

LABOUR REVIEW

EDITORS: TOM KEMP, CLIFF SLAUGHTER
186A Clapham High Street, London S.W. 4

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Labour Youth to the fore



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Cover picture: *THE DISCUSSION HAS BEGUN*
Rome, December 1962 at the time of the Italian Communist Party Congress. Chinese representative, Chao Yi-ming addresses a party branch. At extreme left is Berlinguer, an M.P.

Statement issued by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour League

The Sino-Soviet Conflict

THE open dispute between the leaderships of the Chinese and Soviet Communist Parties marks a new stage in the crisis of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In a period of sharpening class struggle and of growing difficulties for imperialism, the issues raised are of fundamental importance for the whole world labour movement. Khrushchev and his henchmen will be unable to prevent an open discussion taking place throughout the Communist Parties.

Because of the nature of the differences, the crisis goes beyond mere criticism and shakes especially the leading cadres of the Communist Parties. Whatever the Chinese leaders may intend, the clarification of the issues they raise will involve a challenge to Stalinism. Since the Chinese pose certain basic questions, these cannot be answered without a thorough examination of the history of the international Communist movement and an understanding of its degeneration.

The issues in the dispute can be grouped under four main headings:

(a) *Has imperialism changed?* Using the Italian and Yugoslav Communist Parties as dummies, the Chinese accuse Khrushchev of trying to 'prettify' US imperialism. They quote the Italian party as welcoming Eisenhower to Rome in 1959, and add: 'Now we hear some people saying that Kennedy is even more concerned about world peace than Eisenhower and that Kennedy showed his concern for the maintenance of peace during the Caribbean crisis.' Whereas the Soviet leaders maintain that this is the epoch of the victory of socialism in peaceful competition with imperialism, the Chinese correctly argue that this is the epoch of decaying imperialism and that the victory of socialism will only be guaranteed when imperialism is overthrown by proletarian revolution.

The Chinese Communist Party leaders also accuse Togliatti of revising Lenin's theory of imperialism and severely criticize him for advocating joint

exploitation of colonial and under-developed territories by the USA and the USSR. They indicate further that Togliatti's and Khrushchev's ideas about the relation of the modern state to monopoly capitalism are completely removed from, if not diametrically opposed to, the teachings of Lenin. In particular they reject Togliatti's programme of 'structural reforms' as reformist, illusory and comparable to the eclectic rubbish served out by Kautsky and Bernstein.

While agreeing with much of what the Chinese say and imply, it is nevertheless correct to point out that the Chinese Communist Party criticism deals only with the very recent history of the Italian Communist Party—and leaves unexplained the reformist degeneration of this party and its leadership. For example the Chinese say nothing of Togliatti's leadership (or lack of it) during and immediately after the Second World War, when the Italian Party leaders, on orders from Moscow, deliberately restrained the masses and helped Italian capitalism to survive its worst crisis since 1921. To discuss Togliatti is to discuss Stalin. Unfortunately, the Chinese in trying to separate the patron from the protégé only succeed in confounding militant Italian Communists on this vital question.

(b) *Can peace be safeguarded by negotiations?* The Chinese denounce those who misrepresent them as saying that socialism will come only through an inevitable nuclear war. While agreeing that negotiations with imperialism are often necessary, the Chinese challenge the conception that world peace can be achieved simply by relying on the 'good intentions' of imperialism. Instead, they emphasize that 'to achieve world peace it is necessary to rely mainly on the strength of the masses of the people of the world and on their struggles'. Thus, while they continue to talk about Lenin's mythical 'principles for peaceful co-existence' and the possibility of 'banning' nuclear weapons, they raise the



Italy 1945: armed partisans in the streets

The Communist leadership abandoned revolution

whole issue of whether this line is compatible with class struggle.

(c) *Do revolutionary movements threaten peace?*

In particular the Chinese expose the fallacy that colonial peoples can peacefully co-exist with imperialism and its corollary: that national liberation struggles become a threat to world peace. This also involves a discussion of the relation of Marxists to nationalist movements. This thesis of the Chinese on the relation between revolution and war in the epoch of imperialism constitutes one of their most cogently argued—and positive—criticisms of contemporary Stalinism. It has a particular application to Britain where the Communist Party leaders always and everywhere maintain that ‘peace is indivisible’, ‘above classes’ and is an indispensable precondition for socialism.

To all this pacifist jargon the Chinese reply: ‘In the eyes of modern revisionists, any revolution and any action that supports revolution runs counter to the “logic of survival”, now that atomic and nuclear weapons exist. In fact, what they call the “logic of survival” is the logic of slaves, a logic that would paralyse the revolutionary will of the people of all countries . . . The Marxist-Leninists are firmly against this slave logic and maintain that the people should emancipate themselves. This is a law of social development which no one can resist . . .’ (‘Leninism and Modern Revisionism’, *Red Flag*, No. 1, 1963).

The correctness of this idea is illustrated by the lesson of Cuba where US imperialism has failed to daunt the people by its threats and sabre-rattling, and the forced removal of rockets and bombers.

(d) *Can capitalism be overthrown peacefully?*

They accuse the Italian Communist leadership of abandoning revolution. They deny the possibility

of a purely parliamentary transition to socialism, as propounded by the Italian Communist Party leaders. The position of the Italian leaders is shared by the majority of the world Stalinist leaders—including, of course, the British. Khrushchev himself has revealed that the real architect of the ‘British Road to Socialism’ was not Lenin, or even Gollan, but Stalin—thus destroying both Gollan’s claim to originality and the Chinese contention that Stalin was the continuator of Lenin’s policy.

The Chinese intuitively realize that from a false conception of the epoch all kinds of pacifist and reformist illusions are bound to spring. This is amply revealed in the reply of Togliatti to the Chinese when he states: ‘It is possible, on the other hand, *in today’s conditions in the world* [our emphasis] to develop the movement of the masses on such a scale that the ruling groups will be paralysed by it and the perspective is opening of radical economic and democratic changes by the peaceful road and without passing through the trial of civil war.’ After 22 years of fascist terror, imperialist war and bloody partisan struggle, Togliatti assures the Italian working class that the ruling class of Italy will be paralysed by the people! This is the same class that paid and sustained Mussolini and attempted even so recently as 1960 to establish an authoritarian regime ‘which sprinkled the squares of some Italian cities with dead’.* [Togliatti]. On the contrary! It is the cretinous policy of Togliatti that disarms, disorients and ultimately paralyses the revolutionary will of the working class—and paves the way once again for fascism.

Togliatti tries to counterpose class struggle to civil war. This is a dishonest and unMarxist argument.

* *Rinascita*, January 12, 1963.



Italy 1960: In Reggio, Emilia

The dead sprinkle the squares

Civil war is the highest expression of the law of class struggle. Civil war resolves the question of proletarian or capitalist dictatorship. Victorious civil war of the working class presupposes the existence of a revolutionary combat party armed with a programme and policy adequate to the needs of the class.

The Italian and British Communist Parties reject such a policy. The Chinese, on the other hand, while they talk of revolution and civil war, have failed to advance such a programme for the European Communist Parties. Only the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International can and will answer the historical questions posed before the European and colonial workers. There is no other programme.

The supporters of Khrushchev, especially in parties like the British and Italian, see in his viewpoint a justification of their own opportunism. The Chinese, on the other hand, apart from the Albanians (who have their own reasons) have support from the North Korean, Viet Minh and Malayan parties, all of which have been involved in struggles against imperialism. They also have supporters in the left-wing group of the Indian Communist Party, as well as factions in the rest of the Communist Parties.

A world conference of Communist Parties as proposed by the Chinese would be a valuable aid to political clarification, but only if a free discussion could take place. The plea by the British leaders for an end to public debate (the statement was made publicly!) is a hypocritical attempt to gag the critics of Gollan's pro-Khrushchev line. Even Togliatti and Khrushchev are prepared to concede the legitimacy of the Chinese demand.

Those who are searching for a return to the Leninist road and who at this stage rally round the Chinese arguments, must go much deeper into the historical significance of the discussion. The Chinese statements rarely venture further back than the 1960 statement of the 81 Communist parties. This compromise document, which tried to build a paper bridge between irreconcilable political positions, can do nothing but confuse the issues. In its latest statement referring to the 1960 Manifesto of the 81 Communist parties, the Chinese party admits that it made 'necessary compromises on certain matters' in order to achieve unanimity. What these compromises were we have not yet been told.

The Chinese leaders, who stumbled empirically into the conflict, partly as a result of the economic problems they faced in the 1950s cannot explain how their opponents' ideas originate.

The Chinese revolution, like the Yugoslav, took place in defiance of Stalin's orders. This empirically determined conflict with Stalinism is the basic cause of the Mao-Khrushchev split, as of the Tito-Stalin conflict. But the Titoites, who moved some way to

the left in 1949-50 did not maintain that position. After backing, in the United Nations, the US intervention in Korea, in August 1950, they slid over to the right.

Only a *conscious* break with the history of Stalinism can prevent the Chinese Party going through a similar process.

The remarks of the Chinese about 'bourgeois restoration' in Yugoslavia (and thus, presumably in Russia also) are an example of the theoretical dangers inherent in their method. Whatever our criticisms of the Soviet and Yugoslav economies, a return to the bureaucratic centralism of Stalin's time is no way to correct these errors. On the contrary, it is only through the overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy that socialist planning can develop.

The Chinese approach to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia betrays an astonishing naivete and a frightening ignorance of elementary political economy and Marxist sociology. It is not only specious; it is dangerous and opens the door wide to another form of revisionism—'state capitalism'.

The fact that capitalist methods of payment and bourgeois norms of distribution prevail does not make the USSR any more capitalist than China. It only proves that the USSR, far from being a biblical paradise or a proletarian inferno, is, in fact, a transitional society between capitalism and socialism: a degenerated workers' state ruled by a powerful bureaucracy and abounding in economic and political contradictions which will be resolved only by extending the revolution into Europe and America. The bureaucracy has *distorted* and betrayed the property relations established by the October revolution, *but it has not overthrown them*.

Trotsky in his classic analysis *The Revolution Betrayed* made this point clear: 'Another difference is no less important. The Soviet bureaucracy has expropriated the proletariat politically in order, by methods of *its own*, to defend the social conquests. But the very fact of its appropriation of political power in a country where the principal means of production are in the hands of the state, creates a new and hitherto unknown relation between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation. The means of production belong to the state. But the state, so to speak, "belongs" to the bureaucracy. If these as yet wholly new relations should solidify, become the norm and be legalized, whether with or without resistance from the workers, they would, in the long run, lead to a complete liquidation of the social conquests of the proletarian revolution. But to speak of that now is at least premature. The proletariat has not yet said its last word. The bureaucracy has not yet created social supports for its dominion in the form of special types of property. It is compelled to defend state property as the

source of its power and its income. In this aspect of its activity it still remains a weapon of proletarian dictatorship.'

The Chinese supported Khrushchev in suppressing the Hungarian workers' uprising. According to them this was a counter-revolution aimed at restoring capitalism in Hungary. If this were true, it would make their politics even more untenable and self-contradictory. If Khrushchev was not prepared to allow capitalism to be restored in Hungary, what grounds are there for assuming he will restore capitalism in the Soviet Union? Such vulgar 'dialectics' only help the Togliattis and prevent a real analysis of bureaucracy and its role in the workers' state.

Just as the Chinese Communist Party leaders failed to assess objectively the motive forces of the Hungarian uprising, so too today they commit a similar folly in judging Yugoslav economy and society. While correctly criticizing many aspects of Yugoslav foreign policy and socialist theory, they fail to see or consciously ignore the enduring achievements of the Yugoslav Revolution in the decentralization of administration, planning of economy and the social management of enterprises. The introduction of market relations and the principle of profitability in industry *within the context of state ownership and social management* does not constitute a new form of capitalism as the Chinese suggest. In fact it is a significant and welcome departure from the administrative and bureaucratically centralised system of planning which prevails in the USSR.

Before the Chinese begin to accuse the Yugoslavs of kowtowing to imperialism, they should ask themselves why it is that Yugoslavia is in this position today. Was it not the criminal and reactionary policy of Stalin-Molotov towards Yugoslavia—a policy little different from that pursued by Khrushchev towards Albania—that forced the Yugoslavs to make economic and even military agreements with the West? If the Yugoslavs revise Marxism today, a good part of the responsibility rests with Stalin.

The opportunism of Khrushchev is only a continuation under modern conditions of Stalin's theory of 'socialism in one country'. This denial of internationalism, expressing the needs of the Soviet bureaucrats, led to the destruction of the Communist International, and the betrayal of revolutionary movements.

By identifying Stalin's brutality with Bolshevik intransigence and by refusing to draw on the history of the Left Opposition's fight against Stalinism, Mao prevents a real exposure of Khrushchev's opportunism.

For example, without a study of the dialectical relationship between the 'Third Period' policies of 1928-33 and the right-wing policies preceding and following them, criticism of the Russian leaders today could easily fall into ultra-left errors—and even ultra-right errors as in the case of Tito.

For Gollan and the leaders of the British Communist Party, the public ventilation of grievances and the discussion of principles is extremely distasteful. To these bureaucrats, theory is a closed book and the beginning of all wisdom is fear of the Kremlin. But serious Marxists will welcome and critically appraise every left-wing critique of Stalinism, no matter how muddled, naive and misinformed it may be.

The Chinese Communist Party has raised a number of important fundamental issues. We unconditionally defend their right to propagate their views and we shall give them every assistance to do so. But we do not identify ourselves with Maoism—nor do we apologise for its crimes and blunders. We remain its most severe critics because we think that only the policy and programme of the Fourth International embodying the experience of the world working class can assist and guide the European and American working class to find the road to the Socialist revolution.

The Chinese Communist Party makes an important contribution by opening the necessary discussion, but it is not a decisive one. From this standpoint, the Sino-Soviet dispute remains an important interlude in the struggle for the world socialist revolution.

It is not a question of an abstract argument about whose ideas come closest to the formulae of true Bolshevism. On that count, the Chinese are correct on most points against Khrushchev and Togliatti. What is more important is to see the outbreak of this controversy as an expression of the enormity of the gaping contradiction between Stalinism, based on the theory of 'socialism in one country', and the present stage of the crisis of imperialism, including its relations with the 'Eastern bloc'. Forced as they are to confront the forces of imperialism from their own particular political and military position, the Chinese Communists are forced to point out the discrepancy between the needs of anti-imperialist struggle and the Khrushchev formulae of 'peaceful co-existence' and 'parliamentary roads'. This is only the beginning of a situation in which a conscious revolutionary leadership will be built.

In conclusion, we affirm that the task of British Marxists is not to worship the accomplished fact, or abstain in serious disputes—but to accept what is good and historically correct and reject what is bad, unscientific and reactionary in the theory and practice of the Chinese revolution. (28.2.63)

Editorial: Labour Youth to the Fore

ONE of the last acts of Hugh Gaitskell before his death was to nominate Mrs. Braddock, MP, as chairman of the youth sub-committee of the Labour Party. It is reported that both he and George Brown, MP, abandoned their parliamentary duties for that evening in order to vote on what was obviously a most decisive issue for them.

The death of George Brinham, formerly chairman of this committee, under circumstances which led to the trial and discharge of a teenage youth for his murder, was responsible for the vacancy. George Brinham was for many years in charge of the Labour Party's youth work. His addiction to homosexuality was undoubtedly known to his closest colleagues. They were prepared to condone this because he could be relied on to act in a most vicious way against left-wing youth. It was he who summoned the police to the Young Socialists conference last Easter to keep a close watch on supporters of the youth paper *Keep Left*. It was he who was responsible for organizing the suspension of three members of the National Committee of the Young Socialists which ultimately led to their expulsion from the Labour Party last December.

The reliance which the right wing placed on such a man revealed their fear of the left-wing evolution of the youth movement. Despite the witch-hunting the Young Socialists remain, and are growing into, the most active and lively section of the Labour movement. The influence and expansion of the proscribed youth paper *Keep Left* is a striking testimony to this. The demonstration of over 1,000 young people against unemployment in London early in January is another confirmation that the Young Socialists are determined to play a big part in the fight against the unemployment and anti-working-class policies of the Tory government.

It is becoming impossible for the right wing to drive them out. Although there are only two right-wing members out of the 11 members of the National Committee of the YS elected last Easter now functioning on that body, the right wing still hold back in their final decision regarding the future of this movement. Right at the moment when they are faced with the collapse of their official organization, they are still forced to affirm that they will continue with it.

To dispense with the youth movement now would be to dispense with the most active fighters against Toryism in the coming general election. But to continue with it also demands a high price from the right wing. The youth of today can be the party leaders of tomorrow, no matter what action the ageing witch-hunters may take. For every one who is expelled from the YS, ten more equally militant

young people can take his or her place. There is no let-up in the number of young people who will be available for political activity in the coming months.

Long unemployment queues, a high proportion of which are youth, outside the Labour Exchanges provide a fertile ground for recruitment. A colourful demonstration against unemployment fires the imagination of young people who have long been forgotten by the adult party. In other words, the real defeat which the right wing has suffered has its roots in the appeal and initiative of the left wing around its youth paper, *Keep Left*. This left wing has demonstrated its capacity to organise youth who have never before been seriously concerned with politics.

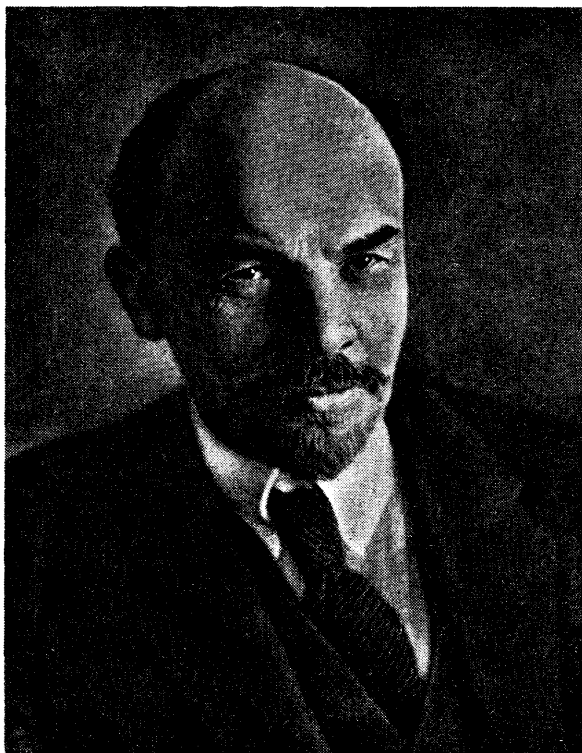
The future of the Young Socialist movement lies in its determination to recruit such young people, but it cannot recruit them on the basis of political argument alone. It has to engage in activity which will inspire them to see socialist policies in a new light. An alternative to the heavy hand of the right-wing bureaucracy can only be provided through campaigns that unite youth around demands which basically affect their living conditions.

Thus the fight to ban overtime so that more young people will be employed makes sense in all of the distressed areas. However, the fight against overtime today must not be confused with the ban on overtime which was often imposed during the boom period. Overtime today is required by the speed-up engendered by automation and the introduction of rationalized methods of production. It is, therefore, as essential as unemployment to the capitalists who need to extract the last ounce of surplus profit from their employees. This fight against overtime can disrupt the entire production plans of the capitalists. It must, therefore, be expected that they will fight back against all attempts on the part of trade union organization to cut out overtime and employ fresh labour.

On this issue the Young Socialists can mobilize thousands of youth, who in turn can inspire and persuade trades councils and shop stewards' committees to wage a real struggle against unemployment. From this it is only a step towards launching a campaign for the nationalization of all those industries affected by unemployment.

The Young Socialists are now the real hope for Labour because it is through their struggle that the demand for nationalization can be raised once again inside the movement in a way that will rally tens of thousands of adult workers in the trade unions and the Labour Party. They are the main force for political and industrial change. Adult labour should throw all its strength behind them.

The Dialectic and



Lenin's Politics

Philosophical Notebooks Article 3

By Cliff Slaughter

LENIN's studies of Hegel in 1914-16 were undertaken in the midst of an all-out fight against revisionism in the international socialist movement. It is characteristic that present-day 'Communists', falsely claiming to follow Lenin, find it necessary to condemn the Marxists of today, the Trotskyists, as 'armchair theorists' who devote their time to books and history instead of getting on with the practical tasks (i.e., the tasks of capitulating to imperialism). Similarly, even some of those who call themselves Trotskyists express surprise and derision when the Marxists insist on tracing current political differences to their philosophical and methodological roots. Lenin certainly regarded his work on Hegel's *Logic* as an absolutely necessary part of his struggle against revisionism. Why was this? Because in the struggle to defeat and overthrow false ideas in the Socialist International, it was necessary to re-discover the essential dialectical view of the relation between theory and practice.¹

1. See article by C. Smith in this issue.

This relation cannot be understood 'in general' and 'once and for all': Marxism is not a philosophical system but a scientific guide to action; only the process of struggle to defeat incorrect conceptions in the real movement can teach the Marxist method, can direct the Marxist to the real meaning of the works he must study. In the course of doing this, the Marxists, organised in a revolutionary party, develop the theory itself, providing a link to the struggles of those who follow.

In his studies of the dialectic, Lenin re-armed himself, the Bolshevik Party and the international working class by his insistence on a return to fundamental questions of philosophy and the dialectical method, right in the middle of the First World War and the preparation of the Communist International. This was to prove of enormous value in his ability to grapple with the strategic and tactical problems of the Russian Revolution in 1917, when the acceptance and repetition of earlier programmatic slogans (including Lenin's own slogan of 1905-6) by the 'old Bolsheviks' almost prevented the Bolshevik Party

and the working class from grasping the revolutionary opportunity of that year.

In his book *State and Revolution* Lenin gave a masterly theoretical underpinning to his campaign to mobilise the working class and its peasant allies to overthrow the Provisional Government. Of course, *State and Revolution* is well known as the classic exposition of the Marxist revolutionary position on the conquest of power by the working class. But the book is worth very careful study from the point of view of the dialectical method.

In order to present the Marxist theory of the state as a guide to action, as a scientific theory, Lenin does not simply give a list of abstract principles, fixed for all time, and counterpose these to 'incorrect' theories. On the contrary he shows that the Marxist theory of the state has developed as a scientific reflection of the needs and experience of the working class in the struggle. 'Marxism is the conscious reflection of an unconscious process.' A Marxist position on the state must reflect the experience of the class. And so Lenin shows first how Marx and Engels began in 1847-48 with a general view of the character of the state as an organ of oppression by one class over another. They were able with their materialist theory of history to show that even those features of the state thought to be 'natural' and inevitable were in fact consequences of the division into exploiters and exploited.

Even in 1847-8, the opportunist thinkers in the Labour movement opposed these conceptions. Lenin points out that since Marx's day, the repressive and militaristic features of the state have everywhere been concentrated and strengthened to preserve the power of finance-capital and the monopolies in their drive to discipline the working class and to conquer the markets of the world through imperialist war. (A work on the state today, urgently required, would be able to document the further development of this process in the period of 'peaceful co-existence' and nuclear power). Alongside this process, Lenin points out, the opportunist and middle-class tendencies in the Labour movement have gone away from Marxist ideas on the state, finally capitulating in 1914 by *supporting* their 'own' national State in war against others. The resulting situation made it necessary, Lenin showed, to consider the question of the State in an all-round, dialectical way, if a decisive struggle for power and *against* the opportunists was to be waged.

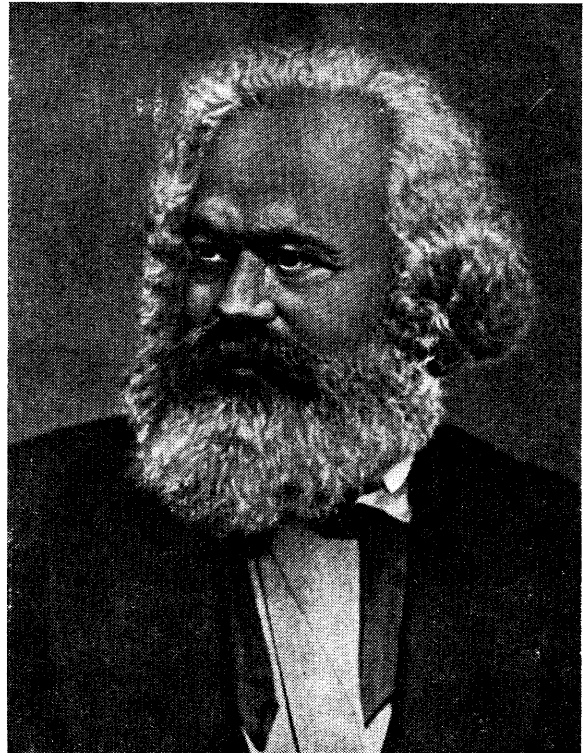
This entailed therefore:

- (1) The exposition of Marx' and Engels' position in relation to their general theory of historical materialism.
- (2) The analysis of the experience of the working class in revolutionary struggles, particularly in 1848, 1871 (the Paris Commune) and 1905 and 1917 (the

Russian Revolutions), and the demonstration that Marxism learned from these, developed by reflecting this experience. Thus it was only after 1871 that Marx and Engels *concretised* the ideas:

- (a) that the old state machine must be *smashed*, not taken over, and
 - (b) that the new workers' power would be a 'commune', drawing the whole working class into government, and preparing for its own disappearance: i.e., the earlier, more 'general', abstract conception took on more concrete form by becoming part of the practical struggle of the working class against the capitalist state.
- (3) Last but not least, the explanation that Marxism develops and can be further developed as a guide to working-class action, *only* in struggle against false ideas representing alien tendencies in the movement. This parallels what Lenin called 'yet another new aspect to Hegel's logic'—the history of the theory itself in development through conflict.

Thus Marx's own ideas were clarified only in bitter struggle against the opportunists on the one



Karl Marx

His ideas were clarified only in bitter struggle against the opportunists on the one hand and the anarchists on the other

hand and the anarchists on the other. Lenin explains these conflicts and proceeds to continue the struggle against the traitors of his own day. In this way, he works out concretely the ideas on the dialectical method derived from his study of Hegel. Ideas and theories in the working-class movement are practical weapons; they have to be consciously prepared and sharpened; every ounce of value must be gleaned from the experience of the class by hard theoretical work. If this experience is simply gone through in a routine way the working class is abandoned to the domination of capitalist ideas. The role of opportunist 'theories' is to try to ensure that this happens. Lenin realised that to develop and understand *his own* ideas of the state and revolution he would have to understand them as the latest in line of developing Marxist ideas, which were part of a struggling objective force, the working class, striving to achieve true consciousness of the meaning of its struggle against the capitalist class. One essential part of this was the struggle to defeat the opportunist leaders, whose role was to contain this struggle within reformist or national limits.

This is not the place to go into further detail, and every student of Marxism should study Lenin's book to see how he flays the distorters of Marxism. As opportunists, the latter are forced to depart from this dialectical method, breaking Marx's writings up into separate parts in order to suit a particular argument, selecting what they want from past writings in order to cloak their present practice of betrayal. Similarly, Kautsky and those like him did not carry out a thorough historical study of the state or of Marx's theory of the state, preferring instead to quote examples and precedents torn from their historical context. All this has to be seen in the context of the international betrayals of Socialism after 1914 and of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Lenin's book was part of his necessary separation from the 'socialist traitors' of the Second International. There could be no finer example of the unity of theory and practice in Marxism. The practice of the opportunists demands a particular kind of theory, or rather denial of theory. Their ideas are ideas imposed on the working class by a bureaucracy whose interests tie it to the enemy class (such as the preservation of the capitalist nation-state, within which they hope to preserve their economic and parliamentary privileges). These ideas are hostile to dialectics, a theory which enables the working class to see the interconnections between all its struggles on every front and in every country, scientifically and consciously reflecting its real material interests as a class. With such a dialectical theory of the state, developed by tracing the evolution of the theory in response to the needs of the class and in conflict with those who hold back the class, Lenin was able to lead the Bolshevik Party

and the Russian proletariat into action in 1917. Important to note here is the enrichment and sharpening of the political conclusions permitted by the many-sidedness of the dialectical approach. Because Lenin had grasped in his study of Hegel the importance of understanding the *development* of ideas in the course of practice, he was able to give a sharp edge to the political as well as the theoretical struggle in 1917, whereas the majority of the Bolsheviks found themselves resigned to a victory of the bourgeoisie in the first months.

Lenin and the Party

Above all, Lenin contributed to Marxism and to the working class the theory and method of building a revolutionary party to lead the struggle for power. His life is a massive concentration on the problems of this construction, bringing to the purpose a scientific examination of all the history and social structure of Russia and the experience of the international class struggle, right through to the intimate details of the internal history of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and its factions. He is able therefore to see the various individuals and groupings, their ideas and manoeuvres, not just in their immediate, superficial appearance, but as the clash of the vital social forces in the Russian Revolution. Lenin was often criticised by his opponents for his sharpness and bitterness in Party disputes. But Lenin's insistence on personal breaks and often violent conflicts over what appeared to be minor issues was simply the consistent working out of revolutionary centralism, the principle that the practice of party organisation and individual responsibilities must reflect the objective needs of the class. Trotsky and others have explained how they were often horrified by Lenin's 'ruthlessness', only realising much later that this was not a personal characteristic but the result of the most profound political convictions. In his autobiography, Trotsky says:

'Revolutionary centralism is a harsh, imperative and exacting principle. It often takes the guise of absolute ruthlessness in its relation to individual members, to whole groups of former associates. It is not without significance that the words "irreconcilable" and "relentless" are among Lenin's favourites. It is only the most impassioned, revolutionary striving for a definite end—a striving that is utterly free from anything base or personal—that can justify such a personal ruthlessness. In 1903, the whole point at issue was nothing more than Lenin's desire to get Azelrod and Zasluch off the editorial board. My attitude towards them was full of respect, and there was an element of personal affection as well. Lenin also thought highly of them for what they had done in the past. But he believed that they were becoming an impediment for the future. This led him to conclude that they must be removed from their position of leadership. I could not agree. My

whole being seemed to protest against this merciless cutting off of the older ones when they were at last on the threshold of an organised party. It was my indignation at his attitude that really led to my parting with him at the second congress. His behaviour seemed unpardonable to me, both horrible and outrageous. And yet, politically, it was right and necessary, from the point of view of organisation. The break with the older ones, who remained in the preparatory stages, was inevitable in any case. Lenin understood this before anyone else did.²

This intensity of concentration led Lenin to see more clearly than anyone else the relation between Marxist theory and revolutionary organisation. From the very start, in his controversies with the Narodniks, the 'legal Marxists' and the Economists, he understood and stressed that *revolutionary theory* was the essential defining characteristic of the revolutionary party. But once again, we must appreciate that this means that every facet of the ideas in the history of the Party must be understood. The internal life of the political tendencies in the Party, their response to particular problems and crises in the development of the class and the Party, must all be understood in order to know exactly where we are going. Let us take an example. In 1913 there was a 'unity offensive' on the part of some of the Mensheviks, trying to re-unify with the Bolsheviks. They argued, and Trotsky supported them in this for a time in the August bloc, that the urgency of the current practical political tasks made it necessary to unify, since agreement could be found on many of these. The fault with this approach was that it departed from the Marxist view of theory and political programme. We must begin, not from the 'facts' as they immediately appear from the current political tasks, but from a theoretical analysis of the process of class struggle of which these urgent tasks are a part. As we saw in the theory of the State, we arrive at this correct theoretical analysis only if we include an examination of the way one-sided and false views of the situation have arisen and been perpetuated in the working-class movement. In rejecting the August bloc, Lenin explained this very clearly, and Trotsky later summarised his attitude:

'Most of the documents were written by me and through avoiding principled differences had as their aim the creation of a semblance of unanimity upon "concrete political questions". *Not a word about the past!* Lenin subjected the August bloc to merciless criticism and the harshest blows fell to my lot. Lenin proved that inasmuch as I did not agree politically with either the Mensheviks or the Vperyodists my policy was adventurism. This was severe but it was true.'³ (My emphasis, C.S.)

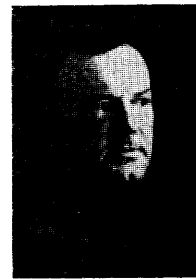
Lenin insisted all through the controversy on the fundamental lines of programme as historically laid down in the splits of the past. Only later did Trotsky recognise this essential feature of the dialectical approach.

Opportunism and Dialectics

Lenin noted already in 1908⁴ that as the bourgeoisie itself became more ideologically bankrupt, it came increasingly to rely on revisers of Marxism and renegades from Marxism to represent its interests in preventing the working class from achieving consciousness of its role. Ex-communists and ex-Marxists of all kinds are now, over half a century later, playing this role in a much more systematic and organised way than they were then. Gigantic research foundation and publishing companies, financed by big business and capitalist governments, offer lucrative careers to 'experts' on Communism with 'inside' knowledge; the 'ex-communist's conscience' becomes a highly saleable commodity. Within the revolutionary movement itself, too, tendencies arise which accommodate themselves to capitalism through this stratum of the intelligentsia, often through literary and academic circles like those of Sartre in France or Wright Mills in the U.S.A. Some of these latter intellectuals build themselves fine reputations as radicals and outspoken critics of the most reactionary features of modern



Sartre



Wright Mills

stratum of the intelligentsia acting as a medium for accommodation to capitalism

government and business, but all of their criticisms are tolerable within capitalism, for they stop short at the vital role of the working class, exploring 'theories' that perhaps this vital role was only a nineteenth century superstition (Wright Mills calls this insistence on the role of the working class the 'labour metaphysic'). Interestingly, they also find it necessary to attack the dialectic with all the tradi-

2. L. D. Trotsky, *My Life*, Universal Library, N.Y. 1960, pp. 161-2.

3. L. D. Trotsky, *In Defence of Marxism*, p. 141.

4. V. I. Lenin, 'Marxism and Revisionism', reprinted in *Marx-Engels-Marxism and On Revisionism*.

tional weapons: Sartre has recently produced a long critique of dialectical materialism⁵ and Mills made his hostility very clear in his last work. For example, he writes that Marx's method 'is a signal and lasting contribution to the best sociological ways of reflection and inquiry available'. But the footnote to which the reader is referred by that sentence begins:

'I do *not* refer to the mysterious "laws of dialectics" which Marx never explains clearly but which his disciples claim to use.'

He goes on to criticise each 'law' in turn, and concludes:

'As a guide to thinking "dialectics" can be more burdensome than helpful, for if everything is connected, dialectically, with everything else, then you must know "everything" in order to know anything, and causal sequences become difficult to trace.'⁶

It is no accident that opportunist political trends can co-exist with these rejections of the methodological foundations of Marxism. Opportunism is an adaptation to the existing social system; where opportunists use Marxist phrases it is only to find a justification for leaving things to take their course in the interests of some 'inevitable' objective development. Opportunism and theoretical advance cannot go together in the socialist movement. Dialectics, demanding that each problem, each struggle, be dealt with from the point of view of the basic struggle of classes in the whole system, is anathema to the opportunist, whose aim is precisely to confine himself and those who follow him to the 'solution' of particular and partial tasks on behalf of special segments of the working class.

If Marxist theory fails to constantly enrich itself and develop in the struggle, then it becomes only a cover for such opportunism. An example is the theory of Pablo and his followers that the objective forces for socialism are so strong that the existing organisations and leaders of the masses, even including petty-bourgeois leaders, can become revolutionary and Marxist. Practically speaking, such a theory has the consequence of holding back the concentration of effort on the construction of an independent working-class leadership. Theoretically, it substitutes objectivism for Marxism. Trotsky would have had some hard words for such 'Trotskyists'.

'Purely "historical", reformist, Menshevik, passive conservative thinking busies itself with justifying, as Marx expressed it, today's swinishness by yesterday's swinishness. Representatives of this kind enter into mass organisations and dissolve themselves there.'⁷

Of course the Pablo group have tried to use

certain quotations from other writings of Trotsky to justify their abdication of revolutionary duty. However, they consistently select and present these extracts in a one-sided and distorted way. The following quotation from the same article by Trotsky shows clearly in what context he spoke about existing organisations responding to the pressure of the masses:

'In the meantime the existing opportunist unions under the pressure of capitalist disintegration *can* and under the conditions of our correct policies within the unions, *must* approach our programmatic norms and play a progressive historical role. This, of course, presupposes a complete change in leadership.'⁸

This should serve as a model in such questions. If 'theory' is simply a contemplative verdict on the 'irreversibility' or 'inevitability' of certain trends, it degenerates into apologetics. Marxist theory exists as a guide to action, to *correct policies* leading to *a complete change of leadership*. With this method, all political problems are posed with the factor of revolutionary activity as their centre. Lenin was seeking to deepen this method when he insisted on the understanding on our idea of a thing, derived from practice, as an essential part of our grasping of the thing correctly now. Marx as a very young man had seen that the impasse reached by philosophy could only be eliminated by basing theory on the real motive force of history; he wrote in 1844: 'Theory becomes a material force as soon as it grips the masses.' Pabloism and theories like it are only an example, this time under particular conditions which deserve careful analysis, of how this unity of theory and practice is time and again lost in the history of the movement, under the pressure of alien class forces. Only a constant struggle for revolutionary theory and methods of work can restore it, re-arming the working class for its revolutionary tasks.

It is for this reason that the understanding of the dialectical method is of vital *political* importance. Without it there will be no reconstruction of the Fourth International, the essence of which is to lead the working class to action based on an understanding of its own past and present experience in struggle against capitalism.

Development of Dialectics

Lenin's work on the dialectical method, then, must be studied by revolutionary Marxists as a contribution to the understanding of how we make

5. J. P. Sartre, *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, Paris 1961.

6. C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists*, pp. 129-30.

7. L. D. Trotsky, *Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?*, reproduced in *Fourth International*, July-August 1951.

8. *Ibid.*

our ideas more effective, by clarifying the way in which ideas in their development reflect the objective world and its changes. In earlier articles we stressed Lenin's grasp of the subtlety and many-sidedness of this process of reflection, of the concepts which arise from it, his reworking of Hegel's great discoveries about the interrelations of these concepts, discoveries which transcend all previous theories of knowledge. In addition we recalled Lenin's insistence, so often forgotten, that the very richness and power of human knowledge about nature and society results from the fact that it reflects a material, objective world, existing independently of our knowledge of it. Dialectical thinking is itself the highest and one of the latest developments of this material world: the way in which human consciousness reflects its environment is part of the behaviour of matter in its most highly developed forms. To understand the development of thought we must understand biological evolution and the material foundation of the origins of humanity, and laws of development of the modes of production and socio-economic systems developed by man in controlling nature.

Dialectics as a theory of knowledge whose basic concept is development through internal contradiction, makes possible the understanding of real relations in the world; this is because the processes we observe have arrived at their present relations with one another (and to our practice and knowledge) *historically*, through a process of contradictory development. A logic which assumes fixed and formal relations between phenomena is useful for handling only simple, limited, everyday tasks, in spheres where for practical purposes relations are relatively static or repeated without significant changes for the matter in hand. But once natural science probed beyond these surface, everyday relations, and when the complex phenomena of social development had to be grasped by a class which required to understand class society and overthrow it, not just adapt it to its needs, then a new development was forced upon philosophy. Modern natural science itself was and is part of the opening up of the world by capitalist industry and commerce, whose transformations of the natural world and of social relations necessitate an understanding of the real relations between class society and nature through production. Lenin brilliantly draws attention to the paradoxical succession of phases as conscious dialectical theory fights its way through, first in abstract philosophy (Hegel) and only later in the sciences:

'The *idea* of universal movement and change (1813 *Logic*) was conjectured before its application to life in society. In regard to *society* it was proclaimed earlier (1847 [*Poverty of Philosophy. The Communist Manifesto*]) than it was demonstrated in

application to *man* (1859 [Darwin—*Origin of Species*]).' (My emphasis, C.S.)⁹

There could be no better example of the richness and unevenness of the development of the world, and of the flexibility of the concepts required for an understanding of it, than this example of the development of the idea of development itself. Historical materialism, the theory of development of society and the ideas which grew up within societies, has the task of explaining this unevenness from the material conditions of bourgeois society, the special class structure and retarded development of the German bourgeoisie which conditioned the rise of classical German philosophy, etc.

At earlier phases in the history of knowledge, thinkers had worked out the elements of a dialectical approach, but until science was a socially organised, rapidly developing system of thought and action, and until there developed in history a class which required such a scientific theory for the solution of its special historical tasks, these elements of a dialectical theory could only remain one-sided, speculative and 'philosophical' instead of scientific and practical. When Marx 'stood Hegel on his head, or rather, on his feet', elaborating the theory of dialectical and historical materialism, he recognised that henceforth the development of the theory depended not on philosophy but on science, and above all on conscious revolutionary action by the working class: 'The philosophers have interpreted the world. The problem is to change it.' Natural science and industry carry this out at the basic level of controlling nature. But the system of capitalism, the framework within which those conquests of nature have been made, has a decisive effect on science and technique itself: at a certain point, capitalist relations of production prevent the development of the productive forces. In this, as in all such periods of social revolution, man stands in peril of all his conquests, all the results of his controlling (humanising) his own existence, being turned into their opposite, into forces of destruction and corruption of human life. Revolution is therefore the only humanism, the only way in which man's nature can be historically affirmed and developed. The most vital of the sciences is the science of this revolution, of human action, the science of history, of which Marx showed political economy to be the secret.

Every science develops; it builds up knowledge and theory about its particular sphere of investigation. New discoveries, new insights, are systematically incorporated into the body of existing knowledge and theory. Earlier concepts which prove too

9. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38 (Philosophical Notebooks), p. 141.

rigid and narrow for this new experience have to be enriched or rejected, or rather transcended by a more nearly complete and many-sided view. It is by learning more in practice about the infinite variety, richness and interconnectedness of the material world that our knowledge arrives at more sensitive, refined and effective ways of thought. Marx, in calling upon the working class to solve the problems of society by its own conscious action, was calling for the working class to replace speculation with science and practice in the social and political sphere just as the natural sciences had done in the conquest of nature. These were not separate tasks: the solution of the contradiction in the development of the highest sphere of the development of nature, human society and consciousness, will lay the basis for a qualitatively new epoch of the free development of the sciences. The age of 'prehistory' comes to an end.

Conclusions

Great stress has been laid in these articles on the need to understand thought itself, our own theory, in its development as a reflection of the objective world. It has also been pointed out that it was in the most abstract sphere of logic and philosophy that the dialectic was first elaborated, and only later worked out for human society and for nature. What happened, then, was that abstract thought—an abstraction from experience at one level—enriched itself by taking on more and more of the concrete, objective world with which thought grappled. It was Marx who turned dialectics in this direction through his concept of human activity not just as 'critical thought' but as '*revolutionary practice*'. All thinking goes through similar phases, proceeding from an abstract, partial appreciation to a richer and more nearly complete reflection of the real phenomena in all their transitions, transformations and interrelations. Further examination of the transition from 'philosophy' to Marxism may bring out more clearly the character of dialectical method.

In the most advanced idealist philosophy (Hegel) we find an elaboration of the laws of thought. In describing these laws of the movement of thought from appearance to essence and to the concrete understanding of development in 'the notion', Hegel tries to take into his logical system all earlier elaborations of the problem. He aims to transcend (i.e., to go beyond, but at the same time incorporate) these earlier philosophies by showing them to be only one-sided, exaggerated, abstracted parts or aspects of an infinitely rich, developing whole of which the parts are only phases, which can be

truly grasped only in their developing and contradictory relations to one another and to the whole.

What is this *thought*, whose evolution and anatomy Hegel so brilliantly describes, tracing the course of its work in all the sectors of human scholarship and creation? It is the thought of living, active men, existing in concrete social relations; it is part of their practice in these surroundings; it reflects their growing control over nature and the contradictions in the social relations within which this control is organised. In the course of conquering nature men are forced to strive for a more thorough, a deeper and more concrete understanding of it. Their ideas of nature begin as the crudest and most 'subjective' abstractions, based first on fleeting impressions and on the immediate and pressing needs of subsistence. Those aspects of the environment which are organised in this early type of thought are 'selected' from the environment, 'significance' allotted to them, and the relations between them conceived, not scientifically but subjectively. This is borne out by investigations of the ideas of primitive societies and of early child development. As the organisation of men in society advances in its handling of the problems of production, knowledge grows, is refined in order to conform with the actual structure and development of the external world, through a process of checking in hundreds of generations of experience. Concepts are broadened, or broken down into more limited and strictly defined concepts in order to take into account new or newly encountered phenomena, distinctions are made which more accurately reflect the essential relations in nature. The history of science is thus a central component of dialectics as a theory of knowledge.

But all knowledge is organised in concepts or ideas; it is worked through the mental activities of men, and this is, of course, recognised by dialectical materialism but without going to the idealist notion that the essential reality is thought itself. Engels showed long ago that this conceptual character of all knowledge must not in any way lead to a separation of thought and the objective world which it reflects. The ability to work with concepts, as already pointed out, is itself something which has developed in material relations with the world, and must itself be understood dialectically.¹⁰

'In any case natural science has now advanced so far that it can no longer escape the dialectical synthesis. But it will make this process easier for itself if it does not lose sight of the fact that the results in which its experiences are summarised are concepts; but that the art of working with concepts is not inborn and also is not given with ordinary

10. F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Preface to 2nd Edition.

everyday consciousness, but requires real thought, and that this thought similarly has a long empirical history, not more and not less than empirical natural science. Only by learning to assimilate the results of the development of philosophy during the past two and a half thousand years will it be able to rid itself on the one hand of any isolated natural philosophy standing apart from it, outside it and above it, and on the other hand also of its own limited method of thought, which was its inheritance from English empiricism.'

This passage brings out very clearly the implications of a dialectical approach to method not only in natural science but also in politics. As in the natural sciences, a failure to understand the Marxist movement's *own* development of ideas, to criticise and develop these through struggle, will result in imprisonment within bourgeois philosophical methods, with all their political consequences.

Human thought, then, can never grasp the whole of concrete reality. Its concepts develop by learning ways of reflecting the real movement of the world. Only the infinite (i.e., never completed) sum of all abstractions would give the concrete in all its completeness. The dialectical method is a development from formal and everyday logical thinking in such a way as to comprehend the changing and contradictory, infinitely-sided character of natural and social processes:

'Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion. Dialectics does not deny the syllogism [of formal logic], but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally changing reality. Hegel in his *Logic* established a series of laws: change of quantity into quality, development through contradictions, conflict of content and form, interruption of continuity, change of possibility into inevitability, etc., which are just as important for theoretical thought as is the simple syllogism for more elementary tasks.'¹¹

The history of philosophy is one aspect of the development of human social practice. But it is an aspect which sums up the most general laws of thought. Hegel's dialectical picture of thought claimed to be more than this. It claimed to be a picture of the essential reality, the reality of the Absolute Idea of which the material world of nature is but the outward show. Surveying and analysing the history of thought, Hegel took the laws of *its* development, taking into itself more and more of the concrete as it developed, to be the laws of development of Reality. This illusion of completeness and correctness of the idealist

dialectical theory of knowledge is strengthened precisely because correct thought does develop by reflecting the material world! The more man investigates and controls nature, the richer and more subtle becomes his knowledge, the more flexible and all-sided become his concepts. Hegel thought that all this was the discovery of the flowering of the Absolute Idea, independently generating all of these things. The role of human thought was to *understand* the inevitability and the lawfulness of this product of the Absolute Idea in the vulgar material world, which should be understood as the Appearance through which thought must penetrate to the ideal reality behind it. Once all the material of thought was conquered in this way, grasped as a manifestation of the Absolute Idea, 'criticism' would have done its work and given to man his 'freedom', the consciousness of necessity.

But the 'proof' of the correctness of Hegel's idealist dialectic only became possible through the results of hundreds of millions of practical actions carried out by human beings in their social relations acting on nature and, in the course of this, changing their social relations and thereby themselves. The reason for the development of human knowledge, including philosophy, to the scientific theory of dialectics, is that man's practice on the objective world brings his concepts closer to the real behaviour of that world. There is thus a *materialist* explanation of the completeness and correctness of Hegel's dialectical logic, as well as of its limitations. Once this dialectical logic is consciously developed, as with Hegel, it is forced to the consideration of the vital role of *practice*. The development of philosophy itself, since its stock-in-trade is 'ideas' and 'explanations', inevitably goes forward to dialectical *materialism*, to the recognition of itself as only one 'moment' in the conquest of the objective world by socially organised man. Then philosophy can be seen as the role played by abstract thought during the period of the separation of mental from manual labour, the period of class society. In order to advance, philosophy must become the theoretical weapon of the class which goes beyond the limits of this period, just as the proletariat requires the most advanced logic in order to grasp its own role. Henceforth the scientifically-based struggle to transform nature and society, and the investigation of the conditions and theories of this transformation, constitute the material of the central intellectual activity of man. In all these spheres 'revolutionising practice' is the central concept. In this sense, Marx when 'standing Hegel on his feet', represents the qualitative stage in the development of philosophy prepared by all the quantitative advances of the Classical German school within the idealist framework, filled out above all by

11. L. D. Trotsky. *In Defence of Marxism*, pp. 50-51.

Hegel. But this theoretical advance was only part, and had to be consciously grasped, as *part* of a qualitative stage in the development of society, of the class struggle: of the revolutionisation of society by the proletariat in preparation for that stage of history when the role of human activity is consciously grasped and rationally planned, freed from social illusions, based on an understanding of the necessary relations between men and their environment.

What is now required in the Marxist movement is a critical historical and political estimate of the way in which this consciousness has in fact developed. It is in the advanced theory of the labour movement and in the practical construction

of revolutionary Marxist parties that this process of conscious development reaches its highest point. The corruption of the Marxist movement by alien class tendencies and bureaucracies must be thoroughly examined. The movement must critically examine the development of the revolutionary Party and of the theory of the Party in relation to every phase of the class struggle, just as Lenin examined the struggle against the State and the theory of the State. In this way, by scientifically rejecting false ideas and transcending earlier, more abstract notions, we shall follow the path of Lenin in using theory as a guide to action, not as a system.

Theory and Practice in Marxism

By C. Smith

IN the course of the development of the Marxist movement, each generation has had to re-discover the essence of the Marxist method for itself. Searching for solutions to the new problems arising for the working class in its own time, the revolutionary vanguard must take the basic ideas handed down to it and give them back their original meaning by developing them in relation to the new reality. In the struggle to build a conscious working-class leadership, propositions which had become empty formulas are refilled with their revolutionary content.

The definition of Marxism as the unity of theory and practice has a profound meaning which is periodically forgotten. When the Marxist movement loses sight of its true role, principles and their concrete application are treated as if they were utterly divorced, existing on different planes. Principles then become mere abstract truths, out

of time and space, with the aid of which reality can be described, while practice turns into routine activity, conforming to traditional recipes.

Today, imperialism encounters new crises; the ideologies of Social-Democracy and Stalinism are, increasingly clearly, incapable of providing any leadership for the world working class. The Marxist movement, in re-equipping itself to resolve this crisis of leadership, must consider these questions anew.

Those who openly or covertly revise the fundamental concepts of Marxism start by destroying their connection with the class struggle. This article looks at the general relation of theory to activity and tries to show how Marxist theory and revolutionary practice, far from corresponding to each other in a fixed and passive way, determine each other through mutual contradiction. Marxism is not a theoretical system, but a living process.

Theory is Practice

'In the beginning was the deed.'

At the most elementary level, thought and action, or their rudimentary ancestors, are directly identical. Living matter fights to transform a hostile environment into a new kind of order within itself. In a process which is both activity and a sort of consciousness, the organism constantly adjusts itself to achieve survival in spite of the constant changes in its surroundings. Then organisms evolve with specialised nervous systems; instinctive behaviour patterns are 'built-in' as reactions to various situations. The species 'learns' to respond in appropriate ways, through the operation of natural selection.

The human child, until it learns the necessary social norms of behaviour, does not reflect on its relationship with its environment. Consciousness is still inseparable from the activity of keeping alive, and cannot examine the purpose of this activity.

Although he spends his life in constant conflict with nature, primitive man is completely integrated with his natural surroundings. At the human level, individual animal activity has been transformed into social practice. Learning is now not a matter of individual heredity, but of the conscious transmission of traditional methods of production, embodying past experience. Thought is thus an aspect of the

material struggle for food, clothing and shelter. Speech, general concepts, logical reasoning, science and art evolve as the strategy of the war against nature.

Human labour, the collective activity of production, is attuned to the rhythm of nature. Life is shaped by natural forces beyond the reach of man. These forces can only be affected by carrying out the correct magical rituals.

But primitive man is not the slave of nature, for he himself is a part of its operation. Like the child, he cannot consider himself divorced from the activity of getting a living, which is productive labour. And since production is a co-operative process, involving the whole community, no one can think of himself except as a part of society.

The basic identity of thought and action, of theory and practice, is found at all levels of experience. There can be no such thing as a thoughtless, purely physical, human action. Every bodily movement involves some mental change which relates it to the history of society.

Thought itself is an activity which is manifested in physical changes in the brain. Its subject is the relation of the thinker to the rest of the material

world and to the society with which he has active material connection.

But even at the most elementary stage, thinking and acting are implicitly in opposition. The act is always concrete, a response to a specific situation, aimed at achieving a particular goal. The thought, desire or question which precedes it, itself follows from a million other acts, similar or dissimilar, successful or unsuccessful, performed in other situations by the same or by other actors. The thought has a general, universal character, which comprises an infinity of concrete actions and is in contradiction with any one of them.

An action is the reply to a question posed to the actor by his environment. When completed, it has altered this environment in ways which must then be compared or contrasted with the desired goal. All activity, even when unsuccessful, is thus essentially creative. Question and answer, desire and act, thought and deed, are potentially opposed in their unity.

It is through this opposition, this process of mutual questioning, that theory and practice develop each other, absorbing and generalising ever growing bodies of experience, giving man greater and greater powers of control over nature.

Theory versus Practice

'For thought's the slave of life, and life's time's fool'

The growth of society and the productive forces leads at a certain stage to the division of human beings into classes. A leisured group separates out which, by living on the product of the labour of the rest of society, is enabled to develop the political, scientific, artistic and religious forms of civilisation. Mental and physical labour are distinguished as different aspects of human activity, performed by different orders of being.

Class society was an essential stage in the progress of humanity. The separation of theory from practical activity enabled thought to reflect on practice and to drive forward the accumulation of scientific and technical knowledge at an ever-increasing rate. It made possible the progress of culture and its development to a stage where man's conquest of at least his immediate surroundings on this planet is now within his grasp.

The price paid for this necessary episode in human history is tremendous. It must be measured in the sufferings of millions of slaves, serfs and wage-workers, whose lives have been crushed beneath the weight of exploitation and oppression. Prevented from participating in cultural development except as its victims or at best as passive onlookers, they

have seen the results of their labour removed from their control.

But the culture of the ruling class itself is distorted and fragmented. The cultural monopoly of a small leisured minority cuts off theory from its practical meaning and divides the thinker from the social roots of his thought.

Human beings, unlike everything else in the universe, produce their own material conditions of life and thus themselves. But the needs of exploiting classes prevent this being understood by thinkers in class society. Theory divorced from the practical process of production is unable to provide conscious understanding of the way in which man creates himself in mastering nature. The relations of material production are seen as the product of thought instead of the other way round.

Religion and philosophy are the ideological products of class society. 'This state, this society, produce religion, a *reversed world-consciousness*, because they are a *reversed world*.'¹ The oppression and restriction of society are given a divine status

1. Marx: Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, in Marx and Engels, *On Religion*, p. 41.

enshrined in religious institutions. The actions of men are explained in terms of a super-human, extra-terrestrial power.

Philosophy is an attempt to 'explain' the world, both natural and social, purely in terms of thought, from outside reality. In striving for objective knowledge, the philosopher must try to create concepts which are not biased by the antagonism and distortion of society. But ideas are now concerned, not with the interests of society as a whole, but with the conflicting interests of different social classes. Through its ideologists, the ruling class must justify its power and exploitation and 'represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, put in an ideal form'.² Plato's 'noble lie', pretending that the existing social set-up is in some way a law of nature, pervades every aspect of cultural life.

The philosopher is thus, without knowing it, viewing the world in the distorting mirror of class society and giving theoretical expression to conflicts between various propertied classes. These are fought out in terms of philosophical and religious ideas, around which the political and economic struggles are organised.

The world was never altered by philosophy as such. For the mass of human beings, life remained unaffected. Practical activity meant, and still means, conforming to social norms, which maintain the system of exploitation. Philosophy, however, not only imagined that it moulded society and that human freedom could only be attained through its paths: it considered itself to be self-creating and self-subsisting. Each new philosophical or religious trend had to explain its necessity by showing that its predecessors had been in error. Each regarded itself as absolute.

The philosophers and artists of class society have striven to grasp the truth about reality, but they can only do this in a one-sided and upside-down way. Philosophy tries to penetrate beneath the surface appearance of reality through the process of abstraction. It thinks that appearance obscures the truth, which could be reached only in the realm of thought. However, the philosophers could not see that erroneous methods of thought arise from the need to conceal the class relations of society, and so philosophy searched in vain for the *mysterious* answer to life's problems.

Philosophy, science and art continually raise questions which could undermine the social order. Guided by the methods of natural science, materialist thinkers collide every day with the barrier separating thought and action, and find themselves in conflict with the superstitious and religious guardians of class rule.

But although philosophical materialism 'explained' the world in terms of matter, this was itself an abstraction, excluding human activity and history. It could not resolve the contradictions within society or account for the existence of its own struggle against false ideas.

Materialism before Marx, and mechanical materialism since his day, have always ended by veering over to the opposite philosophical pole. Beginning by suspecting all knowledge except that based on sense-impression, these 'materialists' turned to rejecting the possibility of any objective knowledge of reality at all.

The thinkers and poets of ancient Greece lived in a period when the forms of thought were still being moulded by class division and commodity production. From the naive attempts of the pre-Socratic scientists and philosophers to understand the world practically, Plato and Aristotle formulated ideas which express the need of a slave-owning class to maintain its power. The Platonic Ideas and Aristotle's Forms took the explanation for the nature of the world away from experience.

The fixed concepts of medieval scholasticism mirrored the static and hierarchical structure of feudalism. At first, philosophy was feared by dogmatic authority as being corrosive to the theological cement holding society together. Eventually, however, it was harnessed in the service of Church and State, and Aristotle was interpreted so that reason could give support to faith.

Capitalism, the last form of class rule, pushes the distortion of thought to its extreme. Theory now becomes the private thoughts of isolated thinkers. From this standpoint, knowledge is broken up into separate 'facts', whose connection is the product of thought alone.

Christian dogmatism had to be displaced by the ideologists of the bourgeoisie. The rationalism of the enlightenment held up to the measure of reason social norms previously unquestioned. Reason thus considered came from 'within' the consciousness of the reasoner; nature and society were 'outside'.

At the period of bourgeois revolution this opposition of reason to reality was a driving force for change. The world had to be made into what it ought to be. Corruption, oppression, superstition were irrational impositions on humanity, and must be removed if reality was to be made reasonable.

But the political victory of the bourgeoisie posed severe problems for this outlook: the sharp edge of reason could not be allowed to cut too deep, for no more revolutions were required. The abolition of feudal property forms cleared the way for new methods of exploitation which had to be shown to be themselves in accord with reason's canon.

In Britain, where the first bourgeois revolution was followed by compromise with the aristocracy,

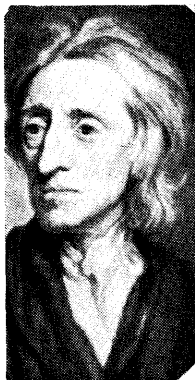
2. Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology*, p. 41.

rationalism was transformed into empiricism. In Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume, English philosophy went through a development from sceptical materialism to positivism, which accepts existing conditions and prohibits any questioning of them.

The arena of action of reason is removed far from the everyday world, where 'common sense' is left to reign supreme. In accord with a social system in which everything and everybody is given a quantitative expression as a sum of money, science must strive to reduce all qualitative differences to mere quantity.

Locke

*English philosophy
develops from sceptical
materialism to positivism*



The world is seen as a machine, whose separate parts interact without altering each other. There is a finite number of fixed qualities—mass, position, velocity, energy—each at a certain quantitative level, and these quantities are related by mathematical formulae, which science has to discover.

Political economy was the supremely bourgeois science. Human society is divested of all its human aspects. An economic machine is driven forward by the search for profit, and only this 'hidden hand' is required to guide society. The relation between human beings is established solely through the sale and purchase of commodities.

As the capitalist mode of production passes its zenith and loses its revolutionary and progressive momentum, bourgeois art, science and philosophy exhibit the gulf between thought and reality more and more. Philosophy, which once posed itself questions of vital importance for human progress, becomes a word-game, the sport of desiccated dons.

Bourgeois thinking separates means from the ends they are meant to serve. It measures the value of a line of action in terms of its efficacy for some immediate practical purpose, whose necessity is itself unquestioned. Technique, developed to its highest point by the vast expansion of capitalist industry, is unrelated to its end-product. The more formally rational technique becomes, the greater the effect it has on society and yet the less it is capable of conscious control in the interests of humanity,

i.e., the less 'rational' are its ends.

Formalism is the logical counterpart of empiricism. Thought itself, totally cut off from life, must be made to obey pre-arranged rules. Logic becomes an abstract recipe for correct thinking, independent of what is to be thought. Just as a commodity is sold for a given sum of money, irrespective of the use to which it is put, so logic, 'mind's coin-of-the-realm',³ is concerned with pure thought-forms, emptied of all content.

In this method of thought, the abstractions through which the world can be understood must be cleansed of all contamination with the reality with which they deal. Abstraction is the 'processing' of the raw material of experience. Knowledge is thus no more than a superficial and relative summary of things. Logical thinking must be unaffected by any influence outside its form, and especially by the object thought about. 'Objective' thought is thus thought without object.

Instead of content, ideas are given 'facts' to arrange. These atoms of information are supposed to be entirely unconnected. They are received as sense-impressions, and then strung together on hypotheses, like beads.

Formal logic confronts the world with a pre-determined set of rules. The validity of these can, of course, not be questioned within the system. Claiming to comprehend the separate objects of the universe in its categories, eliminating all contradiction between them, it is incapable of explaining itself.

Cutting itself off from living reality, reason shrivels and dies. Attempting to fashion a set of theoretical tools which will cope indifferently with any job, it ends by coping with none. Any question worth asking is dismissed as meaningless by the formalists.

Since the rules of logic, like common sense, are themselves the unconscious product of society, this mode of thought, taking itself for granted, can never question the existing social order. Completely disrupted by any minor change, it tries to settle down again, adopting the new set-up as 'common-sense'.

Empiricism and formalism are thus well adapted to the needs of those political trends which seek to alter particular aspects of society, reforming parts of the social mechanism so that the process of exploitation can run more smoothly. The following of established recipes can produce nothing new. Out of the sceptical attack on the dogmatism of the feudal epoch, a new, bourgeois dogmatism has emerged.

The pragmatist tries to identify formal theory immediately with practice. In a world of conflict and crisis, this means the denial of theory altogether. The rational methods of natural science flatly con-

3. Marx: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 148.

tradict the lunacy of social life. In the epoch of the H-bomb, the fruits of scientific thought are geared to a social system which threatens to destroy the human race.

The effect of bourgeois society on culture is felt by many sections of the intellectuals. In one way or another, attempts are made to crash through the barrier between thought and practical reality or to build a bridge over it. But, imprisoned in his petty-bourgeois isolation, the thinker or artist is powerless to solve the problems which he feels or knows confront him.

The meaningless and absurd appear to offer an escape from the rigid rules of formal logic. The bourgeois revolutionary concept of reason has been turned inside-out. Reason is now located in an inhuman external world. Freedom is to be achieved only within the individual and in opposition to reason. Emotional life is regarded as essentially the arena of irrational forces. Counterposing his inner life of freedom to the slavery of the outside capitalist world, the subjectivist still finds himself conditioned and determined by that same world. However deep

his anguish, he cannot solve these *practical* problems in the world of private thought or feeling. Indeed, irrationality and subjectivism are reactionary tendencies, used to prevent the political resolution of the crisis of mankind in the epoch of imperialist decay, for they are employed to build movements of violent desperation to break the power of the labour movement.

The disease and corruption of modern culture reflect the death agony of world capitalism. They are the symptoms of the decay of a whole social system and its ruling class. Their cure can only be achieved in the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism.⁴

4. Some of the ideas of this section are related to those of Max Horkheimer contained in his book *The Eclipse of Reason*. However, despite his critique of modern thought, and his demonstration that a return to older philosophies is impossible, he remains on the philosophical level. This is connected with his evident disillusionment with the labour movement, and mass action in general. However, there is much of interest to Marxists in his work.

Theory and Practice Re-united

'Philosophers have hitherto interpreted the world in different ways: the point, however, is to change it.'

It was in the Germany of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, where the bourgeoisie was economically and politically backward, that bourgeois philosophy reached its highest point. Since their revolution was only 'in the head', the Germans were capable of taking it further than their British or French counterparts—but only in theory. Kant, Fichte and Hegel were able to draw the theoretical lessons of the French revolution as far as they could reach.

Pulling together the rationalist and empiricist threads, Kant posed anew the problem of knowledge divorced from practice. Asking 'How is knowledge possible?', his 'critical philosophy' separated the categories of thought and the rules of logic from their objective content. Things 'in themselves' were beyond the boundary between thinking and reality. Any attempt to cross this frontier was doomed to fall into contradiction. All the properties, interrelationships and development of reality are supplied by reason in the process of cognition.

Hegel abolished the 'thing-in-itself', exposing it as a nullity. Thought and its object were unified in a contradictory whole. In his upside-down, mystical, idealist way he explored the results of the separation of theory and practice. The categories of thought arise from the objective world. They are historical

stages in the unfolding of the Idea. Far from being external to reality, they are its very being, essence and notion.

The concrete object is infinitely connected with everything else in the world and with its own past and future. It is reached through a process of abstraction which penetrates the surface between appearance and essence. When Hegel says that the world is Mind, he is expressing the interconnection between thought and its object, and affirming the ability of thought to master reality.

Hegel saw that men had been acting without grasping the real meaning of their actions. The understanding of this process was the task of philosophy, which could thus bring thinking into conformity with objective reality. History spoke through the philosophic method. Philosophy was the autobiography of the human spirit.

While this led Hegel to reactionary political conclusions, it enabled him to see the nature of formal thought. Truth was not a static object but an historical process, developing through a series of approximations. Hegel does not discard previous philosophies but absorbs them into his system in negating them.

The world was not a machine as the empiricists contended. It was an organic whole, whose inter-

related parts made each other what they were, through conflict and contradiction. Dialectical logic, unlike formal logic, does not deal with separate objects which must be classified into exclusive categories. It is the nature of reality itself. It can see its own development as part of the growth and interrelationship of the object it deals with.

But, although Hegel sees the one-sided character of previous philosophy and investigates its hitherto unconscious connection with historical reality, he only sees it *philosophically*. That is, he can only consider theoretical answers to theoretical problems. His tremendous achievement was to bring together all the contradictions of philosophy and prepare the way for their resolution.

Marx, by turning towards the working class and its revolutionary role in modern society, was able to demolish this theoretical barrier. Philosophy was abolished.

Starting with Hegel's grasp of the contradictory connection between thought and history, Marx sought the social force which could eliminate the obstacle to human freedom. This obstacle, he found, was not theoretical but economic: the exploitation and oppression of class rule. And the force which would smash it was the united power of the working class. The proletarian masses, the producers of wealth, would become the active element in social development.

The problems which philosophy had posed for thousands of years were only the ideological reflection of practical economic and political problems. Their solution lay, not in the realm of pure thought, but in the revolutionary transformation of the social order by the action of the workers.

In showing how false ideas arose from the conflicting material relationships in class society, Marx was able to break through the forms of thought in which the power and interest of propertied classes had been mystically enshrined. A consistent materialist world outlook could be developed, free from the distortion of class society. For this method of viewing reality was able to see its own material basis in the working class.

A scientific understanding of history becomes possible from this point of view. Philosophy could not formulate historical laws without raising the question whether such laws would not limit and determine human action and thought, including that of the philosopher. Marxism, as the revolutionary theory of the working class, can answer this question. Like the working class, the Marxist movement is both a product of capitalist society and part of the struggle to destroy it.⁵

5. The so-called sociology of knowledge (as formulated by Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia*) has to grapple with this basic contradiction. Mannheim, following Alfred Weber, finds in the intelligentsia a group

Marxism studies the world objectively, not in the formal sense of claiming to be 'independent' of reality, but in active connection with it. The objective social conditions are not viewed as unchangeable 'facts', but as problems to be solved, as obstacles whose nature and history must be grasped so that they may be overcome.

The contradictions inherent in capitalist society are seen as opportunities for the conscious intervention of Marxists. The latter are, therefore, not trying to impose prefabricated theories on reality, but to understand it through the process of transforming it.

Scientific objectivity is thus not a standpoint of aloofness, from which all passion must be antiseptically removed. The working-class struggle, an essential part of capitalism, is the only viewpoint from which society can be comprehended.

The philosophic attitude, even in its popular sense, implies a passive acceptance of reality, whatever its defects. That is why every attempt by bourgeois commentators or by revisionists within the Marxist movement to turn Marx into a philosopher, destroys the essence of his thought. Marxism is not merely a theory, but a social movement in which theory plays a uniquely central part.

The Utopian socialists had seen the desirability of replacing the anarchy and degradation of bourgeois society with a system based upon collective ownership and control of production. But, since they could not find their ideas on the struggle of the working class, they did not reach beyond the level of philosophy. Their blue-prints for a better world remained mere wishful thinking.

Unlike all previous revolutions, notably the bourgeois revolution, the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat is the basis for the emancipation of humanity from *all* class division. This liberation has to be a *conscious* process. The communist movement is the struggle to bring about understanding by the working class of its role in history.

In contrast to the bourgeoisie, which could develop its mode of production within the womb of feudalism, the working class needs an organised party to lead its fight for power to control its conditions of life. The independent action of the working class can be developed and the class made conscious of its strength only through an all-round theoretical, political and industrial struggle, led by a disciplined vanguard.

which he alleges is able to understand how thought is affected by the social position of the thinker, and to 'correct' the consequent distortion. This group, he thinks, 'subsumes in itself all those interests with which social life is permeated' (page 40). However, this view is itself related to the social position of those engaged in the reformist 'social engineering', which a particular phase of imperialism made possible.

The Marxists 'have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole'.⁶ Marxism generalises the long-term interests of the working class. This generalisation is a historic process combining scientific analysis and practical activity with the assembly and selection of the human material to carry them out.

The Marxists have the task of laying bare the reality of social relations which capitalism keeps hidden. This task is at the same time theoretical and practical. By giving leadership to the workers in day-to-day battles with the employing class, Marxists bring the nature of capitalist exploitation into the open. Against all the ideological weapons of the ruling class, ranging from the *Daily Sketch* to the University of Oxford, the revolutionaries must wage a constant war to show how only the united struggle of the workers to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie can take the human race forward.

The workers are driven to revolt by the conditions of life to which they are condemned by capitalism. Uniting as a class, they challenge the power of capital. This unconscious or partly conscious conflict between wage-earners and employers continues as an integral part of the economic system, and *implicit* in the workers' struggle is the overthrow of bourgeois society. But without the Marxists, it would be led into channels which would accommodate it within the social framework of capitalism.

Marxism combines theory and practice, not in a passive or peaceful way, but in mutual contradiction. Practice is not mere activity, following set routines, but is itself a theoretical process, constantly checking and re-checking itself. Its concrete, detailed character does not isolate it from theory but gives expression to general theoretical concepts. Its theoretical basis brings it into closer relationship with social reality. Every detail of revolutionary practice must reflect the overall objectives of the movement and the class it fights to lead.

The unity of theory and practice is thus never completed, the gulf between them never bridged. Marxism is a self-critical process, which does not 'explain' the world from the outside but strives to reflect in practice the essence of the class struggle itself.

Marxism cannot be conceived without struggle against revisionist trends in the Marxist movement. It is a battle for leadership of the labour movement against ideas and tendencies representing alien class forces. The pressures of capitalist society, particularly in its highest, imperialist phase, lead to attempts to adapt the movement to existing society. One such adaptation is to withdraw from the difficult tasks posed for socialists behind a screen of abstraction.

In defending its theoretical and practical traditions,

Marxism is not protecting dogma. Social changes within capitalism constantly place new problems before revolutionaries which cannot be evaded by the recitation of ancient texts. The method of Marxism springs from the reality of class conflict, and is kept alive only through the daily contact with that reality.

The revisionists claim to take account of the 'facts' of changing reality, as against 'dogmatism' and 'subjectivism'. But a revolutionary programme embodies the needs of the working class under new conditions, not by throwing the old ideas overboard, but only on the basis of those ideas. As the conscious expression of the workers' struggle, Marxist principles are capable of grasping in theory and practice the changes which imperialism undergoes. The development and enriching of Marxism is the battle to link it with the consciousness of the working class in action.

Marx and Engels conducted fierce polemical struggles against petty-bourgeois trends in their time. Starting with their break with the Young Hegelians, they fought ideas which implicitly or explicitly denied the necessity for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois state, the role of the working class in this task and the need to organise the working class vanguard. It was through this constant fight that their analysis of capitalism developed. Not content with merely proving their opponents wrong, they showed the social roots of these errors.

Lenin looked at his battles with Menshevism, and with Trotsky's pre-war conciliation of Menshevism, against the background of imperialism. Both the revisionism against which he fought and the fight itself were essential aspects of the highest stage of capitalism in an epoch of wars and revolutions.

When Lenin's opponents denounced him as 'subjectivist', they were trying to separate the Marxist party from the struggle it had to lead. As Trotsky later wrote: 'My conciliationism was derived from a certain social revolutionary fatalism. I believed that the logic of the class struggle would compel both factions to pursue the same revolutionary line. The great historical significance of Lenin's stand was still unclear to me at that time, his policy of irreconcilable ideological demarcation and, where necessary, split, for the purpose of uniting and steeling the backbone of the truly revolutionary party.'⁷ Men like Kautsky and Plekhanov, for all their great scholarship, did not rise above the level of philosophy. That is to say, they remained observers and commentators on history and class struggle, 'using' Marxist theory to explain them. Thus they unconsciously and passively adapted their theory to the power of capital.

Lenin's battle for the Third International, both

6. *Communist Manifesto*.

7. L. D. Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, p. 49.

before and after October 1917, manifested even more clearly the inseparability of Marxist theory and revolutionary practice. The struggle to defend the Soviet Republic, militarily and economically, was for Lenin completely fused with the international fight against the right-wing and centrist labour leaders. And this fight to split the world labour movement away from those who made it safe for imperialism had to be combined with the work of winning the leadership of the working class through united struggle for concrete demands. Both opportunist and sectarian trends had to be combatted in the building of the International.

When Trotsky took up the defence of the traditions of Bolshevism against Stalin's attack, he had the same combined method. The theoretical analysis of Stalinism, both its anti-working class policies and its social origins in the Soviet bureaucracy, was part of the fight to build a political movement which could carry on Lenin's work. The factional conflict in the middle twenties and the work to build the Fourth International in the thirties were concerned precisely with the relation between the critical situation of world capitalism and the theoretical and practical crisis of the Marxist movement.

The struggle against revisionist trends in the Fourth International today is again around this central question. Those who see in the post-war world 'automatic' and 'irreversible' tendencies for the bourgeois state to be overthrown without the conscious intervention of Marxist leadership, turn Marxism into philosophy—and so destroy it. They pragmatically identify theory with the description of the surface appearance of particular events. Their

activity can only be reduced to trailing behind the established labour or nationalist leaderships, who in turn tether the working class to the power of world capital.

The power of Marxism, its capacity to become 'a material force', results from its relation to the working class. Marxism has the essential role in the history of the twentieth century. Only the international Marxist movement can provide the working class with the conscious scientific understanding of its power as an independent force to reshape society. The building of that movement is thus the highest point of theory and of practice.

Communism will not return to the primitive conditions which preceded the history of class society, but will embody in a conscious, planned way all the gains made by humanity. In the same way, Marxism unifies theory and practice without discarding the conquests of philosophy, which was the expression of their separation. The working class will achieve power only by negating philosophy, while grasping in practice the theoretical advances which the separation of theory from practice brought forth.

Communist man will make his own social life consciously. Natural science will no longer conflict with an irrational social environment, but will be rationally controlled in the service of man.

The working class, through its conscious vanguard, must become the heir to the science, art and philosophy which class society has produced. The titanic struggles, to grasp the reality of the natural world and of man himself, of the Aristotles, Shakespeares, Hegels and Einsteins will be taken to a new and higher level by the socialist revolution.

Modern Science and Dialectical materialism

By Ralph Martin

IN 1914 the continuation of political relations between the various capitalist countries of Europe required the use of 'other means'. Each of the advanced countries, fighting for a bigger share of the world market, used the most up-to-date machines and factories, the most modern developments of technology, in order more effectively to destroy innumerable towns and cities, lives and ways of life.

By the time the war ended, many scientists felt that they had seen enough of the applications of science to 'real life'; they took up the study of a branch of the subject which they felt to be particularly useless and remote from the needs of industry and war, atomic physics. Robert Jungk describes their way of life in his book, *Brighter than a Thousand Suns*: professors and lecturers in remote and ancient university towns, collaborating freely with scientists of all other countries, all engaged solely in the disinterested search for the truth. The results of their research were the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb.

In the history of these weapons and of the men involved in the development of them, traced out in Jungk's book, their dilemma can be clearly seen. On the one hand, as scientists they have a vast influence on the lives of every person on earth; on the other, however liberal and idealistic they may be (and very often are) as people, they have not the slightest control over the weapons they have invented, nor any power to prevent their use.

Scientists almost invariably attempt to resolve dilemmas of this sort by retreating further into the ivory tower of academic research. They see the separation of science from real life as its greatest safeguard, and the necessary condition for its progress. They dislike the way in which the state

and the monopolies finance research mainly into fields which are useful to them in industry or nuclear strategy. They see their task as that of increasing our store of knowledge of nature, and leave aside the question of how their work affects the lives of people; and when the nature of the work makes this separation impossible, as happens today with research into atomic energy or automation, they see its application only in an ideal world, in which atomic energy provides unlimited cheap power and automation frees workers from drudgery and adds to their leisure, not in a world in which an atomic bomb destroys Hiroshima, and automation puts thousands on the dole.

Yet this attempt to reduce science to no more than the search for objective truth has never succeeded. The example of the atomic scientists shows this; and other examples are not hard to find. The way in which the state finances scientific research has already been mentioned; Jungk talks about the extent to which American research is financed by the armed forces (to the extent of \$1,500 million in 1957), and quotes the fears of the scientists that 'the now amicable contracts will tighten up and the fine print will start to contain talk about results and specific weapon problems'. Again, when the American chemicals firm Du Pont developed a pigment which could be used either in paints or as a textile dye, the directors, not wishing to make their other textile dyes obsolete, spent a large amount of money on developing contaminants which would make the dye suitable for paints but useless for textiles. The case of the drug Thalidomide provides a more recent and tragic example of the uses to which science is put.

In these and other ways, capitalism constantly

uses their work in a way which is quite opposed to most scientists' ideal of progress; and which they seem quite unable either to understand or to prevent. If we want to understand it we shall have to look at the way in which modern science has developed; because science, and especially the relation of science to society, is not something which is organised and decided upon in the best, or most reasonable, way. Like everything else it is determined historically; and the history of science is not simply a list of discoveries and inventions which were used to get more discoveries and inventions; on the contrary, it is a part of the history of society and its culture which Marx described as a history of class struggles.

To say this is not to criticise modern science as 'bourgeois' science, and to oppose to it the claims of some illusory 'socialist' or 'proletarian' science. Most sorts of scientific work to a large extent determine their own methods of observing and experimenting, constructing hypotheses and theories; methods which are based on the experience of many previous workers in the field, and which are departed from only at the risk of confining research in some dogmatic straitjacket. Thus at various times the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union has attempted to force the results of Russian and other scientists into the rigid framework of a scholastic interpretation of

dialectical materialism; rejecting those that did not fit sufficiently well, such as Einstein's 'idealist' Theory of Relativity.¹ On the other hand, these methods contain features which show their origin in the particular way in which science has developed, and which can sometimes act as an obstacle to further development. When this stage is reached, as it perhaps has been today in the physics of so-called 'elementary particles', the theory of the basic structure of matter, it becomes useful to attempt to isolate these features, by seeing how they arose in the history of science under capitalism.

1. See, for example, the article 'Kapitza and the legacy of Stalinism', in *The Newsletter*, 22.9.62, p.2.



Einstein

His theory of Relativity was dubbed 'idealist'

Empiricism



Galileo

Kepler

Newton

Practical problems of nascent capitalism underlay their problems

The beginnings of modern science lie in the period in which trade and commerce began to play an important part in the economy of feudal Europe, and in which the class of merchants and traders who were to destroy feudalism were growing in power. The practical problems of manufacture and trade, of transport, building roads and canals, of navigation, of mining, lie behind the theoretical problems which Galileo, Kepler and Newton solved;² and the urgent need for solutions to the practical problems

explains the rapidity of the development of science at this time.

The new science grew up, not with the support of the universities, but in face of their opposition and hostility. The centres of research were scientific societies, such as the Royal Society in London, set up for the purpose. Official science was based on the authorities of holy writ and the works of Aristotle; it solved scientific problems by argument, or by consulting these works, not by experiment. So Galileo, writing to Kepler about the reception given to his new telescope by the local university professors, says:

'We must smile at the great stupidity of men. What are you to say of the first philosophers of the school here, who with the stubbornness of an adder, despite invitations a thousand times repeated, did not wish even to glance either at the planets or at the moon, or even at the telescope itself. Truly the eyes of these men are closed to the light of truth. It is astounding yet it does not surprise me. This kind of person thinks that philosophy is a kind of book . . . that truth has to be sought not in the world, not in nature, but in the collation of texts.'

2. See 'The Social and Economic Roots of Newton's Principia' by B. Hessen (in *Science at the Cross Roads*, Kniga, 1931).

Clearly, the new science involved not merely great advances in methods and techniques, but also a completely new way of looking at the world and man's place in it; a revolution in thought, in fact, accompanying and justifying the revolution in science. The new philosophy removed the creator to a safe distance, invisible, unknowable and without observable consequences, and made the investigation of the world of our senses the province of the scientist, of observation and experiment. It made possible the vast development in science and technology which has transformed what was previously a world of man's perpetual struggle for existence into a man-made world, hardly any part of which has not been constructed or adapted by man for his own purposes.

In a sense, however, the new philosophy, empiricism, limited in advance the tasks of science. In rejecting the arbitrary participation of the creator in the day-to-day running of nature, the new scientists had removed what had unified their understanding of nature. They said that all knowledge of nature came from experience, but what does the experience of the scientists consist of? It consists of observation of all the numerous different kinds of things in the world, and of the lawful, predictable behaviour of some of them. The job of scientists became one of classifying; measuring, and finding the numerical laws suggested by large number of related measurements; setting precise limits to fields of study, and observing the properties of and relationships between the characteristic kinds of things in the small part of nature thus isolated.

This process of defining the boundaries of any given science, of finding the laws which have autonomy in that particular science, and neglecting the effects on it of the rest of nature, is the necessary way in which scientific knowledge has been and is being built up. Nevertheless there are some questions which it does not answer. It says nothing about the essential connection between the different branches of science, a connection which arises out of the fact that all the sciences are different ways of understanding one world. It cannot explain *why* it is possible to understand this world, firstly as a system of electrons, protons, etc., in motion under their mutual interactions, secondly, as various chemical elements, combining according to certain laws, thirdly, as a collection of human beings, living

in a class society, and so on.

Denying to science the possibility of finding the reasons in the real complexity of nature, empiricism is forced to bring them from outside science—in the form of religion or some more sophisticated variety of idealism. Newton, for example, opposed the idea that the development of science in any way put in question the responsibility of God for the existence and structure of the natural world. Again, Mach, towards the end of the last century, argued that the subject-matter of science was not the real world but meter-readings, subjective sense-impressions received by the individual brain, and in this way he reduced the enormous variety of natural law to conditions on the way in which these impressions were received, properties of the mind.

The scientist is, from this point of view, simply a passive observer, receiving signals from outside and fitting them into a pattern which enables him to predict the results of experiments, but knowing nothing of the connection between his signals and the real processes going on in the world. It becomes impossible for the scientist to say anything about the real nature of matter; and we shall see later how this works out in the case of modern physics. Science loses its active role, of harnessing the forces of nature in order to transform the world in man's interest; but it is just the ability to see this active role of science (including social science), in a world seen as a whole, which leads to the view of present society, not as anything permanent or necessarily as it is now, but as a stage in the history of society which must be passed. The dilemma of scientists which we mentioned at the beginning is the result of the lack of this understanding. Without it, even if their research were not restricted, controlled or directed in any way, its results can be appropriated by capitalism, just as it appropriates the products of the factory worker.

To sum up, the rise of the new science did not lead to an automatic and unlimited development, either for science or for society. Just as the eternal moral principles, the laws of a rational society, laid down by the Enlightenment ended up by providing a justification for the power of the French bourgeoisie, so the history of science from the time of Galileo and Newton up until the present day, has shown it to be science adapted to the needs of capitalism.

Modern physics

It must be said that very few scientists would agree with the arguments of empiricism taken to their logical conclusion as was done in the last section. The great majority of them would say that they were studying an objectively existing external world, about which their experiments and theories gave

them more and more knowledge. Furthermore, the development of science is itself breaking down some of the barriers between the sciences, as for example in biochemistry, which is concerned with the chemistry of living cells.

Nevertheless, this automatic materialism of scien-

tists, which says only that the external world exists and is investigated by science, itself cannot account for the variety of levels of this existence, each with its autonomous laws and corresponding branch of science. Moreover, modern science has its roots, not in this or any other sort of materialism, but in empiricism, and this affects science in several characteristic ways.

One of these ways is connected with the fact that most of the laws of science express purely mathematical, i.e., quantitative relations. In a way precisely analogous to that in which capitalism abstracts from the differences between the huge variety of qualitatively different products of human labour, and reduces all to a common coin—exchange value or quantity of labour time—so the tendency of every branch of modern science is to fix, once and for all, the kinds of things, the qualities, with which it deals, and to confine itself to discovering numerical relationships between these things, and numerical laws which describe their behaviour.

In physics this process has gone much farther than in other sciences. The great advances which physics has made have resulted from a process of constructing models of the world, or of small parts of it, in each of which all the relevant phenomena have been supposed to result from the motion and interaction of a small number of different kinds of things. Each model has in turn been discarded and replaced when it has been found to qualitatively over-simplify the real world. Thus it used to be thought that the world was built up of atoms which were small, structureless and indivisible particles. This model was abandoned when it was found that experimental results could be predicted with much greater accuracy if it was supposed that the atom had a structure, and in fact consisted of a nucleus round which electrons described orbits like a minute planetary system. It was then found necessary to suppose that the nucleus itself was built up from more fundamental units. At the moment, about 20 different 'elementary particles' are necessary to explain the experimental results.

The construction of such models is, of course, the only way in which physics can be developed. The physicist's theories can deal with only a small part of nature, and his knowledge of that part is limited. From a materialist point of view, a good model which predicts accurately the results of experiments also reflects more or less faithfully the actual processes occurring in the real world. The continual construction of such models and, from the contradictions between them and the real world, deriving new ones, is the process in physics of the 'eternal, endless approximation of thought to the object'.

From the point of view of empiricism, however, it is meaningless to say that the processes occurring

in the model reflect actual processes going on in nature; the criterion becomes that the model should be the simplest which adequately explains the results of experiments. In practice, furthermore, the current theory is always thought to contain at least the essential features of the ultimate theory of matter. Thus the history of physics is not understood as this process of 'approximation of thought to the object'; instead, to paraphrase Lenin again, 'the reflection of nature in man's thought' is understood 'lifelessly, abstractly, devoid of movement, without contradictions'.³

The physics of the fundamental particles of matter will serve to illustrate some of these points. The mathematical theory of these particles is today an extremely complex and difficult subject which seems to have very little connection with what goes on in nature (except that certain quantities which occur have a physical interpretation and allow experimental results to be predicted). More than this, the mathematical formalism is interpreted in such a way that it becomes meaningless to talk of the detailed processes occurring in nature. Let us take the simple example of a single particle moving under the influence of known forces. Until the end of the last century, it was supposed that it was possible in principle to measure, as accurately as one wished, all the dynamical properties of a physical system at any instant (in our simple case these are just the position and velocity of the particle at any instant). Newton's mechanics provided a method for calculating their values. Modern 'quantum mechanics', on the other hand, says that it is impossible to know the values of both position and velocity of the particle simultaneously; the more precisely one knows where the particle is at a given time, the less one can say about how fast it is travelling at the time. In fact the laws of quantum theory give physical information only in the form of 'probability distributions' for physical quantities, which provide, in our simple case, no information about the actual values of position and velocity; instead they say that at a given instant, the particle could have any one of a whole range of positions, and give the probability for it being in any one; and similarly for the velocity. These probability distributions for position and velocity are related in such a way that if the particle is almost certain to have one particular position, then its velocity can have any of a very large number of values with practically equal probability, and vice versa.

This 'uncertainty principle', which Eddington and others thought to be the mechanism through which God had built 'free will' into nature, has the consequence that it becomes impossible for scientists to attempt to picture or understand the processes going

3. V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, p. 195.

on in atoms; we have no words to describe such processes. According to Heisenberg, the discoverer of the principle, 'It is not surprising that our language should be incapable of describing the processes occurring within the atoms, for . . . it was invented to describe the experiences of daily life, and these consist only of processes involving exceedingly large number of atoms.' The words which physicists use, particle, wave, energy, velocity, position, etc., are thus no more than analogies, which enable them to fit their experimental and theoretical results into a tidy and familiar scheme; but to push their use too far, to talk at all of the detailed behaviour of elementary particles, is to make statements which 'do not involve any consequences and which therefore have no content at all—in spite of the fact that [they] . . . produce some kind of picture in our imagination . . .' Fortunately, 'it has been possible to invent a mathematical scheme—the quantum theory—which seems entirely adequate for the treatment of atomic processes'.⁴

The stage of our knowledge of nature represented by quantum theory is here interpreted in a way which illustrates what we have said about the consequences of its history for modern science; especially the tendency to understand the qualitative complexity of the world in a purely formal, mathematical way (even more explicitly stated by the mathematical physicist Weyl, '. . . the constructive mathematical method of our modern physics, which repudiates qualities . . .')⁵

4. W. Heisenberg, *The Physical Principles of the Quantum Theory*, University of Chicago Press, 1930.

5. H. Weyl, *Space, Time, Matter*, London, 1922.

This tendency is opposed by some modern physicists, in particular by D. Bohm, who attempts to interpret quantum theory from the point of view of a consistent materialism.⁶ Starting from the 'qualitative infinity' of nature, the unlimited number of different kinds of things in the world, he concludes that there cannot be any final theory of matter which accounts for all its properties in a purely mathematical way. Any such theory leaves out of account the properties of matter, its special laws, on fundamental levels of its existence as yet unknown; and in fact represents, whether or not it is understood in this way, a theoretical model of nature built on our present level of understanding of its qualities.

The 'elementary' particles must themselves be thought of as complex structures, made up of more fundamental elements whose behaviour is governed by new laws. Then, in the same way as the motion of a single molecule of a gas appears to the human observer to be erratic and random (although predictable in terms of its own laws), so to an atomic scale 'observer' the behaviour of these more fundamental elements would seem to be erratic and random. And, just as the actual behaviour of large volumes of gas can be understood as the outcome of the random motions of large numbers of molecules, so it might be expected that the laws of the atomic level could be understood in terms of the random and 'unpredictable' behaviour on the sub-atomic level. In fact, Bohm has described in detail one way in which the 'probability' laws of quantum theory could arise out of the random effect on the atomic level of the motion on the sub-atomic level.

6. D. Bohm, *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics*.

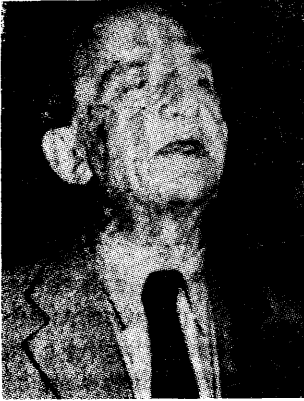
Conclusion

In this article I have tried to show that modern science is, with the rest of modern culture, a part of the 'superstructure' of capitalist society. Many of its characteristic features have their origin in the revolution in thought which accompanied and justified the bourgeois revolution. Scientists, of course, study an objective external world whose properties are independent of the economy, and which determines to a large extent their methods and results. For this reason, the connection between the superstructure and the 'economic base' is probably even less mechanical and more complex for science than it is for other parts of this culture. Perhaps it may be useful, nevertheless, to compare the situation of scientists in capitalist society with that of the writers whom Georg Lukacs has considered

in his recently translated book on the historical novel.⁷

Lukacs' theme is, very briefly, the new understanding of history shown by the great writers of the period of the bourgeois revolution in Europe, and the decline of this understanding after 1848, during the consolidation of bourgeois rule and, subsequently, of the growth of imperialism. Authors such as Scott derived from the revolutionary reorganisation of society which was taking place in their own time a clearer picture of change in history. They saw the progressive and reactionary forces which were peculiar to the past societies and communities

7. G. Lukacs, *The Historical Novel*, Merlin Press, London, 1962.



Georg Lukacs

*Explains the loss of
historical consciousness
and sense*

of which they wrote and which worked to change them (and which through such changes, connected them with the present). Because of this connection, history for them was real and knowable. We see here, from a different angle, the new consciousness of man's power to control nature of which we talked earlier: for the scientist of the bourgeois revolution, conscious of his power to harness the forces of nature for his own use; for the great novelist, consciousness of his ability to make his own history.

As the bourgeoisie lost its revolutionary aims, so this consciousness and historical sense were lost. History no longer leads up to and explains the modern world; instead the historical themes treated present a world which is remote, exotic, unconnected with today. The forces which change the world are unknown and unknowable; they reveal themselves only as the subjective wishes of great men.

Dealing with the important writers of this period, Lukacs is not at all concerned to represent them as dupes or tools of the capitalist class. On the contrary, in many cases he shows their work to be the result of a disgust with bourgeois society; but their rejection of it is itself conditioned by that society. They escaped into history, as providing a world more rewarding or exciting than the actual one. The former understanding arose when a revolutionary class showed in practice how it was possible for men to change the world; unable to recognise and accept the historical role of the *proletariat* after the bourgeois revolution, the later writers were unable to see for themselves the possibility of change. Consequently they saw in history only the difference from, not the connection with, the present.

In the same way, the materialism of many of the earlier scientists turned into the idealism of

Mach and Eddington. As the ruling class was less able to use the results of science in the interests of men, so scientists became less and less confident of their ability to control nature, of the understanding of nature which their science gave them.

The development of the historical novel, from an important way of understanding society and the way in which it changes, into a particular brand of escapism like the detective novel or science-fiction, is therefore closely paralleled by the development of science, which changed from the search for ways to harness nature into an academic pursuit, science for its own sake, independent of the uses to which it is put. Neither makes any statement about the nature of society or of the natural world, whose workings remain unknowable. Both are the typical products of the period of capitalist rule.

Like the novelists with whom Lukacs deals, scientists also have been led to reject bourgeois society's way of using their work; especially, in their case, during the present century, in which imperialism has employed nearly all the great achievements of science in destroying, expropriating or exploiting the mass of the population of the world. Again, this rejection is limited by the position of scientists in this society, and by their partial, one-sided view of the world, which we considered earlier. As imperialism increases the gulf which separates the progressive possibilities inherent in science from the uses to which it is put, so it accelerates the negative, idealistic tendency of empiricism. The increasingly obvious inability of scientists to control nature in practice is reflected in their growing belief that their science provides only a shorthand description of an unknowable 'outside world' as it affects their instruments and meters.

Scientists, too, understand the possibility of great changes in nature and society only when this possibility is demonstrated by a revolutionary class which, in taking power, alters the whole economic, cultural and scientific organisation of society, giving them new freedom and setting them new tasks. Their present fragmented, compartmentalised science cannot itself arrive at consciousness of the possibility and the source of change in a society which seems to them permanent and static. This is provided, not by any impartial and objective analysis of laws and trends in nature and society, but by the understanding that the interests of science and scientists are those of the working class in the capitalist world, and only to the extent that this class successfully fights for a socialist society is any future progress guaranteed.

Social Change and the Intelligentsia

By Tom Kemp

IN every period of social crisis and tension, when an old form of society is struggling to prolong its existence and the new seems to the faint-hearted to be too long in appearing, perhaps never to be born, or only with repulsive deformations, doctrines of pessimism and cynicism have free rein. We live in such an age, for the much-lauded 'affluence' of the past decade or so, which has seen the workers and lower middle classes making relatively modest material gains owing to a steady demand for their labour power, cannot disguise the fact that present-day capitalism is unable to harness to constructive social purposes the productive capacities of modern technology, nor indeed to develop those capacities as would be possible in a rationally-organised society. The ultimate expression of capitalist decay is the willingness of those who control the destinies of the system to see the world reduced to radio-active rubble rather than allow further loss of 'living space' to the rival world system.

Pessimistic ideologies, which deny man's capacity to create on this earth a social system free of exploitation and alienation, in which man is no longer a wolf to man and human solidarity provides the conditions for the full development of the personality of all, are not new. They reached consummate expression in the teachings of such ideologues as Burke, de Maistre and the later Hegel at the very moment when the bourgeoisie itself was reaching out for new ways to control man's environment. Once this class had passed its ascendancy and found itself challenged in its turn by the claims of the working class it turned increasingly to these doctrines, developing them in new terms to justify the maintenance of the status quo. They are recognisable today in a wide spectrum of social doctrine ranging from the extremes of John Birchism to the spurious objectivity of various orthodox schools of social science. Of course, the interplay of ideas, in so far as they gain an independence from the clash

of classes in the social arena, produces all kinds of mutations. If the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class, that does not necessarily mean that in their form they assume an immediately recognisable homogeneity.

Indeed, the relative autonomy of ideas ensures that this should not be so. Ideas are produced by individuals, juxtaposed in diverse ways to the various forces, including ideological forces, present in society, thus making possible an immense variety not only in their form but also, within limits, in their content. The 'ruling class', itself a stratified entity within which important divisions may exist, does not generate a monolithic body of doctrine but a varied assortment of often warring and apparently unconnected ideas. This very diversity is made a virtue in the prevailing 'liberalism' of the bourgeoisie in its rise to power and in its ascendancy; and this diversity, in differing degrees, continues to characterise the capitalist societies of our time. Only under fascism does a unified doctrine, backed by the police power, prevail; but the resort to such methods is by no means a matter of choice on the part of the bourgeoisie—it prefers to have a policeman unobtrusively at the street-corner, not in the highest posts in the state. But however varied the forms of the prevailing ideas in the relatively more open forms of capitalist society, they do accept as fundamental the need to preserve the foundations of the system itself and, predominantly, are pessimistic about the prospects of social change except that which, because it must be consistent with these foundations, is slow, piece-meal and implies no change in the distribution of property and power.

Pessimism has its degrees, and whether it is open or concealed depends on the individual thinker and reflects the moods of the time which, in turn, are a product of social influences. We may mention as a type the hard-boiled cynic who, despite professions of objectivity or desire for 'progress', sides manifestly

with the powers that be, though making use of the degree of license which the 'openness' of bourgeois society may from time to time permit. There is also the disillusioned idealist who may at one time have had the vision of an alternative to the corrupt, self-seeking jungle world of capitalism and even linked his fortunes to the working-class movement but who, buffeted by the cruel winds of the twentieth century, has drawn back dismayed to the safe refuge of conformity. For both such extremes the old adages of conservatism, in a new ideological guise and in modern social science or journalistic jargon, become the wisdom of the age. In their essence they do not differ from the street corner scoffer at a socialist meeting. Their bedrock is that human nature is bad and can't be changed, that all power corrupts and human improvement is a vain aspiration.

To deal with the challenge of socialist ideas, and that means particularly with Marxism, the bourgeoisie can now call on the services of a host of ex-radicals who have themselves more than a passing acquaintance with Marxist ideas and the workers' movement. When, in the 1930s the crisis of capitalism broke surface in a world-wide depression of unprecedented depth and length a wide circle of youthful members of the intelligentsia were drawn into the orbit of Marxism for the first time. The assumptions upon which they had been brought up had already been rudely shaken by the results of the world conflict of 1914-18. The nineteenth century ideas of liberal capitalism were being undermined and in some countries were in complete collapse. They gave no satisfactory explanation of the spreading political and economic breakdown of the 1930s. Despite all that has been said about the Victorianism of Marx's thought, its out-datedness, its lack of relevance to our time, life taught significant numbers of the intelligentsia quite otherwise in this period. In fact it was their introduction to the twentieth century. It gave a more penetrating insight into the processes at work in an age of world wars and economic crisis than all the writing of Marx's contemporaries or successors. In a way it performed a function which Trotsky had noted in the Czarist Russia of the 1890s. While in the latter case Marxism was 'the instrument by which the bourgeois intelligentsia cut the Populist umbilical cord and severed itself from its hated past', in the 1930s it severed the links of many intellectuals with the hypocritical formulas of bourgeois liberalism.¹

Of course, it was not the only possible alternative to such doctrines. Marxism could only have this attractive power where it was linked with a working-class movement, and insofar as that movement seemed to be powerful and capable of fulfilling its promise.

These were big provisos because in practice this movement was under the domination of leaderships, Social-Democratic or Communist, which by political weakness, bureaucratic methods and betrayals which cannot be specified in detail here, ensured that they were not met. Moreover, since the intelligentsia was recruited from the ranks of the property-owning or middle classes it normally took sides, as least as far as its main contingents were concerned, not with the working class, but with the established order. Thus just as many of the young Russians who embraced Marxism became 'legal Marxists' or, in Trotsky's words, 'finding that it led to a revolutionary rejection of the whole capitalist system . . . adjudged it an impediment and declared it out of date' so many of those who were drawn to it in the thirties more or less rapidly followed a similar evolution.²

In the latter situation, however, a new factor was present which largely accounted for the speed and character of the turn from Marxism. After 1917 the attractive power of the Russian Revolution of 1917 acted with Marxist ideas to draw many of the intelligentsia from their allegiance to the old shibboleths. It was the degeneration of the Soviet power, in the period of Stalinism, which gave grounds for a return to them. The responsibilities of Stalinism for this evolution were, in many cases, paramount. Not only did it provide an alibi for many of those who perhaps sooner or later would have gravitated back to other intellectual positions, it also drove out of left-wing politics even larger numbers of those who felt that they had been deceived by a false vision. In individual cases the process of disillusionment spread over a long period from the time of the Moscow trials to the aftermath of the 20th Congress of the CPSU; there were times when particular events, such as the Nazi-Soviet pact, precipitated large-scale movements. We are now talking mainly of defections from the Communist parties and their periphery. Account must therefore be taken of the unevenness of this process in different countries. For example, in European countries during the Resistance movement many were attracted into the Communist parties even from the youth of the bourgeoisie. The hold of these parties on the working class made the situation different from that in the United States or Britain. And it should not be forgotten that some who were so attracted have remained to this day, sometimes built into the apparatus of the party, sometimes as closed-mind dogmatists or because of an identification, still genuinely made, between the working class, Marxist theory and the Communist Party.³

Even those who did not, even for a short time,

2. *Ibid.*

3. An identification which could reach absurd limits in some of the writings of J. P. Sartre.

1. L. D. Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 128.

reside within the party were influenced by the currents which flowed from it, or from the USSR. A similar process occurred within the non-Stalinist left, though the actual events and controversies which brought about defections were not necessarily the same. For example, in the 1950s, before the 20th Congress, many were impressed by the apparent successes of the Stalinist parties and took it that they could, in the future, carry out successful revolutions in the capitalist countries.⁴

Those who passed through the Marxist movement, or experienced its influence in some positive fashion, could never be the same, even after their reconciliation with bourgeois thought, as those who had never passed into the ranks of revolt and social criticism. They were marked by their experiences, but also by the theories which they had once believed in. When they became critics of Marxism, or of the socialist movement in general, their criticism was of a more sophisticated, disabused kind than that of the outsiders. There was a measure of unbalanced hysteria in some of the writings of the ex-communists and the rancour of renegades was pretty widespread.⁵ Some of the more thoughtful, however, of those who had at one time been Marxists produced, at least, theories which broke away from the stodginess of the liberals and the myopia of the conservatives and struck a path to the minds of the generation of capitalism's crisis. They placed on the agenda real problems. They took up and attacked Marxism from the standpoint of ex-insiders, developing, in particular, questions which they had previously found most perplexing and which, as they probably knew, would strike home most forcibly with their former comrades. Since the war a number of the more talented people of this kind have found a home in universities, research institutes, bodies such as the

4. In this the Pabloites reflected a trend in the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, especially in France, in the early 1950s.

5. See Deutscher, I., 'The Ex-Communist's Conscience' in *Heretics and Renegades*.

Congress for Cultural Freedom and 'quality' magazines where they have facilities for turning out a never-ending stream of anti-Marxist work, training more like-minded people and inoculating the intelligentsia against the Marxist virus. It is surprising, perhaps, that the job has to be done on such a large scale, so systematically and with such an important commitment of funds. There is no doubt that this is a tribute to the intellectual powers of Marxism and reflects, at the same time, some lack of confidence by the beneficiaries of capitalism in the loyalty of those well-paid and highly-trained servants upon whom the efficiency of the system depends so vitally. There is no doubt that even in the prosperous years of the past decade business and its spokesmen have not trusted the intelligentsia too far. They have not forgotten the breach in the allegiance of so many in the thirties. At least the educated public is now supplied with academic studies of Marxism, socialism and the Soviet Union on a much more considerable scale than before the war. There are more writers who take up what were previously 'dangerous' subjects, while turning the argument decidedly into a defence of the status quo.

These considerations lead on to the question of the position of the intelligentsia in modern society and in the labour movement. The spotlight is now distinctly on this extremely important social layer, not only in the technically advanced countries, but also, and perhaps more so, in the underdeveloped countries where the educated 'elite' stand out more markedly from the mass of poor and illiterate peasants. The question is posed, then, of the relationship of the intelligentsia to social change: are the kind of changes which are implied in the socialist movement or in the achievement of national independence in the underdeveloped countries merely the gateway to the rule of a new exploiting class of intellectuals? What is the basis of such theories? What substance do they have and where do they lead? These are some of the problems which have to be taken up in the light of the above analysis.

The intelligentsia as a new ruling class

A favourite theme of the disillusioned ex-radical is that the establishment of a society free from the exploitation of man by man is a vain utopia: there will always be a ruling class and always be exploitation. A rationalisation of this kind was written into a book by James Burnham after he broke with Marxism in 1940: he found the new ruling class in 'the managers', an ambiguous term which he never

satisfactorily defined.⁶ He had had many predecessors, some of whom had seen the new group of prospective rulers, superseding the ruling class of property owners, in the functional bureaucrats whose

6. J. Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution*. For a discussion of this type of theory see 'Class, Caste and State in the Soviet Union', in *LABOUR REVIEW*, Vol. 7, No. 2.

rise had accompanied that of the modern state itself. Others had suggested that in the coming society education was the key to power; those already in possession of education, but actually excluded from power, had already designed the operational doctrine which was to prepare the way for their future dominance. But, since they were a minority in the total population, these ends had been disguised with great subtlety in the doctrines of socialism and given institutional form in the allegedly working-class socialist parties which they already controlled.

It is interesting that a number of references are now to be found in anti-Marxist literature to one such closely worked-out theory of a Polish revolutionist of pre-1914 vintage.⁷ Seldom can a work have become so widely known at second-hand, for his book is now virtually unobtainable and has never been produced in English. Trotsky says that this writer, Machajsky, whose works circulated among fellow exiles in Siberia in the early 1900s, began as 'a critic of Social Democratic opportunism'.⁸ This was significant. The bureaucratization of the Social Democratic movement, particularly in Germany, repelled many idealist people from socialism at this time. It was the basis for Michels' influential book *Political Parties* which enunciated the 'iron law of oligarchy'. For some, at least, it led through syndicalism to fascism. For most, just disillusionment after attempts to frame an alternative doctrine had failed. More recently Machajsky's theories have been taken up by Max Nomad and have been referred to by Daniel Bell whose works will now be discussed.

Nomad adopts Machajsky's views, which he summarises as follows: 'the intellectual workers, whether college-bred scions of the middle or lower-middle classes, or self-educated workers, constituted a privileged neo-bourgeois class whose interests were different from those of both the capitalist property-owners and the manual workers. As owners of higher education, a sort of invisible capital, they could command, or aspire to, incomes higher than those of the *uneducated* strata, i.e., the manual workers. Members of that class who were heading the various radical anticapitalist movements were doing so not with a view to the "emancipation of the working class" as they claimed, but for the purpose of using the masses in the intelligentsia's struggle for a place in the sun: first for political democracy with its job possibilities in the various political and cultural institutions; later for a socialized economy under which the intellectual workers would constitute the ruling officeholding and managerial class after expropriating or buying off the capitalists.'⁹

7. Wacław Machajsky.

8. L. D. Trotsky, *op. cit.*

9. M. Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution* (revised ed. 1961), p. 319.

With this as a key assumption Nomad proceeds to examine the lives of rebels and revolutionaries and, not surprisingly, finds it to be 'confirmed'. In fact, perhaps unconsciously, he goes through the record to find such confirmation, rejecting whatever does not fit in with his thesis and interpreting the rest in the light of his guiding theory. Intellectuals who take part in revolutionary movements cannot have any other motive than to prepare the way for a new ruling class made up of people in a similar social category. Workers only want the 'immediate satisfaction of their material needs' and that should be the axiomatic basis for judging social change; the division between intellectuals and workers begins there. The inherent 'economism' of the workers is represented as being naively sincere, whereas the intellectuals are machiavellians who use these aspirations to promote their own interests as the exploiting class of the future. As the result of what, after Pareto, he calls 'the circulation of elites' the 'underdogs' may succeed in winning material concessions and an improvement in their lot. Fundamentally, however, the thesis is profoundly pessimistic and avowedly so, for Nomad proclaims: 'I don't believe there is any hope for the human race.'¹⁰

Nomad takes for granted that the 'masses', the 'workers' or the 'underdogs' exist in history as a more or less undifferentiated and unchanging collection of short-sighted and easily satisfied people governed by narrow material appetites. They are *object* of history, incapable of making history for themselves and noted for their 'incompetence'. Consequently they can be manipulated by power-seekers who hold out to them the prospect of material benefit; but they will only be the more deceived. The idea that the working class can emancipate itself or can prevent its leaders in the class struggle against capitalism from becoming its future exploiters is ruled out. In fact, in this circular reasoning, apparently substantiated by 'facts' which are well chosen and interpreted with a deliberate slant, such an idea is deliberately fostered by these prospective exploiters to pave their way to power. All this rests on a series of unstated assumptions about human nature and human behaviour as well as about the functioning of class society. What Nomad and other theorists like him have done is to draw out and develop in an entirely one-sided fashion one apparent tendency, while assuming that nothing else changes. No wonder he sees dialectical materialism as a theological conception, for he is quite unable to see the relationship of things changing and interacting with each other in a continual process of development which always outruns the capacity of theory to describe it. Nomad wishes to impose on history his own pessimistic scheme. We shall say more

10. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 19.

later about the derivation of this scheme and its practical effect.

First of all the static notions behind his conception must be rejected. The 'masses' do change in the course of the historical process, as they are brought into contact with changing technologies, go through historical experiences, organise as a class and rise to a consciousness of their role in society and the possibility of changing society. The working class today, as a product of advanced capitalism, can by no means be seen in the same terms as the raw, newly-emerging proletariat of 200 years ago. Even the new proletarian layers in the less developed countries come into the picture at a historically more advanced stage than their predecessors in Britain and Western Europe centuries ago. Educated in line with the development of the productive forces of modern capitalism, and shown by this that man can control his environment, and has within his grasp the possibility of abolishing classes and exploitation, the modern working class develops an opposition to its position as an exploited class and a confidence in its own strength. True, within a capitalist environment which is permeated by the ideologies of the bourgeoisie, the stress on competition, individual advancement and so on, the working class does not by itself attain to socialist consciousness. What it does develop is a greater actual capacity for self-rule which makes it, even more potentially than at the given moment, a force which can change history in a conscious way. These moments of intervention are necessarily rare; the opportunities which they present can only be seized if there is a conscious leadership which has already prepared itself and established close and inseparable links with the class itself.

The fact that socialist ideas are brought to the working class from outside has been a ready source of distortion by commentators like Nomad. Of course, the working-class movement can be seen as a springboard whereby what he likes to call the 'déclassé intelligentsia' gain influence and power. Experience shows that this is an ever-present danger demonstrated first of all in the big Social-Democratic parties in the hey-day of the Second International. It was from this experience that Michels derived his theory called the 'iron law of oligarchy'. But conscious awareness of these dangers can, providing objective conditions permit, provide a safeguard against such degeneration. Such a safeguard cannot be found in organisational forms alone, but must be

bound up with the continuous and active participation of the working class in the life of its organisations. Nomad, and those who follow a similar, less explicit, theory, assume, because of their lack of confidence in the working class, based on a restricted view of human nature, that such participation is impossible. The mass of men, they believe, only want a full feeding-bag, otherwise they can be led by the nose by any charlatan dictator or demagogue who comes along. What is characteristic here is not only the pessimism but the unscientific way in which such a conclusion has been reached. Instead of seeking out the reasons for the bureaucratisation of the German Social-Democracy or of the degeneration of the Soviet Union by an examination of the multiplicity of factors which were involved, a simple, single-track explanation is proposed which is then generalised into a statement of universal validity which has no historical value! The fact that Nomad goes back into history to justify his pessimism only produces travesties of history—which is seen exclusively as a demonstration of his initial proposition.

The practical effect of Nomad's teaching is that 'it can't be done': the workers cannot rule, capitalism can only be replaced by another form of exploiting society which may be worse; to cultivate one's garden, platonically protest 'against all forms of unfreedom and inequality' and reconcile oneself to original sin—that is the only reasonable course. The result is clearly passivity. Passivity of this kind, justified by doctrines of this kind, can only serve the powers that be. It disarms and disorients those who wish to fight by telling them that it is not worthwhile—and, if they are intellectuals (as most of Nomad's readers will be), their real motives are self-interested. But if the conclusions are essentially conservative, so are the assumptions and the whole reasoning behind Nomad's denigration of the revolutionaries whose lives and theories he examines. True it is a sophisticated conservatism which surveys, with ostensible sympathy, the efforts to change society; the end is the same—man is a wolf to man, nothing can really be changed. Antipathy to the intellectuals is thrown in for good measure, but even that does not mean that Nomad has real sympathy for the masses. Indeed his attitude towards them is one of contempt. Like other disabused intellectual ex-radicals, he blames them, subconsciously, for allowing themselves to be misled and betrayed, and finds an alibi for himself in inaction.

The End of Ideology?

Daniel Bell shares with Nomad not only an interest in the writings of Machajsky, but also a disabused and disillusioned attitude towards politics which, in like manner, becomes a defence of the status quo

in effect, if not in intent. His essay, *The End of Ideology*, has coined a phrase, this time with intent to provide an epitaph for an age: an age in which many intellectuals in the United States and Western

Europe, were drawn towards Marxism and left-wing politics.¹¹

In sophistication Bell exceeds Nomad. He tells us that he has been through the mill of radical politics since, while at college, he began writing resolutions on 'the road to power'. Bell's road eventually lay through the offices of the sumptuous magazine *Fortune* to a sociology professorship at Columbia University. In the course of it he acquired the ability to turn his knowledge of Marxist theory to good account, i.e., to use it strictly as a tool of analysis, to domesticate it to serve the purpose of turning out a knowledgeable article in a style between the journalistic and the academic. He is thus able to take 'dangerous' themes and play with daring ideas with a dash of left-over radicalism to add zest, while remaining strictly acceptable so far as the 'American way' is concerned. His social criticism is of the mildest, and the ultimate conclusion must be, as with Nomad, that since 'utopia' is unreliable you adopt a course of action which serves the status quo. In his own words his perspective is 'anti-ideological but not conservative'; he repudiates what he calls 'neo-conservatism' as well as all 'nineteenth century ideologies'.¹² The apparent scepticism ('The claims of doubt are prior to the claims of faith') which seeks 'detachment, which guards against being submerged in any causes, or accepting any particular embodiment of community as final', is belied by many a premise, articulate or not, to be found in his writings. In other words he does not arrive at a position above the mêlée, independent of society and the struggle of classes going on within it. He rejects the social crisis, muted as it may be compared with the more intense outbreaks of the 1930s (at any rate in the United States), although in subtle ways. The direct or indirect influence of Marxism upon intellectuals like Bell has been to destroy for ever the naivety of the old-style liberalism. Just as in Russia it prepared, through the 'legal Marxists', for a reconciliation with capitalism, so often, in their case, it leads unmistakably to an effective reconciliation with society as it is; on different terms, perhaps, but a reconciliation nonetheless.

11. D. Bell, *The End of Ideology* (Collier Books ed., 1961).

12. *Ibid.*, introduction entitled 'The Restless Vanity'. 'In the last decade, we have witnessed an exhaustion of of the nineteenth century ideologies, particularly Marxism, as intellectual systems that could claim truth (his emphasis) for their views of the world.' p. 16. First emphasis added: the book stresses at a number of points that particularly Marxism has failed. After all, he is not so opposed to 'liberalism' in the nineteenth century sense as is evident in a number of passages—e.g., when he is dealing with the market economy. And he is not averse to rediscovering its 'verities'—of eternal validity?

The politics of disillusionment has shed the old vision of freedom broadening down from precedent to precedent. It is geared to the vocabulary of alienation, perceptive of class forces and always ready to see the interest behind the idea. It no longer has faith in democracy, except as a description of the political process in some of the advanced capitalist states. Its objections to 'democracy' in fact go beyond a criticism of 'bourgeois democracy'—which, in fact, it is quite ready to accept—to a general scepticism of the possibility of any genuine popular political participation or self-rule.¹³

At the same time, Bell and others like him do raise real problems. There is no presumption here to deal with the wide range which they cover, since the purpose is to consider, rather, assumptions and implications of their approach. The usual framework for their ideas is the short article or academic-type study which considers one theme, one aspect of reality or theory. Within this one or a small number of factors tend to be isolated for treatment, rather than seeing them as part of the totality of experience. Take, for example, the history of the Soviet Union in the 1920s which is often taken as a practical demonstration of the accuracy of the predictions of Machajsky, Michels and others.¹⁴ In Bell's account 'a truly workers' society' steadily becomes the control of the workers by the managers in a society characterised by 'sharp class divisions between workers and engineers'. To begin with he idealises the starting point, though it is true enough that the working class was in power (but does he really mean this?—if so what about the Bolshevik Party and the Soviets?). In his account of how this situation changed the argument is confined to Russia. Nothing is said about the fact that when writing *State and Revolution* Lenin was not assuming the indefinite isolation of the revolution in a backward country. Right through the early years of the Soviet regime Lenin expected, and bent his efforts towards, the spread of the Revolution to other, more advanced countries. Much less of *general* validity can be

13. The attitude of Marx and Lenin was genuinely democratic, though they exposed the hypocrisy of 'bourgeois democracy', its merely formal character. As Lukacs points out, however, there is always a danger 'of swinging over from a left to a right-wing criticism of bourgeois democracy, i.e., from dissatisfaction with bourgeois democracy to opposition to democracy in general'. *The Historical Novel*, p. 254. Nomad and Bell, swinging away from acceptance of bourgeois society, lose confidence in the working-class movement ('democracy in general') and return in fact to acceptance of bourgeois society.

14. What follows is mainly a critique of the essays 'The Mood of Three Generations' and 'Two Roads from Marx' from which the quotations are taken. They appear as Part Three of *The End of Ideology*.

adduced from the Russian experience than is often believed. The successive steps which were taken in the direction of strengthening party control, eliminating factions and destroying the independence of the trade unions represented response to emergencies, retreats which were imposed in large part by the exigencies of the situation.¹⁵ The ripening of a situation in which the bureaucracy could emerge as a privileged stratum, personified by Stalin, is omitted from Bell's analysis. Fastening on incidents like Kronstadt and the trade union debate, he fails to indicate the real circumstances and mood in which they took place. Nor does he mention the fact that the Left Opposition vigorously opposed the Stalinist degeneration and put forward a programme designed to meet the needs of the situation. It was defeated by the strong objective current flowing against them—and no doubt, in part, by subjective weaknesses. In any case the process of degeneration could not have been arrested solely by measures taken in Russia. It was accompanied by a series of defeats for the international working class (made inevitable, it is true, by the policy imposed by Stalin on the Comintern in line with the necessities of the bureaucracy). The draconian laws in Soviet industry which Bell can so easily denounce were part of the heavy price which the Russian workers and peasants paid for the failure of the international working class movement to follow the path which they had taken under Bolshevik leadership in 1917. In this perspective the kind of analysis which is often made suffers from abstractness and from a quite unwarranted assumption that this degeneration followed from the teachings of Marx and Lenin, from Bolshevism, or

simply from an attempt to interfere with the course of social evolution.

Not being able to analyse the degeneration of Soviet power for what it was, Bell is obliged to ascribe it, in part, to Lenin's precepts on party organisation—distorting these characteristically in the process. Moreover, he gives the now Stalinised Communist parties of the 1930s and after the credit for being organised after the Leninist model and for still being bent on revolution. For him there was no change in the nature and direction as a result of social forces. What took place appears to have been a result of a wrong ideology, working out one of the 'roads from Marx'. But when we ask *whose* ideology it became—in fact deforming Marx—the only answer to be derived from his essays is that it was that of professional revolutionaries, drawn from the intelligentsia, following the path sketched out by Machajsky. Ideology for him is finished because the path taken was a false one and there is no other which can change the world, so we must live in it as it is, suggesting such small changes as may be possible.

Not only is Bell providing his own substitute ideology—the old well-tried ideas of reformism and Fabian gradualism—but he does not work through to the basic reasons for Stalinism. He does not investigate the forces which produced it, nor does he see it as the 'ideology'—in the Marxist sense—of a social layer, the Soviet bureaucracy. Consequently, too, he misinterprets the reasons for the Stalinist successes, especially with sections of the intelligentsia, in the thirties and takes the subsequent failures of Stalinism (in the USA) to be reasons which can explain the inability of the working class to take power.¹⁶ The failure of socialism cannot mean anything but failure to build a movement with this goal. But Stalinism was not such a movement: in fact by its effect on working-class politics, by its policies of downright betrayal from 'social fascism' through the 'popular front' to the Nazi-Soviet pact, it prevented the class from grasping its historical opportunities.

We must, however, give Bell his due. As a sensitive participant and observer he is able to describe

15. See P. Broué, 'Remarques sur l'histoire du parti bolchevik' in *Arguments*, No. 25-26, 1962. 'There is in the appreciation of historians of the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party a systematic bias towards considering the party as an historical factor absolutely independent of the other fundamental factors in human history. To say that the Stalinist counter-revolution was written into *What Is To Be Done?*, the Moscow trials in the prohibition of factions within the party, is to hold at naught the foreign intervention against the young Soviet republic, the alliance of German Social-Democracy with the General Staff and the capitalist system which was responsible for the World War. . . . It is to neglect the intervention in history of the conscious factor in the elementary form of the organisation, to preach renunciation and resignation, condemn struggle and even partial victories.' Broué rightly calls attention to Rosa Luxemburg's words in her pamphlet *The Russian Revolution* which is often wrongly used against the Bolsheviks, in which she says that Lenin and Trotsky had 'the imperishable merit of having, by taking power, set an example to the world proletariat and posed the problem of the realisation of socialism, taking an enormous step in the final settling of accounts between capital and labour in the entire world'.

16. In the essay 'The Failure of American Socialism' he plainly identifies the methods and policies of the US Communist Party with Lenin and Bolshevism. He even associates Trotsky with this phase of his arguments—because he accepted Lenin's views on organisation. He says nothing about the Communist opposition to Stalinism in this period. He does not see that the front technique was an aspect of Stalinist degeneration because he still claims that 'The Communists had not given up their belief in revolution and power . . .' In fact the CPUSA, like all the CPs, held back and derailed the American workers' movement in its most promising phase.

what happened to the kind of people he knew most about in this period and after. He can show how they became either corrupted or repelled by their experience with the Communist Party, but he fails completely to explain the significance of what was going on. He does not see the totality of the picture, but only one or a small number of factors. Thus, in the last analysis his reason for the failure of American socialism, and, indeed, for what he calls 'the end of ideology', boils down to a failure on the part of socialists to come to terms with capitalist society! 'Living in the world,' he says, 'one cannot refuse the responsibility of sharing in the decisions of that society.'¹⁷ Behind such a proclamation of policy—for such it is—stands a renunciation of any theory of class struggle and an acceptance of that society on the basis of the search for what he calls 'a shared consensus'. Of course the socialist has social responsibilities. Unless he is avowedly utopian he is not seeking for a millennial leap into a perfect world. He seeks to operate with the material which the old society provides, inescapably involved with all its corruption and rottenness from which he can only keep clear by theoretical clarity and firm attachment to principles, principles not of the abstract moraliser but of one engaged in practical activity to change the social order.¹⁸ He does not wish to share in the decisions of capitalist society. His primary responsibility is towards the working class, taking it as it is with all its variety and weakness, shot-through with the influences which flow into it from the capitalist environment, and striving to make it conscious of itself so that it will be prepared to seize its opportunities when they arise, opportunities which do arise only with great rarity. The intellectuals who joined the Communist parties, or who may be still with them, for all their lip-service to the class struggle did not begin with the working class, nor were they able to establish a genuine relationship with it. Their political life was guided by what they took to be a higher authority—the interests of the USSR, or, more properly, its ruling layer. When the guide lines broke in some sharp turn, or were severed by a slower process of wearing away, they were often left with nothing but a complete reconciliation with the capitalist world which they believed they had rejected. Hence the

17. *The End of Ideology*, pp. 297-8. Bell's views here resemble classic Fabianism, but they are also closely related to the modern right-wing revisionism of the Strachey, Crosland type. The latter certainly could endorse practically everything which Bell says: indeed he is more explicit in his willingness to co-operate with managed capitalism. He is the arch-type of the kind of intellectual who is out to manipulate the working class in order to gain political office: a 'proof' of the Nomad thesis!

18. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

bitterness of the break and the psychological state of the apostate, ready now to equate still, as he had been taught by his party mentors, Stalinism with Bolshevism, Leninism and Marxism. Bell, without having shared all that experience, provides a kind of alibi. He checks off the mood of the disillusioned intelligentsia of the thirties and their successors, the dead souls of the fifties, with evident sympathy and understanding. He rationalises the process by asserting that it arose from scepticism 'of the rationalistic claim that socialism, by eliminating the economic basis of exploitation, would solve all social questions'.¹⁹ They turn, he says, to 'anti-rationalistic stoicism'—in reality an eclectic hotch-potch from Freud to 'neo-orthodox theology' which has, in turn, been the breeding ground for new doctrines rather than the stifling of all 'ideology'. And, in America at any rate, they found 'new virtues in the United States because of its pluralism, the acceptance of the Welfare State, the spread of education, and the expanding opportunities for intellectual employment'. 'And,' he adds, 'in the growing Cold War, they accepted the fact that Soviet Russia was the principal threat to freedom in the world today.'²⁰ The ravages of Stalinism, not any convictions about the impossibility of building an alternative to capitalism free of exploitation, were at the root of this lamentable capitulation, i.e., freedom to share in the decisions of capitalist society in fantasy alone and to take a slightly better cut from its flesh-pots.

This social decadence of a layer of people from which once came significant numbers of potential revolutionaries must not be confused with a failure of socialism or of Marxism. If these are what is meant by 'ideology' it is by no means 'exhausted' or at an end. A lot could be said about Bell's use of the term 'ideology'. One thing which does need saying is the mistake he makes in associating it with 'channelizing emotional energy', as a kind of evoker of a life force. Bell seems to have seen Marxism through Bergsonian spectacles. It is a way of putting the life force at the disposal of political action instead of, say, religion or private gratification. Passions not reason govern where ideology is involved; now passions are spent, and with them ideology. Bell not merely depicts the change, he provides it with a justification; he is part of the process, not a detached spectator or even a scientific observer. With Bell's writings the member of the intelligentsia can save his conscience, calm his nerves and titivate his intellect (that is the secret of Bell's success as an author)—and find a comfortable

19. See L. D. Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours* for a classic exposure of the moralisers who end up by justifying capitalist immorality.

20. Quotations from Bell's essay 'The Mood of Three Generations', *op. cit.*

nesting place in capitalist society. Bell tells him to forget or ignore all its decay and corruption. He will explain that these are not so bad as he thinks; they may serve a functional purpose—immigrant gangsters are just finding a ladder to climb to acceptance in American society and to make good citizens out of their offspring.²¹ And while a blank is drawn over this side—even what he likes to call ‘the permanent war economy’ (a term much used by some ‘lefts’, who are in debt to Bell as well as he to them) is spoken of with no disapproval, since it is really the fault of the Russians—he trots out the ‘eternal verities’ of liberalism as though they actually held sway in contemporary America.

The members of the intelligentsia of whom Bell speaks, who became politically active in the Stalinist era—which is only now ending—were deeply affected by the crisis of capitalism manifested in economic crash, international tension and war. At the high point of the crisis, or rather when it was most obvious, they came to believe in the need to overthrow capitalism. Misled by Stalinism and Social Democracy, the working class, the only instrument for the performance of this task, was not permitted to carry through actions which might have brought success and were thrown cynically into battles in which they could only be defeated. A protracted crisis of leadership paralysed the class. Ideas were not the dominant factors in either the social crisis of capitalism or in the betrayals of the working-class leaders, although they did play a role. Nor was it the failure of Marxist ideas which brought about the reflux of political activity and struggle; here again objective forces must be correctly appraised. The moods of the intelligentsia were results rather than causes. They moved away from their normal position in the bourgeois camp when the bourgeoisie was becoming discredited and the workers were moving into action. A symmetrically opposite movement occurred as the bourgeoisie recovered its poise and the working class suffered defeats. Betrayed by its leaders, bewildered by defeats and battered by a series of disheartening experiences, large sections of the working class resumed an ‘economist’ position. They settled for small gains of a mainly material nature and waged the class struggle around sectional and immediate demands. Apparently they were ‘satisfied’; if the existence of a class struggle was admitted at all it looked as though it could be contained within the framework of bourgeois institutions. Moving in the

same direction, though rather more precipitously, intellectuals, nominally concerned with ‘freedom’ and with ‘things of the mind’ began to pass their own guilt back on to the workers. Their apparent satisfaction with a modest improvement became an argument for reconciliation with the bourgeoisie and also for blaming the workers in open or disguised ways for their apathy, inactivity and acceptance of the society.²² Bell gives this a catchy but false label. For some, however, it has been the occasion for seeking substitutes for working-class action. Echoing the ‘new left’, Bell sees the *essential* problems as being cultural and not political—the problem of radical thought today is to reconsider the relationship of culture to society.²³ No wonder that this trend has been completely unable to grip into the working class which simply knows that this just isn’t true. As for the substitutes, human ingenuity has provided not a few. For some the substitute is found, paradoxically, in a reconciliation with Stalinism in its Khrushchevian form: the bureaucracy will build the exemplary society and undermine the old until it topples painlessly into a grave prepared by parliamentary majorities. The more romantic find their heroes in the rebel leaders like Castro. Perhaps most members of the intelligentsia today, temporarily at peace with their time, do accord with Bell’s picture: ‘acceptance of the Welfare State; the desirability of decentralised power; a system of mixed economy and of political pluralism’.²⁴ Unfortunately for them the crisis of capitalism cannot be halted by clever books. In the age of the bomb the Welfare State becomes the Warfare State in which ‘decentralised power’ gives way to ever-increasing centralisation and militarisation. The ‘mixed economy’ is a polite name for the domination by the monopolies both in the economy and in the state. As for ‘political pluralism’ it becomes no more than a polite fig-leaf to conceal the nakedness of the rule of capital now needing, for its survival, the supersession of the old-style political institutions of ‘bourgeois democracy’ by the strong state of which the Fifth French Republic provides the prototype. Events are confirming the Marxist analysis and point the need for the emergence of working-class parties under Marxist leadership.

22. ‘The irony . . . for those who seek “causes” is that the workers, whose grievances were once the driving energy for social change, are more satisfied with the society than the intellectuals,’ *ibid.*, p. 399.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 313.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

21. ‘Crime as an American Way of Life. A Queer Ladder of Social Mobility’. *op. cit.*

Book Reviews

An old chestnut

On the Prevention of War. By John Strachey. Macmillan & Co., Cloth 40s., Paper 15s.

A former Secretary of State for War who crawled round the Malayan jungle with a band of imported head-hunters and then reported that he had enjoyed every minute, is just the man to write about the prevention of war.

This is Mr. Strachey's only qualification—unless you count his pre-war books, for which this may be some sort of atonement.

He is a bitter opponent of unilateralism, though with the usual guff about having 'deep respect for the traditional pacifist view'.

In fact, he equates unilateralism with pacifism all the way through and ignores the growing number of unilateralists who are not pacifists but militant socialists.

According to Strachey, unilateralism equals pacifism which equals 'surrender to Communist Authority'. It is therefore unattainable, since it is impossible to persuade 'the West' to accept it.

Nor can it appeal to the Western working class since 'the wage-earning majority of the Western World has just achieved material security' (pay attention, there, you railwaymen!).

Therefore it follows that 'there is really no workable alternative to the present position in which the custody of the nuclear warheads is centralized in American hands'.

Strachey does, however, leave a hope for world peace. This lies in the growing together of the American and Russian economic systems. 'It is an open secret amongst the more sophisticated economists and sociologists . . . that the differences be-

tween the two economic systems are tending to decrease.' The Russian bureaucrats and the Western executives are brothers under the skin'. (One up for the State Capitalists! They do manage to provide comfortable theories for right-wing politicians if nothing else.)

And how will this 'coming-together' work out? Why, the two worlds must first 'live together in a balance of power' and then 'learn just sufficiently to co-operate to enable them to organise an authority capable of keeping the peace'.

So we're back to that hoary old chestnut—a 'World Executive'. Hardly worth writing a whole book about. Especially since Strachey concludes, logically enough, that such an 'executive' would have to be based on the nuclear capabilities of the super powers.

So it's Thank God for the H-bomb. A friend in disguise after all.

Strachey does, however, produce one very telling point. He explains, with evidence from Russell's own writings, how the venerable philosopher himself arrives at the very same conclusion—a **world power armed with the most powerful weapons available.**

This is undeniably Russell's view as any reading of *Must Man Survive* will show.

G.G.

A comfortable bleat

The Strangled Cry. By John Strachey. The Bodley Head, 258 pp., 21s.

John Strachey is being robbed for enthronement as the 'philosopher and thinker' of the Labour Party (*Sunday*

Times, September 30, 1962). This book provides for a review of his qualifications.

His family is a clan of British liberals, wealthy and established in bourgeois society. His mind is stocked with the literary culture of the Western world.

He has been writing about politics since the middle 1920s. His works reflect the succession of political fashions current among the 'avant garde' petty-bourgeois.

He started with Fabianism and the Webbs. He advocated the Douglas Credit scheme. He joined Mosley's 'New Party' around 1932. He turned to Stalinism in the 'Popular Front' period 1934-1939. He then went to the Koestler-Orwell-Gollancz school of anti-Marxism. In *The Strangled Cry* he ends up where he started, which provokes the question: 'Has Strachey ever really been anything but a Fabian?'

The Strangled Cry is supposed to come from a liberal humanist crushed by Stalinist totalitarianism. It could really be Strachey's own protest at being lost in the forest of events, where he wanders round in circles.

The main essay, which gives its title to the book and was highly esteemed by *Encounter*, reviews the fate of his former friends, Koestler and Orwell, with whom he rightly brackets Pasternak. They are out of fashion. The logical end of their ideas, he explains, is mysticism or cynicism, good fellows though they were. For after all, the Cold War has got the West nowhere and there is something in Marxism. Pure-and-simple MacCarthyism will no longer do. So where are we to go next?

Strachey tells us. 'Last-stage capitalism', dominated by the great monopolies, can be 'centralised' and

abolished by 'resolute democratic governments'. This must be our road.

But he wrote no differently for the right wing of the ILP in the *New Leader* in the 1920s. This programme is Fabianism and nothing more.

He returned to it in the late 1930s, in 'Programme for Progress', a blueprint for Popular Front Governments. Today such a programme is less plausible than ever. All our experience since 1945 has been that monopolies control 'democratic governments' and not the other way round.

Seeing no alternative, other than the Stalinist caricature of Marxism he concludes, 'The mysteries are seen to be far deeper than we dreamed; reason must become by that much the finer to comprehend them.' What profound and learned emptiness! What leadership for British Labour!

Strachey's passing acquaintance with Marxism was too hasty for him to grasp that Marxism is not a body of tags but a method for analysing the development of society and participating in the class struggle. He learned some of the tags, but his method remains what it was at the start, that of a liberal bourgeois empiricist.

A good test is to consider why, for all his erudition, he fails to explain his own development. How has he come to shift from one 'school' to another? He has criticised each fashionable set of ideas, after it fell from fashion, after he himself succumbed to the social pressures which gave it birth.

Abusing the Communist parties has been cheap and easy since the late 1940s. But in the middle 1930s, he was pretending that the repulsive features of Stalinism did not exist. While the hired journalistic liars defended the Moscow Trials he baited the Trotskyists, when the Trotskyists were showing how Stalinism was weakening the international position of the Soviet Union and discrediting socialism. How did he get himself into the position of defending what Khrushchev (himself implicated) later revealed to have been monstrous crimes?

Let us try to explain. In the early 1930s Strachey had turned away in

disillusionment from the right-wing leadership of Ramsay Macdonald and Arthur Henderson. Repelled by the sectarian stupidities of 'Third-Period' Stalinism, he saw at the same time that Mosley's programme of war against the Soviet Union had at that time little appeal. He could soon join the liberal intellectuals moving towards Stalinism, which after 1934 was attracting them by liquidating the old ideas about the dictatorship of the proletariat and was erecting the programme of defence of bourgeois democracy.

The Coming Struggle for Power, *The Menace of Fascism* and *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*, written in this period, presented Marxism without any of the aspects, vital to militant workers, of building a revolutionary movement, of struggle against bourgeois ideas, of developing programmes of struggle. These books are well-written text-books of abstractions. They helped precisely for this reason to popularise 'Popular Front' ideas ('unity of all men of goodwill') by giving a socialist coloration to the doctrine that the aims of the working class should be subordinated to those of their masters.

This is the reason why Strachey could not see that Stalinism aimed at defending the Soviet Union by the methods, not of Lenin and Bolshevism, but by those of the Soviet bureaucracy, not by revolutionary leadership to enable workers in the capitalist world to take power, but by seeking alliances with 'democratic' forces among the capitalists, at the cost of supporting bourgeois politicians and preaching confidence in bourgeois policies.

Consequently he could not understand that the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939 also was a logical part of Stalinist foreign policy, a switch not from 'goodies' to 'baddies' but from one bourgeois side to the other. Consequently also he failed to see that the atrocities committed by Stalinism were a product, not of Marxism but of the degeneration of the first workers' state, the internal defence and product of Stalinism.

So Stalinist teaching well prepared him in advance to run away from the Communist Party, to take others with him and to justify the informers and

renegades. Those CP writers who have 'panned' *The Strangled Cry* should pause to consider that he learned nothing in the 1930's from Stalinists to counteract his organic Fabian tendency to rally to the side of his 'own' bourgeoisie.

The CP writers should spare their vituperation, however, for another reason. Strachey may soon become a 'friend of peace' again. He wrote in *The Observer* on September 23, 1962, 'Co-existence is not a policy of mere weak postponement of an evil day of inevitable world conflict. Just the contrary; if a combination of firmness and of adequate military preparation at every level, with a genuine recognition of the rights and interests of the Russian people, is pursued by the West, there is a prospect of the organisation of world peace.' Send him wine, Nikita! Here is another apostle of peace-by-summit-talks.

Strachey learned early in life that the working class represents a mighty force in society. But he never learned from Marxism how the working class can develop and use its potential strength. He sees politics as the work of 'clever people' who manipulate the mass. Always . . . except for a few paragraphs in the writings of the later '30s, which echo the idea from Lenin and the CP's pre-1935 publications that genuine democracy for the masses requires Soviet rule.

That his method is bourgeois empiricism comes out also in his paper on Trotsky. It is fashionable that bourgeois intellectuals shall prattle a little about Trotsky, and bait the unhappy Stalinist academics. These people have seen the futility of the Koestler-Orwell school of liberal protest and, after all, Deutscher has published his monumental historical works. The fashion of talking about Trotsky, which would have been unspeakably 'bad form' before the 20th Congress, is not unconnected with the success of the British Trotskyists in establishing a stable organisation and press, and developing a strategy of class-struggle that alarms the cheer-leaders of bourgeois democracy from Great Turnstile to King Street.

So in 1959 we find our Strachey talking on the Third Programme

about the 'gigantic historical forgery on the Stalinist scale' which alone denies that Trotsky was a great man. (Not a whisper about his own leadership of the fellow travellers! Not a hint that he might understand his other 'mistakes' if he studied how he fell into such company!)

'If Trotsky had come to power in the 1920s instead of Stalin, I think it probable he would have failed. He was too civilised a man to have resorted to the extremities of Stalin.' This, the fashionable cliché, leads to two conclusions. Either the horrors of Stalinism were necessary and inevitable, or they were the necessary consequence of Bolshevism.



Strachey has every opportunity to locate the writings of Trotsky which others could be excused for not knowing. Trotsky, in his evidence to the Dewey Commission in 1939, dealt with this very point. He did not aim at power to do the same job as Stalin. He represented different social forces, and, in brief, the Russian proletariat and not the Soviet bureaucracy. Had the proletariat been able to place the Left Opposition in power it would not have carried out Stalin's policies. In *The Real Situation in Russia*, published as long ago as 1929 in English, we find the actual economic proposals of the Left Opposition, developed at length, but assiduously concealed from the ranks of the Communist parties. Whatever the material difficulties, Soviet industrial planning would have been more and not less effective if it had been carried through with the participation of the masses instead of bureaucratically from above. How much higher would be the position of Soviet agriculture today if the forced collectivisation and slaughter of the cattle had been avoided? These policies of Stalin are not 'roughly the same' as those of the Left Opposition; they were completely opposed to them. The horrors of Stalinism were not at all the inevitable overhead costs of progress in a backward country. They were the product of the specifically Stalinist, bureaucratic way by which the ruling minority, based in the nationalised property, sought to defend its position.

This argument, further, feeds the

generation which says, 'If what goes on in Russia is Socialism, we want none of it.' How often have we heard this, and what pessimism and demoralisation it has spread among the youth! For all his belated crocodile tears, Strachey justifies the Stalinists and the damage which they have done to socialism.

Is it, as Strachey argues, a 'blind spot' in Trotsky that he should accept responsibility (in *Diary in Exile*) for the killing of the Tsarist royal family, and should passionately indict Stalin for murdering Trotsky's own children?

The blind spot is in Strachey that he can see no difference. Trotsky defends the regicide not as an individual but as a representative of the Bolshevik Party, which had just led the masses to power. 'When the party of the revolution is obliged to kill, it does it on its open responsibility in the name of the tasks and immediate aims understood by the masses. Revolutionary morals are not abstract Kantian norms, but rules of conduct which place the revolutionist under the control of the tasks and the aims of his class.' (Trotsky: *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, p. 263).



If any conclusions at all are to be drawn from the Marxist criticisms of the crimes of Stalin and from Khrushchev's revelations at the 20th Congress and since, it is that the work of Yagoda, Yezhov and Beria was not an expression of communist policies. Their crimes weakened and did not strengthen the workers' state. They discredited socialism and weakened its supporters. Trotsky's family were persecuted precisely because Trotsky represented the traditions and policies of Communism on a world scale. Attacks on Trotsky were attacks on Communism. He and his family were persecuted just because they represented Bolshevism. He was completely consistently a defender of the working-class standpoint in defending the killing of the Tsar's family and denouncing that of his own.

Let Labour's philosopher pursue his thought further. Was Cromwell wrong to execute Charles I and passionately to justify the execution?

Were the Jacobins wrong to ensure the death of Louis XVI and his entourage?

Incidentally, would it be against the rules to ask if Malayan Communists were not executed under Strachey as Minister of War in the Labour government after 1945?

No less an authority than R. H. S. Crossman testified for Strachey in the *Guardian* recently, 'During the war, the uncompromising theorist gave way to the professional propagandist. Strachey put his exceptional gifts for public relations at the service first of Fighter and then of Bomber Command. His radio talks were a vital factor in quelling public protest against Bomber Harris' total destruction of German cities.' Who is Strachey to speak of murder?



But . . . 'Trotsky lacked self-criticism,' says Strachey. Surely Strachey has read *The Prophet Armed*? Does this not trace with careful scholarship the stages of Trotsky's development from Centrism to Bolshevism and his coming to Lenin as a mature revolutionary in July 1917? Is not the whole account based on Trotsky's own writings and his own consciousness of its stages? 'Reason must become the finer,' says Strachey, so we start by ignoring the evidence that answers the fashionable chatters!

Trotsky in his last book (*In Defence of Marxism*) says explicitly that Lenin was right and he was wrong on all questions of Party building up to 1917.

The final question: 'Where is Strachey going?' If not to mysticism with Gollancz, then to cynicism? He says, 'resolute democratic governments' are going to reform society. Then why do we not hear his voice raised in the Labour Party in defence of Clause Four? Let his faith in democracy bear fruit in a defence of the Young Socialists against the right-wing bureaucracy.

But after all, to see Fabians finish up as cynics is nothing new. The belated revival of Fabianism is, if you like, the strangled cry of the progressive middle class faced with no other prospect than acute class struggle in Britain and hoping against hope to stave it off by petty manoeuvres.

J.A.

Freud

Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis. By Sigmund Freud. Penguin Books, 3s. 6d.

After the publication of so many works explaining Freud to the public, it is refreshing to read what Freud himself actually said. This little book contains two popular expositions, both given very clearly, of psycho-analysis. The first part consists of a series of lectures delivered in 1909, whilst the second, perhaps the best short exposition of psycho-analysis ever given, was written in 1926. The publication of these two works together not only serves as a good introduction to psycho-analysis, but also shows the growth and development of Freud's ideas.

Finding that in all individuals there was a lack of direct association between different ideas and memories, Freud postulated, without any scientific verification, the existence of a mental structure known as the unconscious—later called the id. The id is alleged to be composed of instinctual urges and desires (mainly of a sexual character) most of which remain unknown and unknowable. Surrounding the id, as it were, is the conscious mind or the ego, as it was later termed. The task of the ego is either to adapt the environmental conditions so that instinctual urges will be satisfied, or to direct and steer these urges in such a way that they are dissipated without harm coming to the individual. Neuroses, Freud claimed, are caused by the failure of the underdeveloped ego to deal with instinctual impulses during early childhood, neurotic symptoms being disguised or symbolic forms of repressed instinctual urges. The task of psycho-analysis is to find out, mainly through the analysis of dreams, the true nature of the repressed urges and desires. If this is done the conscious mind or ego can readjust itself to them and the neurosis is cured.

The main objection to Freud's theories is that they are not scientific. There are few academic psychologists today who believe that psycho-analytical doctrine conforms to the methods and principles of science. However, the rejection of Freud's theories because they are unscientific does not mean that they should be ignored. Whether we like it or not,

psycho-analysis has made an immense impact on human culture, and cannot be contemptuously dismissed. A scientifically critical evaluation of Freud is an essential task yet to be accomplished. In making this evaluation account must be taken of the fact that, despite his unscientific methods, Freud played, in some respects, a progressive role. He was the first to make a really successful attempt to develop the study of human behaviour as a subject standing apart from, and independent of, philosophy and religion. For this he incurred the wrath of the church and, incidentally, of the Nazi Party.

In order to emphasise the significance of Freud's work we are to a certain extent justified in using the following analogy: Hegel, in expounding the dialectic, made an immense contribution to philosophy despite the fact that he formulated the dialectic idealistically, proclaiming it to be the absolute idea. It was left to Marx and Engels to correct Hegel by showing that dialectical processes occur in nature and in history, irrespective of our knowledge of these processes. Freud, by insisting that every idea has a cause related to environmental conditions, made an immense contribution to science, despite the fact that he combined this important principle with the idealist conception that human behaviour can be interpreted in terms of the working of the mind as an entity existing separately and apart from the brain. It is now left to scientific psychologists to correct Freud, and, by using verifiable data such as that made available by Pavlov's experiments, to show the true mechanisms that determine human thought and behaviour.

With the above in mind we can say without doubt that this is a useful publication. **J.R.**

Their 'morality'

Spanish Fury. By James Cleugh. George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 21s.

The author of this book says that to have supported the republic was to have backed 'the morally-wrong horse'. The fascists were the 'catholic gentlemen' who upheld decent values and law and order by their butchery, torture, executions and white terror. Franco was 'a counter-

balance' to Marxism, he represented the 'old ideals' of the West, he gave labour an 'absolute guarantee against exploitation', his government has been a great success in reconciling the Spanish people. Dellano the butcher was 'an amusing chatterbox', 'an extraordinary figure'.

Cleugh gives us a touching picture of Jose Antonio (founder of Spanish fascism), facing the firing squad with his crucifix—Antonio was a 'socialist', but said first we must establish religion, traditional values, moral decency, and Cleugh nods in agreement. All decent citizens, asserts Cleugh, supported the Fifth Column of the gangs of armed thugs which machine-gunned the Madrid bread-lines.

Cleugh supports Franco because the 'ideals' of Franco are the 'ideals' of the Catholic Church. Liberalism is too weak to fight communism. The Spanish Catholic Church is 'well known' for its 'commonsense' and 'freedom from prejudice'. Too many people overlook 'the poverty, simplicity and unselfish devotion' of the clergy and exaggerate 'the mere indiscretions of the few'.

Likewise, he asserts, are the crimes of fascism exaggerated. Too much propaganda was made of the bombing of Guernica. The Moorish tribesmen (who fought for Franco) were not savages, they fought like the Gurkhas in the old Indian Army (?). The mass executions they carried out were due to the heat. The atrocities of the native Spanish fascists were because of the fact that 'African blood still runs high' among Spaniards.

Cleugh claims that Franco suffered defeat only because he was too humane. He could have taken Madrid if he hadn't decided (for moral reasons, of course) to save the Alcazar, if he hadn't been reluctant to use his bombers and if he hadn't allowed Madrid an escape route.

Likewise the whole history of the Alcazar is distorted. We are treated to the old tear-jerker about Colonel Moscardó, who allowed his son to be shot rather than surrender. It is admitted that the son died a couple of months later, but it is not admitted that he died fighting in Madrid.

Many other facts are treated in a similar fashion. The gallant Colonel Moscardó held about 600 women hostages in the Alcazar. Cleugh talks of them as 16 women of 'more

doubtful affiliations'. He assures us that Moscardó said they decided 'unanimously' to remain to the last.

In a brief history of Spain Cleugh explains the downfall of the Moorish civilisation in a couple of lines: it 'lacked spiritual depth and stability. It soon became very mixed in blood. The Eur-Africans tended to grow frivolous and materialistically minded.' Many such explanations are given in terms of 'blood' (it appears that Spaniards have 'African blood'). Also a great play is made of the 'Spanish character' and also the 'typical Spaniard' (who is born, conveniently enough, with an innate love of Franco, a respect for the Church and hatred of Marxism).

Finally, there are 'the extremists' who with a touch of the wand can turn the country upside down. The taking of power by the workers of Barcelona was the responsibility of a 'most formidable and completely organised body of professional anarchists' (if this has any meaning).

Like most fascists Cleugh has the tendency to describe capitalists and right-wingers as red devils and agents of the Comintern. Just as Colin Jordan might describe Macmillan as a communist fellow traveller, so Cleugh talks of the bourgeois Republic notorious for its anti-labour legislation, passing 'a series of drastic socialist laws'.

Azaña, the liberal president, is a 'doctrinaire socialist'. We are also pleased to learn about 'semi-communist France' before the war, and America and all Europe except Spain 'dominated by the left' since the war. (It is interesting after these examples to note that he goes into raptures over the 'socialists' Negrin and Prieto.)

Although absurd *The Spanish Fury* is not a funny book to read. It carries the most shameful abuse of one of the most heroic working classes in the world, a class which feared nothing and did not spare itself in the fight against the monsters who drowned their revolution in blood. One day the working class will render accounts with Mr. Cleugh, along with the class before which he crawls.

The Spanish workers who rallied without hesitation to the banners of socialism were 'the vomit of an over-taxed stomach', dominated by 'an uncontrollable herd instinct'. They

were a 'sweating, swearing, singing mob'. The International Brigades had among their members 'mere roving adventurers', drawn by the high pay, as well as 'rascals only interested in plunder'. Finally, he writes of refugees who fled to France from the fascist terror, sick, dying and defeated, and who were left to sleep on the sand—'they rioted like beasts, and were fed like beasts'.

Mr. Cleugh also has a sense of humour. He talks of the 'comedy' of the workers 'lounging' in luxury hotels, and driving around in 'stolen cars' and he laughs at Caballero (a trade union leader) with his 'not too brilliant brain' and his quaint 'out-moded phrase' of 'doing his duty by the working class'.

Nevertheless, *even this book* cannot altogether hide the truth. It shows the defeatism of the liberals and 'minister socialists', their resignations in face of the fascist revolt counterposed to the viciousness they showed towards the working class. It describes the 'white collar', 'Fabian' Communist Party. And through all the distortions the working class appears in its true heroism.

The workers of Barcelona, men, women and children, fought weaponless against the fascists, teenage girls seized their guns with their bare hands as they were shot down. The working women freed themselves from their centuries-old subjection and stood shoulder to shoulder with the working men.

There was no sexual violence, says Cleugh. Former prostitutes appeared as nurses and canteen workers. Cleugh writes cynically of the 'crimson lipstick, vermilion nails, rouge . . . of their former trade'. He describes this as 'license'—presumably prostitution is 'morality'.

In Madrid beggars and police had disappeared. There was also a tremendous feeling of solidarity with the USSR. The Spanish working class had very few weapons and no military skill, their 'unexpectedly tenacious defence' against fascism sprang from the historic achievements they were making and the fact that these achievements were liberating and revolutionary.

At one point Cleugh comments that 'ordinary quiet people' (he means people like Cleugh) thought that something was wrong when they saw 'brocaded armchairs were occupied

by ragged and dirty loungers with rifles between their knees'. Exactly; what shocked and horrified Cleugh was a revolution! C.H.S.

Spencer and Mond

The Miners of Nottinghamshire 1914-1944. By Alan R. Griffin. George Allen & Unwin, 324 pp., 36s.

Faced with the task of streamlining the British economy in preparation for severe competition from European and American rivals, the employers, as part of their campaign, are attempting to keep wage costs down by moving their capital to low cost areas (such as Scotland and the Merseyside). Because of the open co-operation from trade union officials in such areas they are able to negotiate wage rates considerably lower than those existing in other parts of the country.

More specifically in the case of the coal industry, the NCB is forcing through a policy which in the next year or two could mean the closure of the Scottish and Lancashire fields, with production heavily concentrated in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. In May 1962 it was announced that the price of Lancashire coal was to rise by 10/- and Scottish coal by 6/- a ton. This will only speed up the closure of these areas and lead to the decentralisation of the industry—for so long bitterly opposed by miners.

These tactics of the employers are not new, as Mr. Griffin's book soon reveals.

It was after the General Strike that George Spencer MP, one of the leading full-time officials of the Nottingham Miners, induced his men to return to work before the end of the lock-out. He did this by negotiating separate district rates with the coal-owners in the area—a move which did so much to weaken the unity and strength of the miners. As a result he was expelled from the Miners' Federation of Great Britain and with the assistance of Havelock Wilson, the seamen's leader, and Frank Hodges, he attempted to establish a non-political Trades Union movement.

It was in Nottinghamshire that 'Spencerism' met with the greatest success, only to be beaten first by the great Harworth strike (1937) and

finally when the National Union of Mineworkers was formed in 1944. Spencerism aimed at a rigid separation between politics and industrial matters and a mild and reformist attitude towards the employers. But it is wrong to think that Spencer enjoyed a majority following in Nottinghamshire—even in 1928 only about 2,500 supported him whereas over 32,000 voted for the Nottinghamshire Miners' Association (p. 224) and at the beginning of 1927 the Nottinghamshire Miners' Association had well over twice as many members as the so-called Industrial Union (p. 210).

But numbers were not everything: apart from the difficulty of mobilising the rank and file in the aftermath of the 1926 betrayal, Spencer enjoyed open support from the coal owners. Only Spencer's Industrial Union was recognised and open Federation men faced continual threats of victimisation, unemployment, physical danger and even imprisonment. But it was only through the loyal actions of such men that the tradition of free trade unionism was kept alive and the defeat of the blackleg Spencer made possible.

The employers supported Spencer for obvious reasons: it paid them to do so. Mr. Joseph Jones pointed out at a conference of the MFGB in 1937 that 'whilst the average selling price of coal in Nottinghamshire and Derby . . . was slightly higher than in Yorkshire . . . the wages cost was 3½d. per ton less, and profits were 3½d. per ton more'. (p. 265). Spencerism lined the coal-owner's pockets.

Allied to Spencerism was the movement which grew up after the General Strike, often called 'Mondism'—after Sir Alfred Mond, head of ICI. In his Presidential Address to the 1927 TUC, George Hicks suggested that the two sides of industry should come together to see 'how far and upon what terms co-operation is possible in a common endeavour to improve the efficiency of industry and raise the workers' standard of life'. (p. 230). How very like our present Labour 'leaders' enthusiastically involved in NEDC!

On the whole, Griffin adopts in this book a reformist standpoint—under the cloak of objectivity. He tends to support the 'reasonable' men of the unions who were trying to

live with capitalism. The main troublemakers were the militants in the MFGB—and especially those from South Wales: if the attempted amalgamation of the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Miners' Association had been successful in 1928, argues Griffin, much of the subsequent unrest might have been avoided.

But, although the author adopts an anti-Communist Party line, because he is a reformist he is unable to analyse correctly the role of Stalinism in this period. That Spencerism was able to retain its grip in Nottinghamshire for most of the '30s is partly explained in terms of the violent swings in Communist Party policy during these years. During the so-called 'third period' from 1929 British Stalinists denounced the mass Trades Unions as 'finished' and launched 'red' trade unions which were completely cut off from the main strata of the movement. But apart from a brief reference to the breakaway movement led by the Communist Party amongst Scottish miners, Griffin makes little reference to these vital matters and their relation to events inside Nottinghamshire.

So one should read this book with care—for its facts rather than its analysis. If it is studied in this way it can provide valuable lessons of the role of the George Spencers of the movement—George Spencers who are still active in 1963, ready and willing to carry out the needs of the employing class.

P.J.

London's revolution

City Government and National Politics 1625-1643. By Valerie Pearl. Oxford University Press, 1961, 42s.

Valerie Pearl has written a useful addition to the growing number of specialised books on the Puritan movement. Her concern is to outline the relations between the City Government of London and the Puritan Opposition in Parliament. It has often been implied by historians that the City of London was solidly behind the House of Commons in its struggle with Charles the First and from the beginning gave financial and political support to the Parliamentary cause.

This volume shows with a convincing wealth of detail that such was not the case, that right up until December 1641 the official City Government, dominated by the Aldermanic Bench, was sympathetic to the King, and that 'the eventual alignment of London with Parliament was the result of force majeure, that is to say, of the seizing of power in the City by the parliamentary puritans'.

It is this thesis that leads Valerie Pearl to examine the organisation of the radical puritans in the City and in doing so she brings to light fresh and interesting information as well as giving not a few leads to further research.

We learn how the Puritans organised themselves in the wards and vestries of London during the 1630s, getting themselves elected to all sorts of lowly parish offices, in this way building up their influence within the machinery of government until, in the elections to Common Council on December 21, 1641, they were able to oust the older oligarchy from power, although a Royalist minority remained for some time to come.

This change took place against a background of **revolutionary** crisis. The attempt of the King to arrest the five leading members of the Parliamentary opposition on January 4, 1642, heightened the tension already caused by the filling of the Tower of London with cannon and artillerymen.

Fearing a royal coup, the citizens prepared to defend themselves. Nehemiah Wallington, a Puritan shopkeeper, wrote in his diary:

'that the Aldermen and Sheriffs were up that night and the gates looked unto and the chains pulled across the streets, with knocking at the doors for men to stand upon their guard, and the next day our shops were shut up close, with every man his halberd and weapons in a readiness, and it was much feared that that night would have been a bloody night, but God of his mercy kept us'. (quoted on p. 141.)

The crisis, however, passed without violence, a fact which Valerie Pearl attributes to a combination of factors: 'the self-imposed discipline of the citizens . . . the far from desperate character of the populace, and the somewhat restrained and

ambivalent attitude of the leading classes of society'.

Nehemiah Wallington probably sums it up succinctly when he states:

'it is certain enough, that had not the Lord of His mercy stirred us up to bestir ourselves, it would have gone hard enough with us'. (p. 142.)

'Cheapside and the other main streets,' writes Pearl, 'were barricaded with benches, while women who entered sometimes violently into the political struggle . . . boiled cauldrons of scalding water to pour on the heads of marauding Cavaliers who never arrived.'

Throughout this period of crisis the Puritans in the City regularly organised citizens' petitions signed by anything from ten to twenty thousand persons, which were used to pressurise the House of Lords and sometimes the Commons to espouse radical measures, the Root and Branch Petition being the best known of these.

In organising these petitions the puritans spread their influence amongst ordinary 'mechanical folk' as well as merchants and shopkeepers. Unemployment attendant upon a trade depression added to the militancy of the former, and the radical leaders did not hesitate to threaten the ruling circles with the spectre of 'mob-violence' so long as they could be sure of their control over the 'mob'.

The defence of London during 1642 and 1643 rallied the great majority of citizens and gave further evidence of the extent and effectiveness of the puritan organisation. Thousands of men, women and children marched with flying colours and in martial order to erect the chain of forts around the City. Moderates and Radicals, Presbyterians and Independents, joined hands in this enterprise. The Venetian Ambassador, however, remarked that the chief use of the forts would be to control the City's political minorities, radical as well as royalist.

We see clearly in this book how in the period of bourgeois revolution the power of the disenfranchised people was used to put pressure upon

the ruling classes. As this was a **bourgeois** revolution, which merely substituted one ruling class for another, the machinery of government remained intact with the addition of a few modifications added in the course of the struggle. But even so new revolutionary bodies such as the Militia Committee were formed and the control of the armed Trained Bands had to pass into Parliamentary hands to ensure victory. Armed force was decisive.

Those who imagine that the working class can overthrow capitalism by putting pressure on the capitalists and by utilising the capitalist state machine in some sort of pseudo-revolutionary take-over bid would do well to study the methods of the Puritans. They were far more revolutionary than the theologians of King Street and their academic hangers-on who prattle about the 'traditions of British democracy' and in so doing distort history in the interests of a paper programme.

The workers in their struggle for socialism must create their own organs of revolutionary government; they 'cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for (their) own purposes'. This idea is central to Marxism and distinguishes it from all other brands of 'socialism' which these days combine to form a veritable utopian ordnance map complete with 'roads' and 'signposts'.

Marxists will find in this book a fascinating account of how the Puritans seized power in London and may draw from it useful lessons for the struggles of our time. **G.W.**

Words, words, words

An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth. By Bertrand Russell. Penguin Books, 6s.

Lord Russell, it will be recalled, is the man who thought he stopped a nuclear war last October, by writing letters to Kennedy and Khrushchev. For a long time now, he has been explaining how words relate to each other. But he is also convinced that,

somehow, they ought to relate to reality.

At the beginning of the century, he was an enthusiastic leader of the attempt to dissolve philosophy in a bath of logical symbols. The methods of pure logical analysis were used to break down everything, from number and sense-perception to the Russian Revolution, into the tiniest fragments visible to the naked brain.

This enterprise was centred on Vienna and Cambridge, later shifting to the U.S.A. An intricate analytical apparatus was constructed which, it was hoped, would so clarify any problem presented to it, that the difficulty would not longer be seen at all.

However, when this vast machine had completed its tests in the philosophical workshops, it was found impossible to get it through the door, into the outside world. In any case, no one could remember what it was for.

An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth consists of the William James lectures which Russell delivered in Harvard in 1940. It is mainly a discussion with Carnap, who, taking positivism to its conclusion, had decided that only statements about syntax really had any meaning. Philosophy had vanished into its own fundamental postulate.

Russell was anxious to prove that words could refer to *something*. Carnap, Tarski and others had shown that, to avoid the paradoxes of formal logic, a 'hierarchy' of languages was necessary. The truth of a statement in one language could only be asserted in a 'meta-language' higher up the ladder.

Russell proposed an 'object language, in which the real world could be talked about. Some readers, perhaps, will prefer plain English, French, German, etc.

This book is written with the traditional clarity of English philosophers. But this lucidity hides more than the worst obscurities of any German, for it evades all the important questions by pretending that no gentleman could ever ask them. **C.S.**

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A collection of articles written in 1923 during the lull before the great storm of persecution which was later to overwhelm Russian Bolshevism. Here Trotsky, analyses the incipient stages of the degeneration of the Communist Party, uncovers its causes and proposes measures for combating its further decline. He here analyses the party in a historical, that is dialectical way, the relationships between generations, social strata, groups, factional formations, tradition and the multitude of factors that go to make a revolutionary party. 111 pages, 3/6

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This document is a landmark in the development of 20th century Marxism. It sums up the experience of an entire period of struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy. This Platform also represents the highest point in the fortunes of the Joint Opposition (Trotskyist-Zinovievite) to Stalin. It is the programme of the last of the Bolshevik-Leninists who insisted that they remained communists despite all the persecution, jailings, violence and slander inflicted on them. But this document also represents a watershed—the end of one phase and the beginning of another—in the evolution of Trotskyist politics. 112 pages, 5/-

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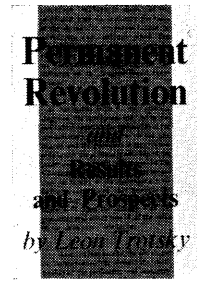
The Draft Programme of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky

This is part of the author's criticism of the draft programme submitted by the Executive Committee of the Third (Communist) International to the 6th Congress of the Comintern which was held in July 1928. The manuscript of that criticism was written by Trotsky during his exile in Alma-Ata (Central Asia). It was sent to the Congress in Moscow together with an appeal for reinstatement into the party from which he had been expelled a few months before by the Stalinist faction in 1927. Stalin and his supporters had invented the theory of 'Socialism in one country', which was made party policy in 1925 and converted into an article of faith to be defended by the world institutions of Stalinism. It is this theory which Trotsky criticises in these pages. 64 pages, 1/-

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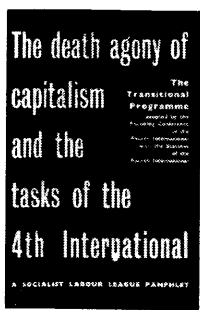
This is a polemic against Radek in 1928. Trotsky examines the arguments against his pre-war theory of the permanent revolution (as expounded in *Results and Prospects*) and takes up the history of his differences with Lenin before 1917, of which Stalin and his henchmen made so much. Trotsky shows that it was Lenin's criticisms of his attitude to the centralised Marxist party, which he afterwards understood and accepted, that kept them apart, and not their differences on the permanent revolution.

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This is the basic programmatic document of the world movement founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades. By 1938 the revolutionary Marxists had found it necessary to lay the foundations of the *Fourth International* in order to restore working-class leadership after the defeats prepared by the Stalinist bureaucracy in control of the Third (Communist) International. The defeat of the German Revolution in 1923, of the British General Strike in 1926, and of the Chinese Revolution in 1927, followed by Hitler's victory over the German working class in 1933, finally ruled out the perspective of transforming the Communist International by internal opposition. 60 pages, 1/-

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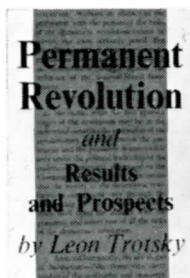
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The Draft Programme of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky

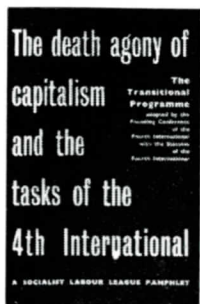
This is part of the author's criticism of the draft programme submitted by the Executive Committee of the Third (Communist) International to the 6th Congress of the Comintern which was held in July 1928. The manuscript of that criticism was written by Trotsky during his exile in Alma-Ata (Central Asia). It was sent to the Congress in Moscow together with an appeal for reinstatement into the party from which he had been expelled a few months before by the Stalinist faction in 1927. Stalin and his supporters had invented the theory of 'Socialism in one country', which was made party policy in 1925 and converted into an article of faith to be defended by the world institutions of Stalinism. It is this theory which Trotsky criticises in these pages. 64 pages, 1/-

This is a polemic against Radek in 1928. Trotsky examines the arguments against his pre-war theory of the permanent revolution (as expounded in *Results and Prospects*) and takes up the history of his differences with Lenin before 1917, of which Stalin and his henchmen made so much. Trotsky shows that it was Lenin's criticisms of his attitude to the centralised Marxist party, which he afterwards understood and accepted, that kept them apart, and not their differences on the permanent revolution.

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This is the basic programmatic document of the world movement founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades. By 1938 the revolutionary Marxists had found it necessary to lay the foundations of the *Fourth* International in order to restore working-class leadership after the defeats prepared by the Stalinist bureaucracy in control of the Third (Communist) International. The defeat of the German Revolution in 1923, of the British General Strike in 1926, and of the Chinese Revolution in 1927, followed by Hitler's victory over the German working class in 1933, finally ruled out the perspective of transforming the Communist International by internal opposition. 60 pages, 1/-

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