

use of common libido, private consumption of social transference-, conflict-, and solidarity-creating energy. Every doctor, trainer, teacher, and manager is familiar with this temptation of power and has certainly been trapped by it, too. Economics, in particular capitalist economies, is considered by its adherents to be an effective and rational means of overcoming scarcity; and they want to regulate the entire life process of the civil democratic world according to this pattern. The defense of private ownership of capital and the means of production is only one facet. Today the main problem is that economic objectivity administers private ownership of groups, organizations, institutions, bureaucracies, and management power.

Socialization of the means of production and capital is, therefore, not a problem of simple dispossession of the one and the forceful takeover of power by the others, even if this may perhaps have been necessary in many places in the beginning; it is rather joint control of resources acquired by joint labor. State ownership, public stocks, cooperative models that are limited to participation in turnover or profit, and so on, have not changed the authoritarian social structure of companies. Nor has the sudden transfer of trade unionists onto the board of directors altered anything either. There is no one in Austria today who treats union people on the board of nationalized industry more brutally and cynically than the avowed socialist manager. In union-owned companies there are, for safety's sake, no shopstewards at all. There is, certainly a need for the strongest possible workers' and employers' organizations, but progressive impulses to change the system are sooner to be found in the systematic build-up of democracy within companies. As long as those concerned do not participate in the decision-making process but are directed by the decisions of others, the lack of meaning in labor and its organization will continue.

History will prove again and again that political life and political will lay behind economic conditions, the development of the productive forces, and economic practice. Whether the "realm of freedom" expands or not will depend on the rate at which those who are affected – at first unconsciously, responding sporadically and to different laws – recognize a common interest and join forces to acknowledge the contradiction in the infrastructure and bring it back to the superstructure, which seems in itself so harmonious, and thereby change it. (Marx speaks in this context of the class in itself that has to become a class conscious of itself in order to build a classless society.) In this context it seems a simple but nevertheless effective idea to start with a T group and to experience and understand, if possible simultaneously, the social life of a group, by talking as openly as possible about what is going on. In this way a group as a social unit can very often understand more promptly and talk about and control what is really going on and explore whether that is, indeed, what they want to do.

If we may, by rough rule of thumb, describe what could be called "socialist" in a society by saying that such a society is investing in the permanent revolutionization and improvement of the political and social relations as much time, energy, money, and power, as in the permanent revolutionization and improvement of productivity and the relations of production, then group dynamics can contribute substantially to this process. In the beginning group-dynamics methods are purchased for purposes of improving productivity and profits; under the surface and in the long run, however, they will lead to a sharpening of political questions about the meaning of and justice in the way we live and work together.

Finally, another example from a training group: A participant came up with the question as to whether this dealing with the emotions, relations, and social structures of the here and now

were not only a "game" in relation to the earnest of the real constraints, rational decisions, and economic facts "of the real world." Another questioned in reply whether we were not so entirely led by the rules of the game, the norms, the daily work load, and the prescribed patterns of behavior that we did not even have time to raise the question about the meaning of it all (that is the reality). "But where does that lead us?" the first one asked, "Things would possibly come to mind which I would rather not think about!" Then the thought of a decreasing economic growth, followed by less work, and thereby fewer socially accepted ways of diversion really must imply something horrible.

Work is a distraction, but what does one do, if this distraction does not work any more?