### 2NC OV – K Affs

#### We must have a historical material understanding of the world to effectively allow ourselves to transition away from exploitation of labor – that’s Tumino 1. They reify the system of capital by ignoring a focus on material struggle.

#### This has a few impacts

#### A. The logic of capitalism results in extinction through the creation of ecological catastrophe and violent imperialist wars that will turn nuclear. That’s our Foster 5 evidence.

#### B. Class divisions are the root of all other opressions – that’s Kovel – class can uniquely appropriate the mechanisms of power such as the state to systematically deny resources to that enable the oppression of other groups.

#### C. It turns the aff

#### Ethics DA – we have ethical obligation to repudiate capitalism – this means any risk a link is a reason to reject the permutation

Marsh 95 (James, Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University, “Critique, Action, Liberation” p. 334-335)

An example from the sphere of personal morality should make the difference clear. When a friend, relative, teacher, or minister counsels an alcoholic to confront her habit, she is not making a prediction. Indeed it may seem unlikely, given this particular person’s past history, that she will lick her habit. Nonetheless, the moral obligation to get over her habit remains. Similarly, an obligation exists to get over **our** capitalism as a social equivalent of drunkenness. If the argument of this chapter is correct, we cannot renounce such an attempt at transcendence without giving up on the ethical project or curtailing that project by confining it to the sphere of intimate, interpersonal relations**.** I am a good father or husband or lover in my private life, but i remain exploitative, cruel, and inhumane in my public, capitalistic life. Such ethical renunciation or curtailment is the death or mutilation of the human; denial of utopia is a living death. Ideologies of scientific elitism, therefore, as they function in capitalist society are correct if there is no such thing as ethical, constitutive reason operating in community**.** If such constitutive reason is possible and actual in human beings as human in community, then scientific elitism is false. Men and women acting democratically and participatively do have a capacity to understand themselves and their lives in a way that is cogent and in touch with reality. Indeed, many of the popular movements in Europe, England, and the United States in the last twenty years such as feminism, environmentalism, civil rights, and antiwar movements, often acting against the advice or opinion of experts have shown themselves to be right and effective. In the Vietnam War, for example, millions of people in the united states taking to the streets in protest proved the “best and the brightest” in the white house, pentagon, and state department wrong. The “best and the brightest” according to the standards of scientific elitism proved to be deluded. The presence of an ethical, political rationality in all of us as human invalidates scientific elitism at its core. As I am arguing it here, a fundamental link exists among dialectical phenomenology, ethical, constitutive rationality, and democracy. Philosophy and ethics, properly understood, are antielitist. To think in a utopian manner, then, about community and socialism is to free ourselves from the excessive hold that science and technology exert over our minds and imaginations. We begin to see that science and technology and expertise, even though they are legitimate within their proper domains, do not exhaust or monopolize the definition of reason and other forms of reason and knowledge that are more informative, profound, and fundamental, indeed, compared to certain expressions of art or ethics or philosophy or religion, science and technology are relatively superficial**.** What revelatory power does a scientific equation have compared to Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” speech? What does an empirical of human populations show me about human life compared to the insight of Marx’s capital? What can a factual study of war show about its horrors compared to Picasso’s Guernica? To the extend, therefore, that science and technology dominate in the twentieth century as not only the highest forms of reason by the only forms of reason, they shove other, more profound, more reflective, more fundamental forms of reason to the side and twentieth-century industrial society emerges as an inverted, topsy-turvy, absurd world. What seems normal, factural, rational, and sane in such a world is in fact abnormal, apparent, irrational, and absurd. We begin to suspect and see that science and technology appear as the highest and only forms of reason because capitalism has appropriated science and technology for its own ends as productive force and ideology. In science and technology capitalism has found the forms of rationality most appropriate for itself, perfectly manifesting it, mirroring it, and justifying it. In such an absurd, inverted topsy-turvy world, fidelity to the life of reason demands critique, resistance, and revolutionary transcendence. One has to pierce the veil of such a world, see through it as absurd rather than accepting it as normal and sane. The prevailing rationality is profoundly irrational.

#### The permutation is severance – it severs out of the methodology of capitalism rooted in the 1AC. This a voting issue because it creates a moving target that steals neg ground a makes it impossible to debate.

#### You cannot permute a method – it strips out all of the conceptual theory that allows us both understand the world and to create a praxis to end oppression

Tumino 1 [Stephen, Prof English at Pitt, ““What is Orthodox Marxism and Why it Matters Now More than Ever”, Red Critique, p. online]

Orthodox Marxism has become a test-case of the "radical" today. Yet, what passes for orthodoxy on the left—whether like Smith and Zizek they claim to support it, or, like Butler and Rorty they want to "achieve our country" by excluding it from "U.S. Intellectual life" ("On Left Conservatism"), is a parody of orthodoxy which hybridizes its central concepts and renders them into flexodox simulations. Yet, even in its very textuality, however, the orthodox is a resistance to the flexodox. Contrary to the common-sensical view of "orthodox" as "traditional" or "conformist" "opinions," is its other meaning: ortho-doxy not as flexodox "hybridity," but as "original" "ideas." "Original," not in the sense of epistemic "event," "authorial" originality and so forth, but, as in chemistry, in its opposition to "para," "meta," "post" and other ludic hybridities: thus "ortho" as resistance to the annotations that mystify the original ideas of Marxism and hybridize it for the "special interests" of various groups. The "original" ideas of Marxism are inseparable from their effect as "demystification" of ideology—for example the deployment of "class" that allows a demystification of daily life from the haze of consumption. Class is thus an "original idea" of Marxism in the sense that it cuts through the hype of cultural agency under capitalism and reveals how culture and consumption are tied to labor, the everyday determined by the workday: how the amount of time workers spend engaging in surplus-labor determines the amount of time they get for reproducing and cultivating their needs. Without changing this division of labor social change is impossible. Orthodoxy is a rejection of the ideological annotations: hence, on the one hand, the resistance to orthodoxy as "rigid" and "dogmatic" "determinism," and, on the other, its hybridization by the flexodox as the result of which it has become almost impossible today to read the original ideas of Marxism, such as "exploitation"; "surplus-value"; "class"; "class antagonism"; "class struggle"; "revolution"; "science" (i.e., objective knowledge); "ideology" (as "false consciousness"). Yet, it is these ideas alone that clarify the elemental truths through which theory ceases to be a gray activism of tropes, desire and affect, and becomes, instead, a red, revolutionary guide to praxis for a new society freed from exploitation and injustice. Marx's original scientific discovery was his labor theory of value. Marx's labor theory of value is an elemental truth of Orthodox Marxism that is rejected by the flexodox left as the central dogmatism of a "totalitarian" Marxism. It is only Marx's labor theory of value, however, that exposes the mystification of the wages system that disguises exploitation as a "fair exchange" between capital and labor and reveals the truth about this relation as one of exploitation. Only Orthodox Marxism explains how what the workers sell to the capitalist is not labor, a commodity like any other whose price is determined by fluctuations in supply and demand, but their labor-power—their ability to labor in a system which has systematically "freed" them from the means of production so they are forced to work or starve—whose value is determined by the amount of time socially necessary to reproduce it daily. The value of labor-power is equivalent to the value of wages workers consume daily in the form of commodities that keep them alive to be exploited tomorrow. Given the technical composition of production today this amount of time is a slight fraction of the workday the majority of which workers spend producing surplus-value over and above their needs. The surplus-value is what is pocketed by the capitalists in the form of profit when the commodities are sold. Class is the antagonistic division thus established between the exploited and their exploiters. Without Marx's labor theory of value one could only contest the after effects of this outright theft of social labor-power rather than its cause lying in the private ownership of production. The flexodox rejection of the labor theory of value as the "dogmatic" core of a totalitarian Marxism therefore is a not so subtle rejection of the principled defense of the (scientific) knowledge workers need for their emancipation from exploitation because only the labor theory of value exposes the opportunism of knowledges (ideology) that occult this exploitation. Without the labor theory of value socialism would only be a moral dogma that appeals to the sentiments of "fairness" and "equality" for a "just" distribution of the social wealth that does the work of capital by naturalizing the exploitation of labor under capitalism giving it an acceptable "human face."

#### Postmodernism’s focus on desire and discourse trades off with a focus on materiality, foreclosing an effective anticapitalist struggle

McLaren and Torres 99 (Peter McLaren, professor of education at U of California Los Angeles, and Rudolfo Torres, Professor of Planning, Policy, and Design, Chicano/Latino Studies, and Political Science, “Racism and Multicultural Education: Rethinking ‘Race’ and ‘Whiteness’ in Late Capitalism”, Chapter 2 of “Critical Multiculturalism: Rethinking Multicultural and Antiracist Education”, edited by Stephen May, p.51-52, Questia)

Preoccupied with celebrating the undecidability and incommensurability of discourses, and uninterested in class politics, postmodernists have thus foreclosed the possibility of mounting a programme of anticapitalist struggle. While discursive undecidability is surely a feature of the textuality of everyday life, we must remember that this is a second-order feature and it is not antiseptically removed from the concrete determinations of capital. Language partakes of a second-order materiality but its features of signification-i.e., the organization, inflection and uncontainability of discourse-should not be confused with the multiple concrete determinations that make up the materiality of class struggle. Global capitalism has a way of reshaping, reinflecting, and rearticulating postmodern discourses of dissent such that they fit securely within the manageable compass of business interests and are underwritten by safe abstract civic ideals and non-threatening constitutional-jurisprudential discourses of diversity. Despite all of the fashionable talk about the deterioration of the nation-state, the weakening patterns of cultural affiliation and social practices, and the creolization and/or hybridization of cultural identities, discourses always converge and pivot around objective labour practices. While postmodernists are correct in arguing that discourses classify, codify, commodify, and often yolk together disparate realms of signification, in their hip cleverness they are able to mount only a corporate-sponsored rebellion. The fashionable apostasy, insurgent posturing, and often sexy and always incorrigible avant-garde transgression that we have come to expect from the postmodernists haemorrhages our understanding of the relation of cultural production to the international division of labour. Through the textual supplication of the deconstructionists, modernism is given a nose-bleed and perhaps an unintended face-lift. While the postmodernists celebrate ethnic diversity and a free marketplace of ideas, their publishers mainly see green as they are able to package such post-beatnik antiauthoritarianism to a new generation of graduate students who want the thrill of rebellion without threatening their own security as future academics. Postmodernists have become capitalism's new voguish flunkies, who operate almost entirely in the officially sanctioned precincts of dissent: the sociology seminar room or bookstore. Consequently we do not maintain, as does Jean Baudrillard for example, that labour has been transformed simply into a sign among other signs, into a structure of obedience to a code. Furthermore, we do not believe that capitalism has passed from a phase where labour is exploited to one where it is only marketed and consumed. We do not want to reduce 'being a worker' to its sign value or a practice of unequal gift exchange as Baudrillard suggests. The enemy of the worker is not the code so much as the social relations of production. Within much of the analysis by postmodernists, regimes of signification have been wrenched from their material location in narratives of human struggle. They are discovered hovering helter-skelter over the turmoil of the real. We do not believe that within postmodern cultures human needs are irrelevant. Indeed, material and symbolic needs are vitally important. The development of global postmodern cultures has done little to undermine the pervasive destructive capacities of exploitation that accompany capitalism. Consequently, as critical educators, we must never deflect our glances from the global mode of production or the dangers of internationalized class domination.

#### The dematerialization of ideology naturalizes the false conciousness of capitalism

Zavarzadeh 3 (Mas’ud, “The Pedagogy of Totality” p.41-43, in “JAC: A Journal of Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics”, Volume 23.1, http://www.jaconlinejournal.com/archives/vol23.1.html)

Human "freedom actually begins," as Marx argues, "only where labour which is determined by necessity . . . ceases. . . . Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the real of true freedom ..." (Capita/III, 958-59). Only with the abolition ofwage-labor will education supersede the subordination of humans to the social

division oflabor ("training") and return humans to themselves as social beings. By using the alibi of the priority of culture over the economic (Hall, "Centrality") or by erasing the very concept ofemancipation from the social scene (Laclau, Emancipation[sj), contemporary pedagogy has opportunistically become a fence-sitter-a "pedagogy without guar- antees." Pedagogical fence-sitting in the class struggle for human emancipation is itself "servility" to the existing practicalities (Lenin, Materialism 357 ).To become a means for human freedom, pedagogy needs to be resituated in class analysis by means of a materialist critique, which, among other things, means that pedagogy must bring back to its practices the concept of"ideology." With the institutional influence of contemporary theory (poststructuralism, postcolonialism, New Historicism, feminism, globalization theory, cultural studies), ideology, like class, has been banned from pedagogy. The displacement ofideology in pedagogi- cal memory ("'Ideology' has gone a little out offashion ... since the mid-1990s": Turner 166) takes many forms, but the most common is the exclusion of ideology from pedagogical analytics by appealing to the authority of the Foucauldian notion of "discourse," which substitutes "power" for class and outlaws analysis of the relations of exploiter and exploited because such a materialist analysis leads to a "binary" (History 92-102 ). Once again, epistemology is deployed to protect and legitimate capital. In less obvious acts o f conceptual cleansing and in the name o f a democratic and "politically ambivalent" pedagogy, ideology is reduced to a thematics (a system of false/correct beliefs); a semiotics (representation); or a rhetorical detour in persuasion (by which "hegemony" is obtained). Critiquing the dematerialization of ideology in contemporary theory, Teresa Ebert argues, from a classical Marxist standpoint, that ideology, before everything else, is a "false consciousness" about the relation of capital to labor. Ideology is a false consciousness in which the exchange of the labor power of the worker for his or her wages is accepted as an equal exchange ("Interview" 58-60). Ideology, in other words, is not an epistemological matter, nor is it a "discourse," a "representation," or an instance of"textuality" (even though it has implications for all ofthese); rather, it is an economic issue. It legitimates the ruling social relations of production that naturalizes the transfer of wealth from the direct produc- ers to the owners. Marginalizing this materialist understanding of ideol- ogy, Althusser repeats the bourgeois gesture of epistemologizing ideol- ogy and concludes that since a Marxist reading ofideology is, according to him, "positivist" (the epistemological shield protecting bourgeois theory from materialist critique) in Marx's and Engels' writings, "Ideol- ogy is conceived as a pure illusion, a pure dream, i.e. as nothingness" (159). However, in Marxism-Leninism ideology is a material practice, an active economic agent in class antagonism; it is the historical other of class consciousness-not a negative but a negation. Class critique is an unpacking of this negation and its material consequences in the natural-ization of wage labor; it is thus a contribution to producing a materialist grasping of the world. Without such a materialist understanding of the world and the place of people in it, all pedagogy is an apologetics for capitalism. It is an apparatus for preparing the "servants needed by the capitalists" (Lenin, "Tasks").

#### Intellectuals on the left have been critical in normalizing the economic structure of capitalism while criticizing the textures and contours of the system – they preclude the fundamental reality that all social dynamics rely on the mode of production and not the other way around.

Ebert and Zavarzadeh 8(Teresa L., English, State University of New York, Albany, Mas’ud, prolific writer and expert on class ideology, “Class in Culture”, p. 36-38)

Thecultural **activism of capital against labor**, however, **was not limited to conservative thinkers. It also** energetically **recruited Left intellectuals and "socialists of the** heart." The defense of free enterprise from the Left has always been of great cultural value to capitalism. **When Left intellectuals defend the market directly-in the guise, for example, of "market socialism"** *(Market Socialism: The Debate among Socialists,* ed. Oilman; *Why Market Socialism? Voices from Dissent,* ed. Roosevelt and Belkin)--**or denounce the enemies of capital as totalitarian, as violators of human rights, and for repressing the play of cultural meanings and thus singularity and heterogeneity** (e.g., Sidney **Hook**, Emesto **Laclau**, Jean-Francois **Lyotard**, Jacques **Derrida**), **their discourses seem more authoritative and sound more credible coming from the supposed critics of capital than do the discourses of conservative authors.** To put it precisely: **the Left has been valuable to capitalism because it has played a double role in legitimating capitalism. It has criticized capitalism as a culture, but has normalized it as an economic system** (e.g., Deleuze and Guat-tari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia;* Duncombe, ed., *Cultural Resistance Reader;* Kraus and Lotringer, eds., *Hatred of Capitalism).* **It** has **complained about capitalism's** so-called corporate **culture**, **but** has **normalized it as a system of wage-labor that** is **grounded on exchange-relations and produces the corporate culture**. **The normalization of capitalism by the Left takes many forms**, **but** all **involve the justification of exploitation, which the Left represents as redemptive. They are** all **versions**-with various degrees of conceptual complexity- -**of** Nicholas D. **Kristof's argument in** his "In **Praise of the Maligned Sweatshop**." **He writes that** the sweatshops in Africa set up by capitalists of the North are in fact "opportunities" and advises that "**anyone who cares about** fighting **poverty should campaign in favor of sweatshops**." His argument is summed up by two sentences printed in boldface and foregrounded in his essay: **"What's worse than being exploited? Not being exploited**" *(The New York Times,* 6 June 2006, A-21). **What** has **made this** double **role** of postwar Left writers **so effective for capitalism is the way their** innovative **writing**, unorthodox **uses of language, and** captivating **arguments have generated** intellectual **excitement**. Jean-Paul **Sartre**, Theodor **Adorno,** Jean-Francais **Lyotard**, Jacques **Derrida**, Judith **Butler**, Jean **Baudrillard**, Jacques **Lacan**, Michel **Foucault**, Gilles **Deleuze**, Giorgio **Agamben**, Slavoj **Zizek**, **and** Stuart **Hall**, to name the most familiar authors, **have each used** quite **different**, **but** still **intellectually intriguing idioms**, **to de-historicize capitalism**. In highly subtle and nuanced arguments, **they have translated capitalism's Authoritarian economic practices**-which quietly force workers to concede to the exploitation of their labor-**into cultural values of free choice and self-sovereignty** (at the same time that they question traditional subjectivity). **Their most effective contributions to capitalism and its economic institutions have been to represent capitalism as a discursive system of meanings and** thus **divert attention away from its economic violence to its semantic transgressions-its homogenizing of meanings** in, for example, popular culture **or its erasure of difference** in cultural lifestyles. **They** have **criticized capitalism**, in other words, **for its** cultural **destruction of human imagination, but** at the same time, they **have condoned its logic of exploitation by dismantling** almost all **the conceptual apparatuses and analytics that offer a materialist understanding of capitalism as an economic system**. More specifically, **they have discredited any efforts to place class at the center of understanding and to grasp the extent and violence of labor practices**. They have done so, in the name of the "new" and with an ecstatic joy bordering on religious zeal (Ronell, *The Telephone Book;* Strangelove, *The Empire of Mind: Digital Piracy and the Anti-Capitalist Movement;* Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitatist Politics).* **Left thinkers,** for example**, have argued that "new" changes in capitalism**-**the shift**, they claim, **from production to consumption**-**have triggered "a revolution in human thought around the idea of 'culture" which**, under new conditions, **has** itself **become material, "primary and constitutive"** (Hall, "The Centrality of Culture" 220, 215), **and is no** longer secondary and **dependent on** such outside **matters as relations of production**. Consequently, Hall and **others have argued that the analytics of base/superstructure has become irrelevant to sociocultural interpretations because the "new" conditions have rendered such concepts as objectivity, cause and effect, and materialism questionable.** "**The** old **distinction**" **between "**economic **'base' and** the ideological **'superstructure**" therefore **can no longer be sustained because the new culture is** what Fredric Jameson calls **"mediatic**" *(Postmodernism* 68). According to Hall, "media both form a critical part of the material infrastructure ... and are the principal means by which ideas and images are circulated" (Hall 209) . . . The logic of Hall's argument is obtained by treating the "material" as materialist. Media, however, are "material" only in a very trivial sense, they have a body of matter, and are a material vehicle (as a "medium"), but **media are not "materialist**" because, as we argue in our theory of materialism below, **they do not produce "value" and are not "productive." They distribute values produced at the point of production**. The un-said of Hall's claim is that **production and consumption/distribution are no longer distinguishable and more significantly, labor has itself become immaterial-**which is now a popular tenet in the cultural turn (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude).* But, even Paul Thompson, who is not without sympathy for the tum to culture, argues that **"labour is never immaterial. It is not the content of labour but its commodity form that gives 'weight' to an object or idea in a market economy,"** and, he adds, **While it is true that production has been deterritorialised** to an extent, **network firms are not a replacement for the assembly line and do not substitute horizontal for vertical forms of coordination**. Network firms are a type of extended hierarchy, based, as Harrison observes, on concentration without centralisation: 'production may be decentralised, while power finance, distribution, and control remain concentrated among the big firms' *(Lean and Mean: The Changing Landscape of Corporate Power in the Age of Flexibility,* 1994: 20). **Internal networks do not exist independently of these relations of production.** and forms of cooperation, such as teams, are set in motion and monitored by management rather than spontaneously formed. ("Foundation and Empire: A Critique of Hardt and Negri" 84) **Relations of production have shaped and will continue to shape the cultural superstructure. Changes in its phenomenology-**the textures of everyday lifestyles, whether one listens to music in a concert hall, on the radio, or through an iPod-**should not lead to postmodern** Quixotic **fantasies about the autonomy of culture from its material base** [Ebert, *Cultural Critique (with an attitude)].* As Marx writes, the Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism, nor could the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, **it is the manner in which they gained their livelihood which explains why in one case politics, in the other case Catholicism, played the chief part** .... And then **there is** Don **Quixote who long ago paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economic forms of society**. (Marx, *Capital* l, 176).

#### Capitalism still remains a material economic problem – the false perspective of capitalism as culture reifies the current economic system

Zavarzadeh 3 (Mas’ud, “The Pedagogy of Totality” p.18-19, in “JAC: A Journal of Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics”, Volume 23.1, http://www.jaconlinejournal.com/archives/vol23.1.html)

The annulling of class through a populist race experientialism has now become part of an affective activism in "white studies," which in the name of unpacking the ideology of the normative ("whiteness"), actually uses whiteness to dissolve class into cultural semiotics and lifestyle (see Delgado and Stefancic). When "white studies" claims to have addressed class, more often than not class is buried under empirical and statistical details, as in Doug Henwood's, "Trash-o-nomics," which quietly equates "class" with "job" and by focusing on the "mid-and downscale" whites, turns class analysis into bourgeois social stratification theory and twists class (as W eber does) into a cultural marker o f status, honor and prestige (177-89; 190). In "white studies" capitalism has a staunch ally who uses race as a sign of its social concern (thus acquiring moral authority) and then, in a left rhetoric, normalizes wage labor. It "radically" expresses a preference for cultural justice and more social equality within the system but not in changing the system itself. The class culturalists view their work as responsive to the changes in capitalism. One of the more popular narratives of this change is articulated by Mark Poster (39-59). This story is rooted in the assumption that capitalism has so radically changed and changed the everyday that what was economic has become cultural. As a result of these changes, for instance, as Poster puts it, consumption has become production (46). The objective (the material ground of class) in this story is narrated as a simulation: a simulacra that is autonomous from all referents and is a hyperreal oftissues ofdesire and representations (see Baudrillard). Such a view, which represents "new" capitalism as post-class, is itself a class theory. It converts the central material contradictions of capitalism into cultural differences. But the fundamental structures of capitalism-what should be the focus ofpedagogy - are today what they have always been: the exchange of labor power for wages and the extraction of surplus labor from workers (profit). Nothing-not the internet, not information technology, not changes in race and gender relations caused by the demand of transnational capital for a higher rate of surplus labor - has changed this basic structural relation between capital and labor. This basic structure is also fundamental in the production of knowledge and thus should be the main focus of pedagogy. Bourgeois pedagogy, as I have suggested, instead dwells on race, gender, ethnicity, and other derivative contradictions and, in doing so, diverts attention away from class. Class is the index of exploitation. It is objective and independent from the affect, behavior, and sentiment ofthe individual worker.

#### A materialist method is key - illumination of social and political relations through dialetical materialism is key to achieving class consciousness and thus stopping capitalism

Lukacs 1919 (George, Hungarian philosopher, He was the founder of Western Marxism, “What is Orthodox Marxism” http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/orthodox.htm)

If the question were really to be formulated in terms of such a crude antithesis it would deserve at best a pitying smile. But in fact it is not (and never has been) quite so straightforward. Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx’s individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious ‘orthodox’ Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx’s theses in toto – without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx’s investigations. It is not the ‘belief’ in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a ‘sacred’ book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to method. It is the scientific conviction that dialectical materialism is the road to truth and that its methods can be developed, expanded and deepened only along the lines laid down by its founders. It is the conviction, moreover, that all attempts to surpass or ‘improve’ it have led and must lead to over-simplification, triviality and eclecticism. 1 Materialist dialectic is a revolutionary dialectic. This definition is so important and altogether so crucial for an understanding of its nature that if the problem is to be approached in the right way this must be fully grasped before we venture upon a discussion of the dialectical method itself. The issue turns on the question of theory and practice. And this not merely in the sense given it by Marx when he says in his first critique of Hegel that “theory becomes a material force when it grips the masses.” [[1]](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/orthodox.htm#1) Even more to the point is the need to discover those features and definitions both of the theory and the ways of gripping the masses which convert the theory, the dialectical method, into a vehicle of revolution. We must extract the practical essence of the theory from the method and its relation to its object. If this is not done that ‘gripping the masses’ could well turn out to be a will o’ the wisp. It might turn out that the masses were in the grip of quite different forces, that they were in pursuit of quite different ends. In that event, there would be no necessary connection between the theory and their activity, it would be a form that enables the masses to become conscious of their socially necessary or fortuitous actions, without ensuring a genuine and necessary bond between consciousness and action. In the same essay [[2]](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/orthodox.htm#2) Marx clearly defined the conditions in which a relation between theory and practice becomes possible. “It is not enough that thought should seek to realise itself; reality must also strive towards thought.” Or, as he expresses it in an earlier work: [[3]](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/orthodox.htm#3) “It will then be realised that the world has long since possessed something in the form of a dream which it need only take possession of consciously, in order to possess it in reality.” Only when consciousness stands in such a relation to reality can theory and practice be united. But for this to happen the emergence of consciousness must become the decisive step which the historical process must take towards its proper end (an end constituted by the wills of men, but neither dependent on human whim, nor the product of human invention). The historical function of theory is to make this step a practical possibility. Only when a historical situation has arisen in which a class must understand society if it is to assert itself; only when the fact that a class understands itself means that it understands society as a whole and when, in consequence, the class becomes both the subject and the object of knowledge; in short, only when these conditions are all satisfied will the unity of theory and practice, the precondition of the revolutionary function of the theory, become possible. Such a situation has in fact arisen with the entry of the proletariat into history. “When the proletariat proclaims the dissolution of the existing social order,” Marx declares, “it does no more than disclose the secret of its own existence, for it is the effective dissolution of that order.” [[4]](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lukacs/works/history/orthodox.htm#4) The links between the theory that affirms this and the revolution are not just arbitrary, nor are they particularly tortuous or open to misunderstanding. On the contrary, the theory is essentially the intellectual expression of the revolutionary process itself. In it every stage of the process becomes fixed so that it may be generalised, communicated, utilised and developed. Because the theory does nothing but arrest and make conscious each necessary step, it becomes at the same time the necessary premise of the following one.