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The Myth of Western Civilization

BY GEOFFREY CLARK

"That culture, the loss of which he laments, is for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine." *The Communist Manifesto.*

I

WESTERN UNION, the Brussels Pact, and the comic-opera "Parliament" at Strasbourg have their counterpart in the battle of ideas. For some time there has been developing a propaganda campaign around the theme of the "West European tradition" and its "values"—a campaign conducted by books, by articles in Press and periodicals, and on the B.B.C. A set of radio talks, begun in July of last year, and continued at intervals ever since, was of special interest because it represented an attempt to reach the widest possible "serious" audience by top-rank official and semi-official publicists.

Three elements can be distinguished in this propaganda. First, there is an historical argument. The origins of our civilisation, we are told, are to be found in ancient Greece and Rome, whose heritage was preserved for us through the Middle Ages by the special care of the Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire, and from these the culture of modern Europe—or at least, of modern Western Europe—takes its rise. Most upholders of the theory go further, and imply if they do not say explicitly that the heritage of classical and Christian antiquity passed directly, without significant breaks in continuity, and almost if not quite exclusively, to the favoured nations of the West. Secondly, it is held that this tradition embodies certain "permanent values"—truth, kindness, tolerance, freedom and so on—which persist essentially unaltered through the ages and transcend the rise and fall of material civilisations. Generally these values are left undefined; though Sir Harold Butler (*Listener*, August 5th, 1948) offered the following summary of what "we" mean by freedom and democracy:

"We all want to be free to live our own lives, to think our own thoughts, to say what we like to each other. We want to choose our own government and to have the right of political opposition. We hate the idea of being dictated to, being ordered about by a government we cannot control, being bullied by an arbitrary

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police, being told what we must say and think. That is what we mean by democracy. That is why we hate the whole concept of the totalitarian State."

Thirdly, these values are said to be threatened by the rise of a new "heresy"—materialism; which "makes it meaningless to talk about human rights," "knows only 'power' and expediency"; which recognises "no justice, only a ruthless, functional expediency"; whose attack is directed both from within the citadel and from without, and must at all costs be repulsed.

Most of this propaganda is more or less openly designed as an attack on Marxism, on Communism, on Eastern Europe, and above all on the U.S.S.R. And as might be expected, some confusion arises from the attempt to rule out Marxism as incompatible with the "Western" tradition of "freedom." Professor E. L. Woodward and John Plamenatz, indeed, know enough about the facts to admit that Marxism *is* in the Western tradition (though a "heresy"); while Mr. A. J. P. Taylor contradicts the other speakers by pointing out (*Listener*, July 15th, 1948) that the course of European history has in fact been a series of "dictatorships," and that "liberty has always been fighting against the current of events." Professor Woodward—whose contribution contains enough contradictions for a study in itself—goes so far as to say: "We are not defending a set of ideas derived from a Western European tradition" at all. (*Listener*, June 2nd, 1949).

II

Before we examine the historical basis of their argument, we must consider for a moment the political use to which it is being put. One can hardly avoid being struck in the first place by the effrontery of these learned gentlemen, who wish their audience to assume, no doubt, that the liberties they proclaim exist already in the West; but who must be perfectly well aware that to say the least there are extremely serious restrictions upon them in practice; and, above all, who devote none of their energies to the struggle to remove these restrictions, either at home or in the colonies for which as citizens they bear their share of responsibility. For Eastern Europe they are not responsible—and they are never likely to be. Criticism, like charity, might well begin at home.

It is clear that what we are dealing with is no longer a genuine academic theory, but one that, as Professor Barraclough puts it—

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"has now become the vehicle of organised political forces, charged with political content; it has come into its own as an ideological smokescreen behind which the militant upholders of 'Western tradition' hastily seek to manoeuvre into position the compelling artillery of the atomic bomb, it is the battle cry of the British Council and the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of '*Blut und Boden*'" (*Humanitas*, June, 1947).

Mr H. V. Hodson, speaking of the Empire, made the point very frankly (*Listener*, September 9th, 1948):

"Here is approximately a quarter of the world, measured either by land mass or by population, an asset whose value in either cold or hot war can be best gauged by imagining how calamitous a change—from our Western point of view—would come over the balance of forces in the world if some non-Western Great Power were firmly established, let us say, in India. The preservation of the Western tradition in this area is thus one of the greatest contributions which the British Commonwealth has made to the welfare of mankind and has still to make in the future."

The "Western tradition" propaganda is, in practice, a defence of Western Union; that is, of the metropolitan countries of the old imperial systems—Britain, France, Holland, etc.—united in their new dependence on the imperialism of the U.S.A., in hostility to the Soviet Union and the forward movement of the colonial peoples. This is what we are to defend under the name of our "common European heritage of Hellenic culture, Roman law, and medieval Christendom." Now that we are faced with progressive deterioration of our living standards in consequence of the Marshall Plan, and with further surrenders of our economic and political independence, it has become more than ever necessary to persuade us that here is something worth fighting and perhaps dying for, certainly worth going hungry for. Moreover, the appeal to "liberal" principles is specially useful now because the more directly reactionary ideologies—fascist and near fascist—have been heavily discredited in the war; instead, democratic freedom is to be extended, even to the enemies of democracy; which conveniently enables Liberals, Right-Wing Social-Democrats, and Fascists to unite in support of the same social system—all in the name of Western values.

III

The historical argument itself is open to several objections. To begin with, the "continuity" of the "Western" tradition is not borne out by the facts. (The invocation of this "continuity" to lend an air of respectability to the political philosophy of Messrs. Attlee and Bevin is, of course, a mere verbal juggle.) The economic and cultural basis of the late Roman Empire was not in Western Europe at all, but in the East Mediterranean area. The same is true of the early Church, whose language for the first two centuries was not Latin but Greek, and whose intellectual centres were in Africa and Asia Minor. Further, it is not by any means clear *how* the Church "preserved and transmitted the best of classical culture." What we do know is that from the fifth century at any rate the Church was profoundly hostile to the pagan culture of ancient Rome, and regarded it as the work of the devil. In any case, long before that, the classical tradition had decayed. Slavery had destroyed alike the economic prosperity and the spiritual vigour of the Empire. What was required was not defence against "barbarism," but a new infusion of creative energy, which only the barbarians (because of their relatively free tribal institutions) could give.¹ Again, it is easy to overestimate the "continuity" by which the learning of the ancient world was carried on in, say, the Carolingian schools: medieval standards of scholarship were often atrocious, and the repetition of classical phrases is much more in evidence than any genuine persistence of classical thought. The same is true of medieval civil law, where "it was only the form which was provided by the Roman law, while the substance was rooted in the contemporary social structure."² As for the political traditions enshrined in the Holy Roman Empire, it is sufficiently notorious that the creation of Leo III was "not Holy, not Roman, not an Empire, but otherwise very suitably named."

With the "unity" of medieval civilization we shall fare little better. Traube and more recently Coulton have emphasised the difference between the possibilities of a rich and unitary culture provided by the Latin tongue, and the historical reality. The fabric of medieval Europe was constantly torn by the feuds of rival kings and princes, of Emperors and Popes. Within the Church itself, a semblance of unity was maintained largely by

¹ Cf. Engels, *Origin of the Family*, pp. 167-78.

² Kantorowicz, *cit.* Barraclough, *op. cit.*

exterminating the opponents of Catholicism and burning their books: but there is plenty of evidence of a persistent tradition of opposition to Papal supremacy in various countries, even in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Before and after this there were, of course, considerable differences between the various national churches, such as became evident at the Council of Constance.

* Weakest of all is the suggestion, intended to make us look down on the "uncultured" East, that Western Europe has somehow enjoyed a monopoly of the classical and Christian inheritance. The legacy of Rome passed in the first place to Byzantium, where the political structure of the Empire remained intact while that in the West disappeared. Here for 800 years was the "chief Christian state in the world": whose torch was handed on, ultimately, not to the West, but to Moscow, the "third Rome." Till the late Middle Ages, easily the most progressive societies in the world were those of the Near East, whether Christian or Arab. To the Arabs the West is indebted for successive infusions of classical learning, and of their own discoveries—for example, in mathematics. To Byzantium the debt is immense. Most people know that the Byzantine Emperor Justinian edited and codified Roman law: we sometimes tend to forget that he intended his work to "reveal in due course to the nations of the barbarous West the idea of a state based upon a foundation of law."¹ After his time there were many outposts of Eastern civilization, like Ravenna in Italy. When the Princess Theophano married Otto of Germany in 972, she brought with her not only Byzantine treasure, but Byzantine monks, architects and statesmen, whose influence continued to be felt till the thirteenth century. The Western Church, itself the most positive cultural force in the formative period of feudalism, was largely built up by missionaries from the East: St. Theodore, for example, came to England from Tarsus in Cilicia; and even as late as the eighth century half the Popes in Rome were Greeks or Syrians by birth. The typically "European" figure, Aquinas, was considerably influenced by John of Damascus; and it was from the Arab philosophers, above all Averroës, that he brought back the thought of Aristotle to the West.

There never has been a West European civilisation sharply marked off and isolated from the East. In the Middle Ages there were countless contacts by pilgrims, by traders, in the Crusades.

¹ N. H. Baynes, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. 195.

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Poland was Roman Catholic; Bohemia had close links with France and England. In the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries Eastern Europe was largely occupied with the attacks of the Turks; but even these wars were to a certain extent a unifying influence, a task shared by East and West. The influence of France on Russia in the eighteenth century and of Russian literature on the West in the nineteenth are well known. Above all, Marxism, born in the European-wide movement of the 1848 revolutions, stands out as the supreme achievement of the Western tradition—the crown of English political economy, French socialism, German philosophy; and Marxism has won its first decisive political triumphs in the East. When Europe has been divided, as in the Reformation or in 1848, it has been divided not between East and West, but between the forces of progress and reaction.

It is of course true that in the last 300 years, certain states of Western Europe have been transformed by the development of industrial capitalism, and their cultural history has taken a somewhat different course. But this has meant neither their isolation from the rest of the world—rather the reverse—nor the effacement of the common traditions of 3,000 years before. Within the European framework capitalism has made possible the development of various national cultures, whose interaction has been extraordinarily fruitful. To its special role as the cradle of industrial capitalism, Western Europe owes alike its industrial pre-eminence (*vis-à-vis* the East) and the acuteness of its social and political crisis. Its culture likewise is the culture of a capitalist society, and is necessarily involved in the crisis of capitalism. Thus the critique of Western civilization is a critique of capitalism, and the defence of Western civilization is a defence of capitalism.

To-day the division is neither between East and West, nor between "Christianity" and "paganism" or "materialism." It is between the tiny handful of politicians, bankers and militarists who rule the U.S.A., with their satellites and puppets in Europe, on the one side; and the great mass of the peoples of all countries, who passionately desire peace and social progress, on the other—the few against the many. If the history of Europe is being drastically and unsoundly rewritten, it is done with a purpose: to conceal the fact that the real divisions are not geographical but *class* divisions; to set the West against the East in the interests of capitalism.

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IV

What is the actual condition of Western Europe to-day? The most conspicuous feature common to all countries of Western Union is their growing economic and cultural dependence on the United States. The report of the European Economic Commission has underlined what was already evident from the recurrent sterling crises: the mounting unemployment in Belgium; the comprehensible failure to produce a surplus by adding together sixteen (or even nineteen) deficits; the chronic and overriding dollar famine. Economic dependence on the U.S.A. is not being reduced by Marshall Aid, and it never was the intention to reduce it. Culturally, Western Europe is exposed to invasion by the worst of American mass-produced culture, its screens monopolised by Hollywood, its radio stations plugging the same crooners.

Politically, Sir Harold Butler's freedoms are less in evidence than the steady encroachment on such political liberty as used to exist in capitalist democracies. "Freedom to live one's own life" perhaps never meant quite so much to an unemployed miner or a locked-out engineer as it did to Sir Harold Butler; while the horror of the bourgeoisie at the prospect of being ordered about by a government "we" cannot control has long been notorious. West European governments are to-day even remoter from control by the mass of the people than they have been hitherto, through the huge growth of permanent bureaucracies and the relative independence and inaccessibility of the executive. As for arbitrary police, it would be difficult to imagine anything more arbitrary than M.I.5, or the new powers to arrest or deport on suspicion enjoyed by the police at Hong Kong. Freedom to choose one's own government has, of course, never existed even in name for the great majority of "our" colonial subjects; in the metropolitan countries it is daily becoming less of a reality. The case is much the same with the right of political opposition and freedom of thought. So long as you oppose in the right way, so long as you freely think the right things; so long, let us say, as you support the Marshall Plan, so long as you are not too pro-Soviet, so long as you demand no fundamental social changes—excellent. Otherwise, you can hardly expect to be given access to the radio, to the big Press, to the cinema screen: you may not even be allowed to teach. Freedom, so far from being an "absolute" or "permanent value," is to be extended just as far as safety suggests—and to-day that is not very far.

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In such a society it is not surprising that the scientist feels himself frustrated, since an ever-increasing proportion of research must be devoted to war, while his discoveries must be kept secret for "security" and the threat of the purge hangs over him if his opinions are "unreliable." It is not surprising that art, poetry, philosophy appear to have run into a blind alley; that irrational and mystical philosophies are constantly propagated. We have here all the symptoms of the decay of a social system—economic bankruptcy, political centralisation and increasingly autocratic government, ideological confusion, spiritual impotence and despair. This is why the leaders of the Churches and reactionary political parties are for ever exhorting their followers to learn the enthusiasm, the devotion, the self-sacrifice of the Communists: and in their hearts they know it cannot be done.

One need not assume that all the "Western" propagandists are consciously dishonest. But behind their shrill cries about saving Western civilization one can generally detect the anxiety of a vested interest that feels itself threatened:

"They identify the particular social order they have created with the principle of order itself, and regard the threat of a competing order as synonymous with the peril of chaos. They think of themselves as priests preserving the sanctities of the temple of civilization, and they are only partly conscious of the fact that they are at least as interested in the golden chalices on the temple's altar as in the sanctities which the chalices symbolise" (Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of An Era*).

It is because they are absolutely unable to conceive that there might be a different kind of society and a different kind of culture from the one they know, one which would *work* as well or better than their own, that they become irrational. As Whitehead puts it, "Slow drift is accepted, but when for human experience quick changes arrive, human nature passes into hysteria. When fundamental change arrives, sometimes heaven dawns, sometimes hell yawns."

V

It is not Western Europe that is collapsing, but Western capitalism, and with it the culture and the whole world-outlook of its apologists. Western Europe is in transition. The old order is dying and the shape of the new can be seen—by those who care to look

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for it. The attack on the East is intensified now because there the new society is already arising. Its economic basis is to be found in the common ownership and control of the means of production, and the planning of production for *use*, for the needs of people, in place of the arbitrary criteria of profit. To the recent achievements of this system, the European Economic Commission, again, bears witness. In the Soviet Union prices come down and real wages rise. Still more to the point, in this economy there is no fear of slump, no panic to export, no scramble for markets, no motive for war. Its political basis lies in "the conquest of power by the working class in collaboration with the farmers, the professionals, and some at any rate of the small proprietors," and their use of that power to "end the existence of capitalists as a social class" (Barrows Dunham, *Man Against Myth*).

The new democracy is far wider than the old: the Webbs called the U.S.S.R. "the most inclusive and equalised democracy in the world." It is also far more real, because for the first time there has been revived the characteristic feature of ancient Greek democracy—the active participation of the maximum number of citizens in the actual work of administration, as well as the discussion and formation of policy. "Every cook must learn to rule the state." Moreover, the progressive abolition of class conflicts and the ending of the terrible waste of human effort in internecine struggle has made possible the release of creative energy on a scale never before imagined.¹ The tasks before these new democracies demand nothing less than the willing and whole-hearted co-operation of the millions. "What we build," says Zhdanov, "cannot be built with passive people."

The new society presents a challenge to the old not only because it is economically and politically successful, but because it exemplifies, so far as they mean anything at all, those values which Western capitalism proclaims so loudly and so conspicuously fails to enshrine. The "eternal values" of the Western apologists are in fact no eternal values at all: they are the values learned by the bourgeoisie in the course of their own liberation struggle, in seventeenth-century England and eighteenth-century France, dressed up in nineteenth-century Liberal phraseology; they reflect the conditions of bourgeois society, not as it is, but as it was. The

¹ Mr. R. H. S. ("Double-Dick") Crossman seems to feel that this is somehow unfair. "Having eliminated the free play of class against class in their own totalitarian State," he complains, "the Communists exploit the conflict of classes in the democratic States for their own purposes" (*Listener*, August 12th, 1948.)

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bourgeoisie demanded liberty, fraternity, and equality not only for themselves: their principles had from the outset a wider significance, as a flag to rally the people behind the bourgeoisie; though capitalist society by its very nature prevented liberty, fraternity and equality from being extended to the mass of the people. These "values" helped to create bourgeois society; to-day, so far as they represent something more than the interests of the bourgeoisie, they can only be realised in the conditions of socialism—that is, by the overthrow of bourgeois society. Hence the proclamation of these values in the abstract cannot possibly any longer serve the cause of human progress: it can only serve the cause of those who use them to defend their threatened interests, by diverting attention from the social changes that are needed to make the ideals a reality. Vague aspirations towards complete individual autonomy mean very little in any organised society; if "freedom," "respect for personality," "government by discussion rather than coercion" are to become realities, they must be reinterpreted in the context of the new social relations.

"Liberty" is perhaps the most often invoked and the most generally abused of all these slogans. It is hardly ever explicitly defined. A. J. P. Taylor, for example, says:

"we should be shocked by anyone, if such could be found, who questioned whether liberty—the right of the individual to determine his own course—was historically a part of the Western way of life which we are now so constantly called upon to defend."

Mr. Taylor is willing to take the risk. But it never occurs to him to ask whether this is all that is meant by liberty. As Caudwell long ago pointed out, this conception of liberty as the absence of all social bonds, as a "free for all" reflecting the ideal conditions of bourgeois economy, as *anarchy*—this is the central illusion at the heart of bourgeois culture. "Seen from the viewpoint of the bourgeois, bourgeois society is a free society whose freedom is due to its individualism, to its completely free market and its absence of direct social relations, of which absence the free market is the cause and expression. But to the rest of society bourgeois society is a coercive society whose individualism and free market is the method of coercion." As it develops the resources of production at an unprecedented rate, bourgeois society necessarily becomes

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more and more complex. Because he aims at freedom from social relations, the bourgeois is completely unable to control the forces of society. He finds himself at the mercy of economic and political forces, which he can no more control than his forbears could control the forces of nature. His freedom has ended in unfreedom, not only for the rest of society, but for himself.

In order to master nature, men have first to understand its laws, then to co-operate to achieve the desired end. If we wish to control society the same is true. In either case we must enter into definite relations, definite obligations to one another. There is no other way. Robinson Crusoe can solve neither our technical nor our social, nor our cultural problems. Only if we unite our forces can we achieve our ends; only thus can we increase our freedom. From this point of view, freedom is power—the power to do what we want; and to counterpose "the idea of freedom" and "the idea of power," as Professor Woodward does, is meaningless.

As soon as freedom is conceived not in the abstract but concretely, as freedom for actual men to do specific things, it becomes clear that the control of social forces by society must be its basis. The fundamental "freedoms"—the right to a livelihood, the right to work, the right to leisure—are not only guaranteed by the Soviet constitution. They are guaranteed by an economic system which is free from slump and unemployment. Freedom to criticise and control the administration of one's factory, farm, or office is rightly considered more useful than the chance to vote for one of several capitalist parties at elections. Socialism has brought freedom to hundreds of thousands of young people to follow their chosen careers, by establishing an educational system in which the students are chosen on merit alone, and their needs provided for by scholarships and grants. Not only students: one recalls the Dean of Canterbury's remark that he met hardly anyone in the Soviet Union who expected to be in the same job a year later, so rapid were the possibilities of promotion and so widespread the enthusiasm for part-time study. Above all these people are free to enjoy the best of their country's culture and to make their contribution to it: they are free to take part in the building up of a new society, and they know that their work is respected and valued.

Further, it is suggested that the governments of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and Communists generally, are peculiarly deficient in respect for human personality and the rights of individuals. It is difficult to see why, except to make a

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propaganda point, the bourgeoisie should claim a monopoly of these qualities. Naturally we too believe in justice, tolerance, and kindness to our fellow men. The question here again is not whether these things are desirable, but—can they be practised? And in what kind of society are they most likely to flourish? Here again we have to deal with the obsessive individualism of the bourgeois, to whom the slightest interference with, for example, the property-rights of “the” individual presents itself as a monstrous denial of human freedom. The spring-time of bourgeois culture, as might be expected, saw the beginning of the cult of the individual personality: yet even Mr. Taylor admits that the Renaissance ideal of all-round perfection was and could only be the ideal of a small élite. The idea of the autonomous personality was likewise a reflection of the imaginary “free” producers, consumers, and wage workers who met as individuals to exchange commodities in the market. And again this idea has found its nemesis in the progressive denial of human personality by capitalism; in the reduction of the worker to an accessory of the machine; in colonial slavery; and ultimately in fascism and war. In Marx’s words:

“In bourgeois society, capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality” (the *Communist Manifesto*).

“Human individuality, human morality, itself becomes at once a commercial article and the fabric in which money operates. . . . (Capitalism) estranges man from nature, from himself, his own active functioning, from his universal essence. . . . It makes his essence but a mere means for his existence. It estranges his spiritual, his human essence . . . it is the alienation of man from man” (*Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*).

In the long run the bourgeois too loses his individuality. Because the bourgeois conceives social relations not as relations between men, but as relations to a commodity, to the market, he cuts himself off from the strength and the love of his fellow men. The only relations that retain their human quality are his family relations; the possessiveness that empisons his family life is not simply the result of his private-property attitude to his family, but is due to his fear of the loneliness to which he has condemned himself. For if these bonds slip he is left alone, with his world

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crumbling about him, helpless. Then he discovers that in isolation he is not merely helpless, he is not in any real sense a man. Individualism has destroyed him.¹

Even theoretically, the concept of the individual as valuable only in and for himself meant the rejection of the older tradition (the tradition alike of classical antiquity and of the Middle Ages) of man-in-society, man as a citizen. Man was isolated from society, the individual from the social category. Marx made his rejection of this kind of totalitarianism absolutely clear:

“The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the *ensemble* of the social relations” (*Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach*).

“Above all we must avoid setting up ‘society’ as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity. His life . . . is therefore an expression and verification of the life of society” (*Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*).

When there is no longer a state power separate from society itself, there can be no conflict between society and the individual. In this society of the future, “the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” “The ultimate goal of Socialism is the individual.”

But concern for human personality, for *people*, is not a thing that can be allowed to wait on the achievement of full communism. Stalin emphasises that “it is time to realise that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and the most decisive is people.” The foundations for the future must be laid now; “every child must be a first-class passenger.”

According to Professor Woodward, however, “it is meaningless to talk about human ‘rights’ in a materialist society,” where “sacrifices for a future generation have no theoretical justification,” and—

“the relations between men . . . must always be relationships of power—*homo homini lupus*—with all our values reduced to shadow-play and our virtues regarded as epiphenomena” (*Listener*, June 2nd, 1949).

¹ It is because of this social atomisation that neurosis is the peculiar stigma of capitalist society in its dotage. It is also why in England (“this most bourgeois of all nations”) strangers talk about the weather when they meet—it is the only thing we feel we have in common.

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It is perhaps sufficient condemnation of modern "Western" standards of intellectual integrity and freedom of discussion, that misrepresentations of this kind can be broadcast, but neither reply nor serious, documented, discussion of Marxism is allowed. One would have thought, for what it is worth, that in a materialist society, which claims to base its values and its ideals on the real world of men and nature, there could be no rights except human rights. As for self-sacrifice, it is hard to see how anyone can do more than give his life, without hope of reward in any future existence. The men who defended Moscow and Stalingrad, the thousands of Russian partisans—the products, surely, of a "materialist culture"—were prepared to die for their children and their country's future. But Professor Woodward appears to think they had "no theoretical justification."

Third, there is the claim that the West believes in "government by consent, not by coercion," and holds principle above expediency. To quote Professor Woodward again:

"We cannot submit to a supposedly temporary surrender of our standards on the ground that this surrender is a necessary means to an end."

But what is this?

"We cannot degrade our own standards, and yet, in the defence of these standards, we have already, twice in a lifetime, accepted a general war, and the line of argument I have adopted leads to the conclusion that we may have to accept a third war; yet nearly everything we have to do in war is contrary to our standards of value. I do not see any way out of this dilemma."¹

In other words, we are to adopt means so horrible that the odds will be against the survival of the very values we are supposed to be fighting for. Woodward makes no attempt to resolve this contradiction. Instead, he tells us it represents a "paradox." Now paradox is not a device for glossing over contradictions. It is a rhetorical, not a logical device, used to rivet attention on some important point, by juxtaposing words or concepts *apparently* contradictory, but not, when correctly interpreted, really so. Here,

¹ *Listener*, June 2nd, 1949.

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however, the intention is not to elucidate the problem but to shelve or conceal it, by simply asserting that contradictory opposites can both be true in the same sense at the same time. Reason, in effect, is said to be confounded or surpassed (a process not unconnected with the general growth of philosophic irrationalism). The defenders of Western tradition flout not merely the logic of Hegel, but the logic of Aristotle.

On this basis we can find plenty more "paradoxes" in Professor Woodward. The Western tradition forbids "the substitution of the idea of power for the idea of liberty"—but "no nation-state has been innocent of that sin of apostasy." Freedom of thought is sacred: but if freedom of thought involves "the acceptance in good faith of conclusions which are disruptive of our fundamental beliefs," then it has led to *heresy*, which must be stamped out, if necessary by a new holy war, complete with atomic bomb. Yet "heresy" is only the Greek for "choice"; and according to Mr. Taylor "everyone who believes in the rights of the individual is a heretic." Again, "government by discussion" and democracy are supposed to be fundamental: but the discussion in the Press and B.B.C. is a discussion with one side left out, and when the results of democracy are not acceptable they are referred to as "the tyranny of the majority."

To come back to the question of force. There is no political situation imaginable to-day in which all coercion could be dispensed with. No one suggests that criminals and lunatics should not be coerced, or that declared Fascists should not have been restrained during the recent war. And it has often been pointed out that if the German Fascists had been forcibly restrained by the Weimar Republic, millions of innocent men and women would now be alive who will never enjoy any freedom again. The question is not whether all coercion can be avoided, but how it can be minimised, and when the use of force is legitimate. In Western Europe to-day the *status quo* can be maintained without frequent resort to open violence—though the recent strikes in France provide only one of numerous exceptions, and in the colonies the repressive machinery has never been concealed. The protests only arise when the tables are turned, when the mass of the people, having seized power, find it necessary to use their power against the survivals of the old régime if all their work is not to be destroyed. In the end we have to ask what kind of society will make possible the eventual abolition of coercion: and the answer can only

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be a classless society, in which the basic antagonisms that give rise to violence are removed, and "the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things."

VI

Two things impress one especially about the prophets of the Western tradition; their irrationalism and their despair. Toynbee says that "the notion that our civilization may come to grief seems now to be in the air," and that in America he found this notion "weighing on people's minds." Woodward says frankly that no end is in sight; that it may be necessary to "accept" a third war; rather naturally he does not tell us when or on what issue. He admits that he has no reason to think such a war would be less disastrous than "submission," nor victory than defeat. In the end he prefers the choice of war, as "a mystical act of faith": after all, he has no reason to offer us. But he reveals his own position clearly enough:

"Although war is very evil, it is not the worst evil . . . the use of hateful means for a good end implied in the conception of a *bellum justum* does not corrupt society to the extent to which the use of other hateful means to a good end corrupts it."¹

In plain words, better destruction than fundamental social change.

Both the despair and the irrationalism reflect the impossibility of making capitalism work any more. Capitalism is daily frustrating its own values, and its prophets can no longer create anything. While they brood over failure and war, the peoples of the East are carrying forward the tradition they claim to stand for.

The task for us is not to destroy or reject the heritage of European civilization, from which Marxism has sprung. It is to take up, carry over, preserve and develop all that is best in the European tradition: and to do that means smashing capitalism. This is the historic task of the proletariat and its allies, of Marxism, in East and West alike. This is not the denial of humanity but its fulfilment; where prehistory ends, and history begins.

"I call revolution," says Marx, "the conversion of all hearts and the raising of all hands on behalf of the honour of the free man."

¹ *Listener*, June 2nd, 1940.

Mental Testing

BY JOAN SIMON

THE article by Angus McPherson, "The Philosophical Aspects of Intelligence," is calculated to make confusion on the question of mental testing worse confounded. It is essential to examine more closely the origins and development of the mental test movement, and its use and abuse in capitalist society, if we are to criticise and evaluate it in Marxist terms. It is also necessary to recognise the import of the new departure in the Soviet Union where psychology is becoming a social science in the full meaning of the term. It is from this standpoint, from the standpoint of a new and advanced psychology, that Soviet criticisms of bourgeois psychology are made. But McPherson, though he quotes these criticisms, fails to recognise their full significance, for he himself uses Marxism as a formula, not as a method. He is satisfied to expose the "false philosophical postulates" of bourgeois psychology, to oppose to them some quotations from the Marxist classics, and thereafter to take over the content of bourgeois psychology as if it had been purified (by incantation, as it were) and only needed a little adaptation and re-interpretation to become sufficiently "dialectical" and "materialist."

But it is precisely the concept of "intelligence," as an allegedly immutable attribute of the individual, that is the main barrier to an understanding of human development and the learning process. Having once accepted "intelligence," and the contention that it can be measured, McPherson can only argue within the limits set by bourgeois theory and practice. He can only attempt a "Marxist" definition of this eternal category of human nature, which, in the nature of the case, is no improvement on the many others available. The end result of his attempt to reconcile two diametrically opposed theoretical conceptions in this way can only be a return to the "false philosophical postulates" he has previously so roundly condemned, a relapse into idealism.

I

Soviet psychology was choked by just such uncritical borrowings from bourgeois psychology until, in 1936, the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B) intervened in the interests of advanced socialist

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practice and decreed the removal of all mental testers, the withdrawal of text-books, and the abolition of the subject of psychometry in institutes and colleges. By this measure the way was opened for the development of educational psychology as a science.

The decree strongly criticised the People's Commissariats for Education for putting "pedologists" (mental testers) in control of the schools and denigrating the teacher's role. As a result the schools were mismanaged and Soviet school work jeopardised. The work of teaching and education was split between pedologists and teachers, the former controlling the latter and virtually removing responsibility for educational work from them. The whole apparatus of mental testing was brought into play, the investigations undertaken attempting to demonstrate from a "scientific biosociological" point of view "that the slow progress of the pupil or the defects of his conduct were conditioned by heredity and his social standing." An increasing number of children were classified as intellectually unsuccessful, defective, or "difficult," and removed to separate schools; this merely aggravated the problems. Only neglect of educational tasks and the ignorance of leading officials could explain that teaching was declared an empiric and pseudo-scientific discipline, while pedology, which lacked an established object and method and was full of injurious tendencies, was proclaimed as a universal science competent to direct all educational policy and teaching. The decree concludes with a condemnation of both the theory and practice of the so-called pedology, which—

"are based on quasi-scientific, anti-Marxist theses. To such theses belongs above all, the chief 'law' of contemporary pedology—the 'law' that the destiny of children is fatally conditioned by biological and social factors, by the influence of inheritance and by an assumed unchangeable environment. This deeply reactionary 'law' is in crying conflict with Marxism and with the whole practice of socialistic construction, which successfully re-educates the people in the spirit of socialism and liquidates the survivals of capitalism in economics and the people's mind."

Such a theory can result only from an uncritical transfer of the views of bourgeois pedology which—

"for the purpose of conserving the power of the exploiting classes, tries to prove a particular ability and a particular right to exist

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both of the exploiting classes and of the 'higher' races, and on the other hand the physical and psychical damnation of the toiling classes and of the 'lower' races. Such a transfer . . . is all the more injurious as it is disguised by a 'Marxist' ideology. . . . The establishment of a Marxist science about children is only possible on the basis of overcoming the . . . anti-scientific principles of . . . pedology and by severely criticising its ideologists and practitioners in order to rehabilitate pedagogy as a science and the pedagogues as its practitioners."¹

This controversy had none of the publicity and attention in this country that has recently been lavished on the biological controversy. But, examined in the light of more recent discussions, it clearly marks the first break with accepted scientific views in the capitalist world, and a recognition of the need for new theories to encompass and direct radically different practical tasks in a vital field. Since 1936 Soviet psychology has come of age, and the significance of the contributions of Rubinstein and Ananiev is that they outline a new departure in psychology comparable with that of the Lysenko school in biology, though as yet psychology has still to consolidate its advances.² The issues are perhaps more easily distinguishable in psychology, which has barely achieved the status of a science in the capitalist world, than they are in the physical and life sciences which can lay claim to a greater tradition.³

Two important points need underlining with regard to the break-away of Soviet psychology. Before theoretical generalisations can be made in any field there must be a long process of experiment and social action, and the material conditions necessary for gathering

¹ "On Pedological Distortions in the System of the People's Commissariats of Education," July 4th, 1936.

² The publication in 1946 of a series of articles recalling the decree and developing the discussion is evidence that cosmopolitan trends have still to be combated, and the biological discussions have given rise to renewed criticism. But the issue of text-books and the adoption of psychology as a subject in later secondary education as well as training colleges implies that it has achieved a new status.

³ The general principles raised by the Lysenko controversy have been fully discussed by Bernal (*M.Q.*, Vol. 4, No. 3). It is only suggested here that psychology came under review first, for very good reasons connected with the internal development and external relations of the science, no less than the demands of practice. Unfortunately, there is, as yet, little material available in translation. The references in this section are to the sources used by McPherson; S. L. Rubinstein, *Consciousness and Dialectical Materialism* (1945), translated in *Science and Society*, Vol. X, No. 3; B. G. Ananiev, *Progress of Soviet Psychology*, abridged, translated and mimeographed by the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. (1947).

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together accumulated experience (the aggregate of the practical attainments of society). So the natural sciences arose and developed; the necessary material conditions were those resulting from capitalist practice which provided the practical foundation for an understanding of the laws of nature, and mastery over nature. But the material conditions necessary for a scientific understanding and control of human nature are those of socialist construction, in a classless society. So long as the division of labour obtains there must be a contradiction between the forces of production, the state of society and consciousness; human nature is only seen through a distorting mirror, and bourgeois practice restricts the whole field of experiment and application. But with the negation of the division of labour, the abolition of private property and contending classes, the individual is brought into practical connection with the material and intellectual production of society as a whole, and so freed for real human experience. Society itself is controlled and directed by men, with the conscious aim of providing for real human needs. Then also human change is rapid and extensive. Completely new opportunities arise for investigating the real springs of human conduct and disclosing the laws which govern the development of human nature, for applying scientific principles and advancing scientific knowledge of human processes.

Secondly, psychology must be centrally concerned with the great question of philosophy—the relation between being and consciousness. Marxism solves this question on the basis of social practice: “the coincidence of changing circumstance and of human activity or self-changing can only be comprehended and rationally understood as *revolutionary practice*.”¹ Consciousness is not an individual possession, closely locked away in each individual psyche. Consciousness arises historically from the necessity of intercourse with other men; it has, therefore, from the beginning been a social product. As a social product, its origin and development must be governed by the laws of development that govern society as a whole, that is by changes in the forces of production and productive relationships. The law of social development, knowledge of the material basis for the development of social and individual consciousness in man, is, therefore, the essential foundation for scientific psychological study. And that study must first be directed to uncovering the laws of development of human consciousness, to investigating its origin, development and

¹ Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*.

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inter-connections, to discovering processes, not analysing finite things.¹

The history of psychology is, therefore, not that of a simple accumulation of knowledge—

“the great socialist revolution brought about a radical change in psychology which was only possible on the foundation of Marxist-Leninist theory. *Soviet psychology also has a special character in that it studies the laws of development of socialist consciousness in the Soviet people and plays a living role in construction and especially in the cause of communist education.*”²

Theory and practice are radically different; methods also are new.

“For Soviet psychology, which eliminates the idealist isolation of consciousness, investigation of the psyche is a study of man’s *consciousness in action*. Soviet psychology to-day carries on its investigations of psychic processes, such as perception, memory, thinking, by investigating man’s action, his concrete activity both practical and theoretical, by analysing the context of the real motives and objectives underlying action; thus breaking with the treatment of traditional functional psychology.”³

Soviet psychology unequivocally accepts the principle that man consists of body as well as mind; his psychic processes are a property of his brain—the highest form of organic matter—and cannot be separated from his neural and cerebral processes. Nor, on another plane, can man’s consciousness and his activity be separated. Consciousness is formed by practical activity, and revealed in the course of it. To take a simple example, the consciousness of a young child operates within a relatively restricted environment, but as his activity increases so his physical powers develop, his mental functions are modified and new ones acquired: he can henceforth envisage and take action in, a far richer and more complex environment and the process of development continues with the changed child operating in a changed situation. This process is the process of acquiring knowledge. Neither the chi nor the

¹ As Ananiev says: “Whilst bourgeois psychology is principally concerned with the classification of personality, Soviet psychology considers this a secondary, purely formal, and frequently harmful activity. Before proceeding to the task of classification it is necessary to establish the laws of formation of character. These general laws are gradually being revealed at the present time,” *loc. cit.* p. 8.

² Ananiev, *loc. cit.*, p. 2.

³ Rubinstein, *loc. cit.*, p. 259.

environment are immutable, nor is knowledge detached and formal—a system of ideas apart from the human being and the real world.¹ Education is not, therefore, an external force brought to bear on a separate watertight mind; it is the motive force in the psychic development of the child, and exerts a formative influence on mental development. Training and enlightenment can therefore be the creative, motive force in the moral and intellectual development of the child; it is such particularly in socialist society where the educational system has a conscious aim conforming to the genuine human needs of each individual.²

Contrast this position with the generally accepted view of bourgeois educational psychology as outlined by Schonell. Intellectual, emotional, physical and environmental factors, inter-related and interdependent, form personality.³ But the “principal force in child development is . . . a purposive striving for expression and power in physical, emotional and intellectual realms.” Though security, social contact and a measure of success are the usual nutritives of this “expressional urge,” its particular nature “differs with the individual’s inborn equipment and differing personal attitudes are developed towards life’s activities.” These reactions in turn vitally influence “the elements of personality already formed” so that “a child’s personality presents not only a picture of inherited tendencies, but, in addition, a mirror of the conditioned states produced by the environment.”

¹ The process is fundamentally the same when the stage of generalisation from experience is reached and language (which is, as Marx puts it, “practical consciousness, as it exists for other men, and for that reason is really beginning to exist for me personally as well”) is the primary instrument of social intercourse. But when language becomes a thing in itself, when it is employed, not as a means of social intercourse and self-expression, not as a medium for transmitting first-hand experience or achieving a concrete and accepted aim, then the form only is retained without the content. Children can memorise and reproduce successions of words and diagrams, and learn to juggle with concepts, without doing more than grasp the ends of the cloak which covers the reality, without, therefore, gaining any real experience.

² See Ananiev, p. 5. While this aspect of the formation of human personality has received due attention, the question of inherited characteristics, their mutability and their importance for human mental development has been relatively ignored. But it is clear that innate characteristics can exist only as anatomic-physiological peculiarities of an organism which cannot alone determine a man’s abilities, since these abilities are formed only in the process of developing the appropriate activity and therefore in dependence on those objective conditions which make the given activity practicable. (See A. N. Leontyev, “Important Tasks of Soviet Psychology in the Light of the Outcome of the Session of the All-Union Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences,” *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, January, 1949.)

³ i.e. personality in the psychological sense, which is defined as “that complex integrated resultant of innate equipment and environmental influences attained by an individual in the course of his development.” F. J. Schonell, *Backwardness in the Basic Subjects*, 1948, pp. 1-2.

The boundaries to development are here clearly marked out by the child’s inherited tendencies and the mechanical action of a given environment. The individual cannot rise above either. The motive force in his development is a “purposive striving,” a “dynamic urge” (arising no one knows how) the nature of which is determined by his inborn equipment.¹

There is no way out of this blind alley. The only variations that can be introduced are a greater emphasis on the psyche or a greater emphasis on the environmental mechanisms in determining development; in either case the dynamics of development can only be explained in terms of some mystic force whether in the individual or at the creation of the environment. At best the ideal is a gradual progress towards the millennium because the more intelligent individuals benevolently adapt the environment for the backward and so help them along. At worst, the “physical and psychical damnation” of the backward is established for all time.

II

It is clear that the philosophic postulates on which a psychologist bases his system, whether consciously or unconsciously, must integrally affect his methods and findings. It is impossible to separate bourgeois theory and practice in psychology, or either from the philosophic views they embody in a particular material situation. It is when the contradictions of the capitalist world increase in the epoch of imperialism, and social and individual conflicts become more manifest, that bourgeois psychology flourishes; and, because of the material conditions in which it operates, is directed to explaining away or “resolving” these secondary contradictions.

The two main philosophic trends in the capitalist world of to-day—pure idealism and, its inverted form, mechanical materialism—find a parallel in psychology in the systems which attempt to prove the primary importance of heredity in determining personality and those which attempt to prove the superior influence of the environment. But no clear line can be drawn, for to-day all bourgeois psychology is shot through with metaphysical ideas; even behaviourism has been unable to preserve its purity and the various non-physiological behaviourist trends are strongly idealist.

Most psychologists, it is true, claim to be free from all

¹ “Urges,” “impulses” and “drives” are only “instincts” and “complex innate patterns” in more modern form, introduced when the latter degenerated into futility. But this change of vocabulary masks a real failure to make any concrete advance.

preconceptions. But the attempt to take a stand on the empirical plane is doubly difficult in psychology which is bound to bourgeois philosophy at one pole and capitalist social practice at the other. It means in fact that the investigator works with the vestigial remains of outdated philosophies, coloured by more or less undigested portions of the modern ones;¹ and there is a particular danger in this field that inchoate and disconnected views may be filled out with class bias or social prejudice. It means that psychologists are still haunted by the traditional categories which the mechanists inherited from scholasticism—perception, imagery, intelligence. When psychology broke away from theology, under the influence of developments in physics and mechanics, the early experimentalists simply took over these categories and attempted to describe in terms of matter following physical laws all that had previously been assigned to the world of the spirit. There was therefore no obstacle to an idealist renaissance when the time was ripe; and the way was also prepared for various forms of animism when “scientific” psychology later came under the influence of evolutionary theories and developments in the life sciences.

Lacking clear guiding principles “scientific” psychology has been unable to determine its field of observation. It has been led blindfold, via abstraction and formalism, into the investigation not of concrete human activity in a concrete social-historical setting, but of “mind” as it operates in the world of spiritual processes. Grounded on the mechanist view that external collision determines development, it conceives of the formation of human personality in terms of the mutual action of “elements” external and antagonistic to each other—biological and social, heredity and environment. If external action and reaction determine human personality it is the task of psychology to examine the general nature of this process. It is not therefore concrete man who must be the object of study but “man-in-general,” the abstract individual—in the last

¹ “Perhaps the most prevalent attitude of contemporary psychologists is to regard the problem (of the relation of mind and body) as outside the scope of psychology as at present defined. This attitude, however, very naturally means in practice a refusal to admit that any such problem exists. This again turns out upon closer examination to mean among many psychologists that the answer to the problem is quite simple, and that philosophy has made itself much trouble over many unproductive and unreal problems. When we turn to ask what this simple and obvious answer is, we find persisting, without great alteration, a variety of answers prevalent in the nineteenth century, indeed, a number of them prevalent in the ancient world. Many of them have, however, taken on a special colouring as a result of the scientific and philosophical events of the last few decades.” Murphy, *Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology*, p. 391.

analysis spiritual man, or “mind.” Man acts, therefore mind acts; activity is realised into the spiritual world, mind *is* activity, a form of behaviour (whether purposive, vitalist or determinate). When the psychologist claims that he studies behaviour this is what he means. And when he turns to analyse this behaviour he can only do so scientifically by eliminating all that “irrelevant” social conditioning which makes it particular; therefore, in the name of science, behaviour (the objectivised mind) is abstracted from all meaningful relations and examined in a purely formalistic manner. That is, the psychologist, who has already abstracted individuality and activity, now breaks the context of activity and substitutes for the concrete situation a generalised situation, for capitalist society the “environment.”¹

He now has his “psychic phenomena” corresponding to “natural phenomena” and these, if they are to be scientifically studied, must be studied as phenomena in general—in categories. The eternal categories of human nature are ready to hand, only lightly buried and not yet superseded. And so the “scientific” psychologist returns by a devious route to the old metaphysical questions, of which the primary one is “What is intelligence?” The fact that he can now give a physiological, biological, genetic, or anthropological turn to the discussion, that he can measure various forms of action and reaction and has given statistical expression to certain conclusions, does not detract from the ultimate futility of his quest. His views have only achieved importance because of their significance in capitalist society; for, since the social determinants of individual behaviour have been only formally excluded, the psychologist’s “man-in-general” is (in distorted form) man under conditions of capitalist class society; and so capitalism is vindicated, it conforms to human nature.

The psychologist strongly defends his results. They have, after all, emerged from scientific analysis. But the question must be pressed, analysis of what? Not of original psychological facts but of various preconceived notions imported either openly or under the counter. The whole practice of “intelligence” testing is based on a concept of “intelligence” distilled from current social practice. In addition, concepts and techniques are borrowed wholesale from auxiliary sciences; as a result the laws disclosed frequently turn out to be physiological or biological laws, but psychological phenomena

¹ For an illuminating study of this process of degeneration, see Georges Politzer, *Le Crise de la Psychologie Contemporaine*, Editions Sociales, Reprint, 1947.

are forced into this framework.¹ Alternatively the tendency is to take from the auxiliary science the most tenuous theories which thereafter remain embedded and less easily subject to modification than in their original setting. Thus schools of functional psychology (Stern's, for example) are wedded more or less closely to vitalist philosophies which experimental science has dislodged step by step from their former positions. Starting from the proposition that life can be explained teleologically in such terms as "environment" and "responses," they arrive at the conclusion that "intelligence" consists in general mental adaptability to new problems and conditions of life; a conclusion which contributes neither to knowledge of the nature and origin of "intelligence" nor to its practical recognition.² Such theories can vary infinitely and so the progress of psychology is marked by the warring of schools.

Analysis which proceeds thus from notions and definitions, which is not grounded on original psychological facts, can only end in theories which apply to any or all of the facts in any sort of direction. Psychology, having no firm scientific basis, cannot therefore point the way to new knowledge. Even genuine experimental research does not help, for the number of possible researches is infinite, their direction random, and there is no means of recognising progress or finality.³ The measure of psychology's failure to

¹ For instance, the whole theory of maturation, which figures so largely in the construction of "intelligence" tests, involves the importation of biological law into the psychological sphere. The child develops as his innate qualities unfold, and this unfolding is regulated within certain biological stages during which new and more mature mental qualities appear, having no connection with concrete experience or educational background. This biological "growth" of "intelligence" is supposedly separated from inherent intellectual capacity by a statistical elimination of chronological age when calculating I.Qs.

² "Teleological definitions of intelligence are numerous, contradictory, and often meaningless. They usually take the form of defining intelligence as an adjustment or adaptation to new situations, where adaptation or adjustment produces changes that are 'useful' or 'biologically advantageous.' But biology itself . . . has given up the attempt to discuss the behaviour of animals from the point of view of deciding whether it is 'advantageous' or not." J. L. Gray, *The Nation's Intelligence*, p. 65. Nevertheless, the concept that "new" mental tasks test "intelligence" is still a directive one.

³ "Research is spotty, scattered, unco-ordinated; great gaps exist which remain unfilled for years. The warp and woof of physics and chemistry are so tightly drawn that research takes place in a ready-made context, and an abundance of implications are clear." In psychology it is quite random, and "what is to be done with the fragments of research which result? . . . The separate zones of research are as unco-ordinated as single fields of research could be. The inter-relations between our facts on the motives of laboratory rats and the motives which influence adults' preferences in politics are still almost as vague as if no experimental research had been done; and the peninsulas of 'learning to read' and 'learning to respect the ethical code' are two phases of childhood experience which are separated by a vast bay of sheer ignorance." Murphy and Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology*, pp. 9-10.

establish itself as a science is that it has not yet made the ancients out of date; on the contrary it has latterly given them a new lease of life.

In this situation the question of achieving greater exactitude has become pre-eminent, and mathematical techniques have become the life-line of pre-scientific psychology which is to wrest it into full scientific status. But mathematical exactitude or mathematical experiment are not in themselves guarantees of objectivity and accuracy; they are only one form of exactitude which makes a discipline of a descriptive science. Science first attempts to know the facts on the plane of the facts, and thereafter to reduce them systematically to phenomena; its exactitude is defined by the extent to which its knowledge covers the facts, the measure in which its content is adequate to the forms in which the object it investigates is concretised.

Psychology does not establish its work on analysis of the facts; nor does it go from facts to theories but vice versa. It is bounded by preconceived views and choked with borrowed theories; it has no clearly defined object to investigate. The fact that mathematical techniques are used at the intermediate stage does not overcome the basic difficulty; at most it is removed a stage further in the closed psychological other world. Thus all the efforts of innumerable psychologists to measure "intelligence" and define its origin and nature have only ended in transferring attention from the general question "What is intelligence?" to the general question "What are the factors of the mind?" And that question is no nearer solution than any other with which modern psychology has grappled.

III

"Factor analysis" is a technique designed to provide a statistical short cut to the discovery of the primary properties of "human nature," a solution to the problem of the structure of "mind." It signals the failure of mechanist experimental techniques to encompass the complex problems involved in investigating such functions as thinking. It is also the result of capitalist pressure on psychology to produce concrete results.¹ The way that it has

¹ "Since the field is highly complex, a direct advance by non-statistical methods is bound to be slow. Meanwhile scientific curiosity demands at least a provisional solution; and the immediate needs of applied psychology call for working hypotheses and some practical device for determining the key-characteristics of different individuals. It is these urgent demands that factor-analysis endeavours to meet." Burt, *The Factors of the Mind*, p. 12.

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evolved from simple testing is an example of the progress of psychological investigation as previously described.

Originally the testing of physical capacity was believed to be the direct road to testing mental capacity, but when simple mechanical principles had been undermined and the attempt to measure mind by measuring matter had failed decisively, testing gravitated into the world of mental processes. Binet brought the modern form of "intelligence" testing into the limelight. When he first constructed his tests it was with the object of separating out the mentally deficient from the indifferent and lazy in the French schools. He rejected both the psychophysical approach and the *a priori* mental categories of scholasticism, and asserted the empirical justification of measuring "general intelligence" as manifested in the social behaviour of individuals. That is he constructed tests composed of simple everyday tasks held to be normal at different ages by teachers and others. And he constructed a scale whereby various tests were allotted to different age groups and on their performance a mental age could be calculated.¹

The popularity and usefulness of Binet's tests raised the old question—"What is intelligence?"—in a new form. It was inevitable that as the technique of testing developed it should be turned to solve this perennial problem of psychology, the more so at a time when the whole question of biological inheritance had assumed political importance.² Practising mental testers were quite incapable of defining the "intelligence" they were measuring, let alone its composition. Here, as elsewhere, theories could be had for the asking according to the predilections of individual investigators. At a symposium in 1921 Thorndike defined "intelligence" as the "power of good responses from the point of view of truth," Buckingham as "the ability to act effectively under given conditions,"

¹ This new instrument was eagerly adopted in the United States, which was grappling with the problem of assimilating millions of European and Asiatic immigrants and sifting them into schools and jobs. It was here that performance tests for those suffering from linguistic and sensory handicaps were first developed, that Binet's individual tests were revised and adapted, and that (when it was decided in 1917 to test the whole American Army) the group test was introduced. The method of calculating the I.Q. (as the ratio of mental age to chronological age) originated with Stern in Germany. In England, Burt working largely on his own lines, evolved tests and scales.

² As soon as it was discovered that test results showed a gradation in terms of social class it became important to prove that "intelligence" was mainly innate. The arguments used to prove this point were frequently circular. For instance, it was assumed that if tests continued to place children in the same order of merit they were testing innate capacity; tests which did not oblige in this respect were discarded and the fact that the remainder showed constancy of I.Q. was quoted as proof that "intelligence" is hereditary. Now genetical techniques are illegally imported.

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Woodrow as a "capacity to acquire capacity," Terman as the power of "abstract thinking." Others gave alternative, complex and altogether varying definitions, or refused to make any attempt. Dearborn, from the materialist angle, insisted on a single definition, "the capacity to profit from experience."

The most obvious point about all these definitions is their shuffling off of the real problems involved, by definition, to another plane. In addition, as Spearman later noted, no one brought—

"any factual evidence that intelligence as defined by them does really accrue in any particular performance, or constitutes the actual basis of any particular estimates, or is veritably measured by any particular tests."

It was obviously time to put a stop to this anarchy, and, profiting from the disorganisation and weaknesses of the various "empirical" schools, Spearman made a bid to draw mental testing into the scholastic fold. In order to give the word "intelligence" some meaning, he argued, we must set forth all possible kinds of cognitive performance in a comprehensive system. Instead of trying to "explain the nature of mind by the necessities of living, we should derive, rather, the capacity to live from the nature of mind, and therefore ascertain that nature independently."¹ He therefore set out to investigate the causal mechanisms of mind and the general laws they obey, justifying this course in modern terms by reference to the scientific theories which have been taken to demonstrate the eternal relativity of all human knowledge of the material world.

Having started from scholastic preconceptions, Spearman had no difficulty in arriving at scholastic conclusions.² But the method he employed was an adaptation of the statistical techniques initiated by Galton and developed by Karl Pearson, applied to the results of specially constructed tests. The statistical search for unit traits in "intelligent" behaviour involves in the first place the selection of a few of the enormous number of possible activities for testing, the

¹ *The Nature of Intelligence and the Principles of Cognition*, pp. 18-32.

² It is instructive to note the jubilation with which his efforts were greeted in the Catholic world. "He has justified in his brilliant modern way the main theses of scholastic psychology bearing on cognition, and has respectfully acknowledged the great value of scholasticism," wrote the *Tablet* (June, 1923). "He has trenchantly criticised many shallow but popular modern psychological doctrines, while generously acknowledging the splendid value of modern research work. In fine, with infinite skill and tact he has raised to the lips of the gracious and venerable Dame Psychology a phial of living water, that she may quaff it and renew her youth."

establishment of constant interrelationships, and finally the interpretation of results. Spearman's selection was essentially limited by his mentalist approach, and his interpretation relied mainly on introspective techniques. In analysing his results he inferred from the presence of a regular correspondence between a number of different measurements the existence of a "hypothetical general and purely quantitative factor underlying all cognitive performances of any kind." This he called "g"; this statistical "g," he claimed, corresponded to the power to educe relations and correlates. The net result, therefore, is the re-enthronement in modern garb of pure reason, the logical faculty, or whatever else you choose to call it, as the arbiter of man's destiny under God.¹

Burt arrived at a similar conclusion—that tests involving "higher mental processes" such as reasoning vary most closely with "intelligence"—by a more empirical route; but the point of departure of his investigations was comparison of the results of tests with teachers' estimates of "intelligence" (based partly on their empirical judgement and partly on examination results) so that he grounded "intelligence" in the context of present day schooling. As a result of work of this kind "intelligence" testing was placed on a more respectable level, and directed to finding an index of general and specific mental abilities and the degree to which these are determined by heredity or environment.

But the old scholastic question remained in a new form. Spearman had solved nothing, for many rejected his premises, others his techniques. The question now was, Is there a single general factor which operates in conjunction with another special factor specifically relating to the particular activity undertaken (as Spearman postulated in his Two Factor Theory), or are there a number of group and single factors involved? The search for factors of the mind was on, and, encouraged by the belief that they were at last using really scientific procedures and language, psychologists set about isolating statistically a whole series of factors—verbal, arithmetical, mechanical, retentivity, perseveration, oscillation of attention, besides the overriding one of "intelligence"—in an attempt to reach an inventory of the abilities of man. Now chaos has broken out at this new level; as many different theories about

¹ Spearman was, of course, very careful not to make any such claims and to eschew the old formal categories. He was not himself responsible for spreading the idea that tests designed mainly to isolate "g" were superior to others. Nor was he directly responsible for the immediate confusion between "general intelligence" as sought by Binet and his own factor. But that confusion has obviously arisen.

the nature of factors being available as were offered to explain "intelligence," and as many disagreements arising as to the appropriate statistical methods.

The word factor is a neutral positivistic word which can be used by materialist or idealist with equal ease. It may cover the indirect expression of physiological peculiarities, it may have something to do with God. Spearman could be said to hold that factors are a causative agency of some kind (his school now suggests that a few fundamental factors "account for, explain, or are the cause of, all human conduct"). Others treat factors as synonymous with abilities, or call them "unitary traits of personality" or "the fundamental dimensions of mind." But, complains Burt, echoing Spearman's former criticism:

"Few, if any, explain why some factors are 'meaningful' and others merely 'statistical,' what makes one ability more 'fundamental' or more 'elementary' than the other, how to distinguish 'true psychological factors' from the rest, or the 'causal' from the merely 'descriptive.'"¹

And it is now Burt who offers a way out of the chaos, or rather a doctrine of resignation. Why, he asks, should not our factors have the same kind of existence—or non-existence—as is allowed to physical forms of energy? And so the "empirical" psychologist follows the "philosopher" scientist from the logical world of determinism into that twilight world where there is no subject and no object and, therefore, no relations between them; where there is no necessity and no causality, only phenomena. This is the logical end of a system built on false foundations, a retreat from any aspiration to know the individual and his processes at all.

For this positivist standpoint is the foundation of Burt's whole subsequent argument. He now proves that factors have no concrete existence, still less any effective causal powers. He reminds his readers that causality is, in any case, an out-of-date notion; it was successfully "extruded" from physical science by Mach and Karl Pearson; and he later throws in Eddington and Bertrand Russell for good measure. To those who are anxious for the fate of postulates of inductive inference in the absence of causality, he advises² the appropriate postulates of Keynes (*A Treatise on Probability*). The theory of knowledge to which Burt has been led by a lifetime

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 210-11.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 216-22.

of psychological research is that "the only articulate or communicable knowledge that we can attain is a knowledge of structure." It is at this point only, that is when it has already been "transcended," that we are introduced to that obstinate problem of being and consciousness, matter and mind. For, Burt adds—

"if this position be accepted the relation of matter and mind would lose much of its mystery, for we should no longer be concerned with the interactions of disparate substances but with the correspondence of abstract structures."¹

In psychology, therefore, as in other realms of bourgeois thought, theories revolve within the limits set by capitalist social relations—within a constricted circle, unbreakable unless the capitalist mode of production itself is breakable. Psychological theories, therefore, reflect the contradictions of capitalist society, not the contradictions of objective actuality, and the methods of investigation and field of investigation are correspondingly limited. Instead of tracing the unified process whereby the impact of reality on the human individual gives rise to a process of conscious activity and thought—which in turn produces both a different individual and a different set of circumstances—bourgeois psychology is narrowly limited to investigating the mechanisms set in motion by the impact of the mind on the given environment and vice versa. And it is on the way to concentrating on these phenomena alone, not because, as in physical science, great experimental advances have been made which have exploded the old mechanist views, but because, in the methods forced on it by bourgeois practice, psychology has forsaken objective enquiry and experiment and seeks a justification.

IV

Because he accepts the category of "intelligence" McPherson is unable to break out of the vicious circle in which bourgeois psychology is imprisoned, and can only take sides in the endless and futile argument on the relative importance of heredity and environment in forming it. As a result, caught up in the toils of bourgeois theory, he follows up his re-definition of "intelligence" with a *defence* of "intelligence" testing based on an idealist interpretation of experience, and he vindicates the use of tests in the schools. He is aided on this downward path by the fact that he entirely omits to

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

consider the social origin and uses of testing in capitalist society, and the objective results of testing.

Tests are now mainly used to separate off at a fixed age a fixed percentage of children for grammar school education. Because selection must be on a mass scale group tests are used which are entirely verbal and usually arranged in certain formal categories, corresponding to types of intellectual operation. These tasks are supposedly divested of all emotional significance, interest or point, framed to demand a denuded "pure" intellectual response.¹ At the applied level all the controversial questions are ironed out into a simple system of beliefs. It is just assumed that there is a general factor corresponding to "intelligence" that can be tested, that the "intelligence" so tested is inherent and distinct from acquired knowledge, and that predictions based on it are certain. It is in this guise, at any rate, that "intelligence" testing has been sold to educationists.

When tests are specifically constructed to differentiate children in terms of grammar school education, the form and content of this type of education is tacitly taken as given (tests anyway were originally grounded in this context). If there is room for only 15 per cent. of an age group in grammar schools the tests can be so constructed that the raw marks are "skewed," i.e. so that the top pupils are stretched out on the scale, the remainder being bunched closely around the average. This makes it easier, in selecting the top 15 per cent. to draw the line at the requisite point. It does not prevent the results being used to justify the existence of the grammar school, and of places in precisely that proportion. The more the "intelligence" test is used to this end the less objective it becomes. The traditional forms of education as well as the bourgeois attitude to knowledge are buttressed by the "intelligence" test; the "intelligence" test is inextricably identified with maintenance of the social and ideological *status quo*.

To-day, while testing gives way to more testing and all manner of reactionary educational theories are upheld, real educational reform sinks into the background. Education is overshadowed by psychological theories and cannot develop as a science. Teaching becomes

¹ For instance, following directions ("Write the letter which is the fifth letter to the left of the letter which is midway between K and O"); opposites; rearranging mixed sentences; paraphrasing proverbs; manipulating numbers; analogies ("education is to revolution as crawl is to?"); similarities; mazes; story completion; memory. See J. L. Gray, *The Nation's Intelligence*, pp. 26-34. For discussion of the method of constructing tests, see B. Simon, "The Theory and Practice of Intelligence Testing," *Communist Review*, October, 1949.

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something like a conditioned reflex; faced with a certain concentration of I.Qs. the teacher automatically delivers the requisite lesson. The separation of children into types of school, with different types of education adjusted to their I.Q. level, is not only the negation of education but also restricts the field of psychological enquiry anew. This position is becoming clearer, and teachers, administrators and educationists are already showing signs of revolt.

The very scale on which tests are now used is calculated to show up the fallacy at the root of the whole system. Because the tests retain only the forms commonly believed to cloak "intelligence" without any content at all, they are not even good tests from the point of view of bourgeois schooling—particularly now that the fight against formalism in education has achieved some results. They turn out to be about as faulty a prognostic instrument as the old formal examination. The psychologist, nothing daunted, now advances tests of "character" and "temperament" to supplement them. But the question obviously arises—Why go to all this trouble? Why take the individual apart in accordance with certain preconceived notions, abstract his reactions from all meaningful relations, and then add them up into a composite psychological picture? The functioning, living whole is there to be investigated; surely it would be safer to start with the real thing? The psychologist would then be spared the odd theories he now has to propound to explain how his psychological machine works; he might even discover the only thing teachers want to know—how real children really learn.

There is only one answer to these questions on the practical plane: that the whole technique of testing in the educational field has been evolved to classify children at an early age. The only intelligent course, therefore, is to abolish selection and testing together, and give every child the maximum opportunity for healthy all-sided development. Then psychology will have a free field of investigation and the opportunity for scientific study of child development, and education too will be free to develop as a science.

"Intelligence" testing must, therefore, be consistently criticised and exposed in its theory, its practice and on its results. It is impossible to separate out these aspects. It is clear that progress towards a fuller understanding of human nature can only be impeded by attempts to "reach a fuller understanding of intelligence"; one might as well try to understand the laws of development of

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society by way of study of the bourgeois theory of the State. It is equally clear that the practice of testing perpetuates a bourgeois concept of "intelligence" reflecting bourgeois supremacy and practice and so lauding the middle class. The objective result of testing is, therefore, to uphold and perpetuate class inequalities, and to spread reactionary views of "human nature" which vitiate educational theory, undermine educational effort and dehumanise the educational process. Because it is unscientific mental testing is socially reactionary; because it is socially reactionary it perpetuates the conditions which have led to its downfall. Psychology, of all studies, can least afford to be socially neutral if it aspires to be a science.

Problems of Soviet Musical Theory

BY ALAN BUSH

SOVIET musical theory is Marxism applied to the practice of music in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx touched upon the relation of art to the foundations of society when he spoke of the "legal, political, religious, æsthetic, or philosophic—in short, ideological—forms in which men become conscious of this conflict (between the material forces of production and the property relations within which they have been at work) and fight it out." Thus Marx regarded art as an expression of the class struggle.

In another passage he pointed out that when socialism was first being established, it would necessarily be created from out of some particular stage of the development of capitalism, it would bear the "birthmarks of capitalism." In other words the men and women who were building socialism would carry with them to some extent the ideological prejudices of a capitalistic upbringing. Especially is this likely to be the case among intellectuals, because their sphere of work is furthest removed from the economic foundation of society.

Marxism was first developed further in the field of æsthetics by Plekhanov, who wrote in his *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*:

"In primitive society, where class divisions do not yet exist, productive activity has a direct influence upon the conception of the universe and upon æsthetic taste. . . . When we are concerned with a society divided into classes, the direct influence of economic activity upon ideology is far less obvious. . . . If we want to understand a dance performed by the Australian aborigines, it suffices that we should know what part is played by the women of the tribe in collecting the roots of wild plants. But a knowledge of the economic life of 18th Century France will not explain to us the origin of the minuet. In the latter case we have to do with a dance which is an expression of the psychology of an unproductive class."

These observations of Plekhanov are important; they point out that in all societies art is *ultimately* based upon the economic

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structure of society, but that the degree of closeness of its relationship to the economic structure varies with the form of society, and especially with the profound difference between class society and a society without classes.

Before the October Revolution, in the very midst of the Revolution of 1905, Lenin, attacking the bourgeois theory of art being above society and developing in a world of its own, wrote:

"It is impossible to live in society and remain free of it. The freedom of the bourgeois artist, writer, or actress is simply secret or hypocritically disguised dependence on the money bag, on bribery, on maintenance. Non-partisanship in bourgeois society is merely a hypocritical, disguised, passive expression of adherence to the party of the sated, the party of those who dominate, the party of the exploiters." ("Party Organisation and Party Literature.")

Lenin regarded history and with it the history of art as a process of constant, irreconcilable struggle between the old and the new. As far back as 1894 he had written:

"Historical materialism includes, so to speak, partisanship, which enjoins the direct and open adoption of the standpoint of a definite social group in any judgment of events." ("Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of it in Mr. Struve's book.")

Lenin developed these fundamental ideas of Marxism as far as the practice of art in socialist society was concerned after the October Revolution. In a conversation with Klara Zetkin, he said:

"In a society based on private property the artist produces for the market, he needs customers. Our revolution has freed the artists from the oppression of these all too prosaic conditions. It has made the Soviet State their protector and customer. . . . But, of course, we are Communists. We must not stand with folded arms and let chaos develop as it will. We must guide this process, following a quite definite plan, and mould its results. It is not *our* opinion of art that matters, nor the feeling that art arouses in several hundred or even thousands among a population of millions. Art belongs to the people. Its deepest roots must lie

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among the very thick of the working masses. It must be such that these masses will understand and love it. It must voice the feelings, thoughts and will of these masses, must uplift them. It must awaken the artists in the masses, and serve to develop them."

The present controversy in the Soviet musical world started with the publication of a document described as the "Decision of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U(B.) of February 10th, 1948, on the opera *The Great Friendship*, by V. Muradeli." Making a number of criticisms of this particular opera, the decision points out that "the failure of Muradeli's opera is not an isolated instance, but is closely connected with the unsatisfactory state of contemporary Soviet music, with the spread of the formalistic trend among Soviet composers." Further on in the document it is stated that "many Soviet composers have, in their mistaken pursuit of novelty, divorced their music from the needs and artistic taste of the Soviet people, formed an esoteric circle of connoisseurs and musical gourmards, lowered the high social role of music and restricted its significance, confining it to satisfaction of the spoiled tastes of individualistic would-be aesthetes."

It is evident that this "Decision" carries forward the ideas expressed by Lenin in the foregoing paragraph.

But Lenin also warned against a primitive interpretation of these ideas. Dealing with literature, but in a way which could apply equally to music, he wrote:

"It goes without saying that literary activity is least of all subject to mechanical equalization or levelling, to the domination of a majority over a minority. It goes without saying that in this sphere it is absolutely necessary to ensure larger scope for personal initiative and individual inclinations, full play for thought and imagination, form and content. All this goes without saying. But all this only proves that the literary part of the Party cause of the proletariat cannot be mechanically identified with other parts of the Party cause of the proletariat." ("Party Organisation and Party Literature.")

To some people it may appear that the terms of the criticism of the "Decision" go beyond what Lenin considers correct, that they in fact do make the Soviet composers "subject to the domination

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of a majority," and do not "ensure larger scope for personal initiative and individual inclinations." Such objections have at their root objection to any criticism at all. They resent the "Decision" because it is an indication that the C.C. are not "standing with folded arms and letting chaos develop," but that they are "guiding the process." It must be realised that Lenin is here comparing artistic activity with other forms of Party activity, education, etc. He is careful to explain that "artistic activity is least of all subject to such domination," *not that it may remain outside any criticism*. It is here, therefore, a question of degree.

Let us turn now to a consideration of why the Central Committee at this particular moment ceased to stand with folded arms, but turned its concentrated attention upon the situation in the Soviet musical world. The discussions and conferences inaugurated by the publication of the "Decision" disclosed a number of facts of great significance. It became apparent that the whole organisation of Soviet music and its criticism, the award of the valuable Stalin Prizes, the possibilities of publication and performance, had gradually got into the hands of a small group of composers, together with those writers on music, who were their admirers. This group is headed by the composers named in the "Decision" as those "whose work most strikingly illustrates the formalistic distortions and anti-democratic tendencies in music, which are alien to the Soviet people and their artistic tastes." These composers are Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Shebalin, Popov and Miaskovsky.

It is a very significant fact that with the exception of Khachaturian these composers all belong to the eclectic school of Russian musical development, the school of Glazounov, Scriabin, and Maximilian Steinberg, rather than that of the Big Five, whose last representative was Rimsky-Korsakov. The case of Khachaturian is different; he started as a composer with strong national Georgian and Armenian elements, from which, however, it appears, his latest work had shown an unexpected departure.

The discussions brought out the fact that the articles in the musical journals and the musical articles elsewhere were never critical of anything produced by these composers, and at the same time ignored to a great extent the compositions of others, including the very important musical developments in the Autonomous Republics. Successful operas by composers in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan were sometimes ignored and such composers were seldom by any chance considered for Stalin Prizes.

Of course, this situation would not have been so serious had the composers in question achieved really outstanding successes with the Soviet musical public. But this was not the case. Since the victory over fascism, the public had shown signs of decreasing interest in concerts where the works of such composers were performed. Operas by Soviet composers aroused little interest; indeed the general public began to display the same indifference or even hostility to present-day music which the public of Western Europe and the U.S.A. shows to its contemporary composers, though not to the same degree. This was a new phenomenon in the Soviet Union. And it is evident that such indifference or hostility could not have been due, either to the influence of critics (since the critics whose articles appeared were always favourable to the works of the composers now mentioned in the "Decision"), or to a general feeling of hostility towards living composers, since the public in the U.S.S.R. is in general biased in favour of its own composers, as it is towards all contributors to the development of socialism in its own country or elsewhere; hence a Soviet audience is likely to accept a new work, whether it is fully appreciated at first or not, provided that it does not actually repel.

The composers themselves remained seemingly unaware or indeed tolerant of this situation; and one more symptom of aloofness and superiority on their part showed itself. There had been two important celebrations since the actual victory, the 600th Anniversary of the foundation of Moscow, and the 30th Anniversary of the October Revolution. The people of the Soviet Union had celebrated both these events by renewed efforts at the rebuilding of their shattered country, by reaching new records in all domains of achievement. But for the Moscow celebrations the composers created nothing, apart from a few perfunctory popular songs. For the 30th Anniversary, Shostakovich turned out a pot-pourri of Soviet popular songs, which made an unfavourable impression of lack of interest on his part. The remainder did nothing at all.

On the other hand, composers not belonging to this group had little or no opportunity to reach the public, either through getting their works published or by means of performances. There appears to have been excessive centralisation in the organisation of the orchestras. Provincial towns were sacrificed to the demands of Moscow and Leningrad, whose musical life was again subordinated to the influence of the one particular group.

The "Decision" has led to a drastic alteration in this state of

affairs. It has analysed the reasons for the unpopularity of the works of these composers with the general public, and taken steps to end the monopoly of control enjoyed by them and their admirers among the critics.

Not many people will be inclined to question the reasonableness of these measures. But there will still be many who will find the terminology of the "Decision" peculiar, and the attack on the so-called "formalistic tendencies" of these composers unwarrantable. The "Decision" states that the tendency of their music "renounces vital principles of musical composition such as melody, and prefers confused, neuropathological combinations that turn music into cacophony, into a chaotic conglomeration of sounds. This music distinctly smacks of contemporary modernistic bourgeois music in Europe and America, which expresses the decay of bourgeois culture, the total negation of musical art, its impasse."

To a person unacquainted with historical materialism, the very idea that it is meaningful to speak of such a thing as bourgeois music seems foreign and even absurd. To a serious student of this philosophy, however, it is not only senseful to speak of bourgeois music, but also certain that such a thing exists. The history of art since class society superseded tribal communism has been the history of the art of classes within society. In recent times the bourgeoisie has been the ruling class. The ruling art of that period has been their art, the art which expressed different aspects of their psychology, whose function it was, to quote from our own Marxist theoretician of art, Christopher Caudwell, "to adapt the individual to the necessities of social co-operation," in this particular case to co-operation within the framework of bourgeois society. A ruling class has its art both in its progressive time and in its decay. Bourgeois civilisation is now in its last stages. Hence it is not only possible but certain that there is such a thing as the art "which expresses the decay of bourgeois culture."

What will be the characteristics of such an art? Caudwell has explained this as follows. "The bourgeois illusion regarding freedom (of which art is a mode), counterposes freedom and individualism to determinism and society; it overlooks the fact that society is the instrument whereby man, the unfree individual, in association realises his freedom." From this it follows that the art of the bourgeoisie in decay is the art of the extremist individualism, in which the freedom of the individual is believed mistakenly to lie in the deepest layers of his subconsciousness, in precisely those

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emotions least socially adapted, and therefore least inhibited by the necessities of social co-operation. But if, as Caudwell maintains (and as historical materialism makes evident) the function of art is to adapt the individual to the necessities of social co-operation, such an art as that of bourgeois civilisation in decay is therefore the negation of art, precisely the term used in the "Decision" of the Central Committee above quoted. (I hope no one will raise the objection that modern music is peculiarly repellent to the directors of capitalist monopolies, who prefer Noel Coward; and that therefore atonal music must be revolutionary in a social sense. Of course, the majority of the bourgeoisie are complete philistines, but those few who are interested in art favour—as far as the art of to-day is concerned—this individualistic variety.)

Even so the accusations of "formalism" may seem to run counter to the warning by Lenin quoted above to the effect that artistic activity "is least of all subject to mechanical equalisation, to the domination of the majority over the minority."

At this point opinions may differ. Some people may consider that in particular instances the accusation of formalism which smacks of decadent bourgeois music is unjustified or exaggerated. What is meant by formalism? It is in fact used by different people in various senses. Khachaturian was accused of formalism, when, in a Symphonic Ode, he had scored one passage for twenty-four trumpets playing in unison. A more usual term would be "bad taste." The eight harps and four pianos in Prokofiev's *Ode to the End of the War* were similarly criticised. No doubt both these two examples are cases of composers excessively concerned with effects of colour—or, if you prefer it, noise—rather than musical substance. Of course, colour and dynamics are both essential ingredients of music. But it is a characteristic of formalism that it stresses some one or other ingredient of music at the expense or to the exclusion of the other ingredients. Thus the excessively percussive music of some American composers, such as Ornstein and Cowell, would come into this category. This tendency to a lack of balance comes, it is believed, by losing sight of the true function of the particular work during the process of composing it, when the technical considerations, when the various musical ingredients are allowed to work out their developments, uncontrolled by the directing consciousness of the composer, who, as a human being living in the U.S.S.R. in a socialist society, must never lose sight of the function of his music, nor lose touch with the public, who

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are together with him building up a new way of life which shall irradiate humanity as a whole. Soviet composers must search for new ways of expression. Such new ways are absolutely necessary if socialist realism is to be expressed in art, but they must be sought for in the U.S.S.R. as a development out of the classical traditions of music of that country, retaining what is essential and developing new ways of treating this. For this reason stress is particularly laid on the traditions of the Russian classics as far as Russian composers are concerned. In general a national artistic consciousness is believed to be essential. What is called homeless cosmopolitanism leads a composer inevitably into eclecticism. Apart from the Russian Classics, the characteristics of folk-music, which in the U.S.S.R. is still very much alive, are stressed as very important. The study of folk-music should, it is considered, be widespread in the music conservatoires, whereas up to now it has been the subject of especial departments only. In this way again national characteristics, which are the heritage of the people for whom the Soviet composers are writing, will bring the new music nearer to the hearts of the Soviet people. Instead of this the composers prone to formalism attempt to derive the new elements in their music from the latest productions of Western European and American music. This introduces a two-fold eclecticism of style: it is contrary to national tradition, and contains forms of expression characteristic of decadent bourgeois music and therefore least likely to serve as suitable ingredients in the art of socialist realism.

Of course, when such criticisms are made and such organisational changes brought about as has happened in the U.S.S.R. since the beginning of 1948, certain possibilities arise. Disgruntled and second-rate composers may try to take advantage. Leading personalities, whose talents entitle them to positions of prestige, are excessively attacked by those whom they have previously ignored or derided. But the Report of the Plenum of the Union of Soviet Composers, held from December 21st to 29th, 1948, some ten months only after the publication of the "Decision," bears witness to the remarkable vitality of the Soviet musical world. During these nine days at a series of concerts 150 compositions were performed, all composed or completed during those intervening ten months, each by a different composer and including thirty major works.

The programmes included works by all the so-called formalist group except Prokofiev, whose opera had previously been produced.

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Miaskovsky produced a new symphony, Shostakovich was represented by film music, Khachaturian by a Symphonic Dithyramb to the memory of Lenin, Shebalin by a String quartet, etc.

In his speech at the closing session Khrennikov, the present General Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers, was applauded when he spoke a word of praise for Muradeli, whose opera, *The Great Friendship*, had first evoked the "Decision." He stated that it was—

"necessary to organise mass concerts and mass discussion in order to sound the opinion of the people. We end this conference enriched by a great experience, conscious of the responsibility which lies in the immense work before us. We must preserve that unity and friendship which became so apparent during the conference. In all our activities we must develop the spirit of self-criticism which is the mighty prime mover of progress in all aspects of our life. And above all we must strive and struggle for partisanship in our art, because only a partisan art can be a powerful lever in the education of our people in the spirit of communism, and because only a partisan art can correctly reflect the Leninist-Stalinist epoch in all its greatness."

When faced with such monumental achievements as the totality of Soviet musical life, of which the organisation of this Plenum was merely a detail, though a very important one for the immediate future, it seems a little foolish to deride the Central Committee for presuming to venture into the field of music. Only the organisation of Soviet life in general can provide the tremendous surplus product out of which such a vast expenditure on the arts is possible. The Central Committee is the democratically elected executive of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, under whose leadership the development of socialism, the fight against fascism, and the reconstruction of the post-war period have all been triumphantly accomplished.

The Central Committee does not claim infallibility on all matters of musical development (any more than they claim to know the truth regarding every detail of natural processes); but they were obliged to act in the musical sphere—or stand with folded arms and let chaos develop—and they acted therefore (as they would do in all other spheres) upon what they knew, though it could not be the totality of possible knowledge of the subject. In their actions

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they were guided, as in all other spheres, by the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism.

At the Conference which preceded the publication of the "Decision," Zhdanov, the representative of the Central Committee in this controversy, spoke as follows: "At the present time Soviet composers have two responsible tasks: the main task is to develop and improve Soviet music, the second task is to protect Soviet music from the penetration of elements of bourgeois decay. Comrades, we want, we desire passionately, to have our own powerful school, we want it to be both more numerous and stronger than that which once amazed the world with its talents and covered our people with glory. . . . If you use to the full our classical musical heritage and at the same time develop it in the spirit of the new demands of our epoch you will develop into a mighty Soviet school."

In what country among the Western Democracies do the trusted representatives of the people speak in such terms to their composers? Here any idea that music has a high social role is treated with contempt or even disapproval. Writing about *The Olympians*, the new opera by Arthur Bliss to a libretto by J. B. Priestley, recently produced for the first time at Covent Garden, Ernest Newman said the following: "*Mr. Priestley's text is a first-rate one. . . . As I see the matter he began with two excellent themes, each of which, had he so willed it, might have been self-complete and self-sufficing. The legend of the gods of Greece having sunk to the status of a troupe of shabby, strolling players, but becoming their ancient selves again for one night in a hundred years or so, is a theme in itself, and a great theme. . . .*"

Mr. Ernest Newman no doubt likes to see the Greek gods, once the personification of the forces of Greek society, as it developed from tribal communism to the democratic City State of Athens, made trivial. Such ignorant Philistinism is characteristic of our decadent society. The jibes of such petty Philistines against the social developments of music in the U.S.S.R. and the New Democracies are not of much account.

Where are we in Britain to look for great themes? Is there a high social role of music here in our decadent bourgeois society? Yes, there is, if we embrace partisanship in our art, and place it at the service of those who are partisans in the glorious struggle of mankind for the new world of true freedom, which socialism and communism will secure to all.

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BY STANLEY EVANS

IT should now be clear to all that the tendency of the modern world is towards certain quite clearly marked forms of social change. The drive to national independence in the East (and indeed nearer home as in Greece) is clear. National independence, however, is not an end in itself. The end to which the modern community is increasingly driven, an end which is yet only a beginning, is that of socialism.

There is probably no country in the world to-day in which there is not either a victorious or a nascent socialist movement. Necessarily, therefore, the world is preoccupied with a struggle against socialism and the world of ideas is preoccupied with a debate for and against socialism.

This is the environment in which the modern Christian churches have to live and function and think. It is, therefore, impossible for them to escape from confronting socialism at some point.

The debate within the modern churches is not new. It has been waged violently since before the revolutions of 1848 and the *Communist Manifesto*. The papal stand was made clear in 1846 by the so-called "liberal Pope" Pius IX, who, in an encyclical of November 9th condemned (among a list of other bodies which included societies that distributed Bibles in the vulgar tongue), "that abominable doctrine, so diametrically opposed to the law of nature itself, which they denominate communism, which once admitted and recognised would overthrow every species of law, and right and property, and destroy the very foundations of human society."

The papal line on the subject has never changed. From that day to this communism has been the main enemy and encyclical after encyclical has pilloried the foe and endeavoured to lead the church in an alternative course. The famous encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) condemned all forms of socialism on the grounds that private property was rooted in nature (no distinction being made between property for use and property for profit). " 'Religious socialism,' " they said, " 'Christian socialism' are expressions implying a contradiction in terms. No one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true Socialist."

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The significance of this remark needs to be appreciated. Just as 1848 was roughly the beginning of modern Christian anti-communism, it was also roughly the beginning of modern Christian socialism,¹ a movement perhaps most marked in the Church of England but one, nevertheless, which infected all the churches.

The tradition was certainly there within the Roman Church. The Abbé Mably² had taught that most of the evils of society sprang from the unequal distribution of property which was contrary to natural law. Natural inequalities in strength and intelligence, he taught, were not sufficient arguments to prove the necessity of the economic inequalities existing in human society. At a later date the Benedictine Deschamps held that the principles of sound Christian morality ought to aim at the community of goods. It was in this tradition that a number of priests were involved in a rising in Italy in 1877, while in France and Germany others were associating with the revolutionary movement.

In England the Christian Socialist movement and its work is well known. Under the leadership of Kingsley and Maurice, it infuriated the church leaders and never quite satisfied the working-class leaders. As the century wore on, however, its effects on the church were deep and it is a reflection of its influence that the Lambeth Conference of 1920 felt compelled to state:

"We cannot claim a good record with regard to labour questions. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution only a minority of the members of our church have insisted on the social application of the Gospel. . . . The question is not whether labour is friendly to the Church, or whether we can attract labour men to the Church, but whether the ideals of labour are sound and its claims just. . . . The purpose of the labour movement, at its best, is to secure fullness of life, the opportunity of a complete development of their manhood and womanhood for those who labour; it seeks to furnish a better world for people to live in. . . . The labour movement can help the Church by bringing us in touch with actualities, and increasing our discontent with mere pious aspirations."

¹ It was in 1848 that the Christian Socialist group of Maurice, Kingsley and Ludlow came into being.

² See his *De La Legislation oue des Principes des Lois*, Amsterdam, 1776.

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They went on to say that "industrial and social conditions in different parts of Africa and the East, including the exploitation of coloured labour and the labour of children, deliver a clear challenge to our Christian civilisation."

But while these words were being uttered the Russian Revolution was fighting its way to victory against forces armed and supported by the very men who had put most of the Lambeth Bishops into office. The success of the Revolution did much to check the fervent ecclesiastical support of the labour movement outside Russia. Inside the country it administered a tremendous shock to an Orthodox Church which had been a prop to the Tsarist tyranny. With no Tsar to support it, the Orthodox Church first opposed the Revolution, then as the result of a long internal struggle, came out in its support, and then split. It took twenty years to produce the situation which was disclosed in 1941 of a church wholly supporting the Soviet régime.

In these years the social ferment in other churches had been bedevilled by a skilfully contrived campaign about "religious persecution" in the Soviet Union. In the pages of the sensational press Russian Bishops were murdered not once, but many times, before they eventually arrived in Paris. The campaign succeeded to a considerable degree. Nevertheless, as the years passed, the real impact of communism and its challenge to the churches became more and more felt and led to a considerable debate, which was shown in England by the production of such works as *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, and those of Needham and MacMurray, and which produced a growing social agitation within the churches.

As the churches were engulfed in the second World War they had behind them a considerable experience of fascism. The Vatican had had its own difficulties in Mussolini's Italy, the "Church struggle" in Germany had had a pronounced influence throughout the world, while General Franco and his episcopal supporters had signally failed to convince the world that they were crusading for Christianity.

The alternative to fascism was more difficult to see. Was not the Soviet Union atheist? It was a whole world of confusion that was reflected in the religious press in the weeks following June 22nd, 1941.

The *Church Times* wrote:

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"Christians are bound to claim the precedent of Mr. Churchill's speech for stating that no word that they have spoken about atheistic and materialistic communism shall be unsaid. The blood of thousands of martyrs can only be washed out by deep and bitter sacrifice. On the other hand, again following Mr. Churchill, Christians, who are themselves in arms against the most cynically immoral power in history, cannot refuse either to aid or be aided by whatever other nation or government is actively opposed to Nazidom. So far as we understand the matter Great Britain and Russia are not allies but associated in a common undertaking. The distinction is important."

The *British Weekly*, one of the leading Free Church papers, was frankly bewildered, and wrote:

"The only way to think about the new relationship into which Russia and we are now entered and are pledged to maintain until we are all free to live again—the only way to think about this new relationship is, in the meanwhile, not to think about it at all."

The *Christian News Letter* echoed a more widely held opinion. It wrote:

"Public opinion has endorsed the Prime Minister's statement that everyone who fights against the Nazi's unprecedented claim to unlimited power is our ally. It is none the less true that the participation of Russia brings a new confusion into the issues of the war. Between the Nazi creed and the European tradition of which the Allies are the professed champions, the gulf is plain. But Russian Communism, while it presents a moral challenge to the democracies in respect of the unjust social privileges which persist in them, has at the same time revealed features hardly distinguishable from the merciless and inhuman tyranny of Nazism and openly repudiates the religious source and sanction of the best Western civilisation. There are opportunities as well as dangers in this new political alignment."

The Roman Catholic *Sword of the Spirit* was even more coldly calculating:

"It cannot be repeated too often that Hitler's attack on Russia has nothing to do with Communism. It is not the doctrine

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of Marx but the tanks, guns and aircraft that Hitler is out to smash. . . . There are two great danger points. On the one hand, some sections in this country are ready to use Communism in order, as they say, to destroy Hitler's hold in Europe. They are willing to encourage and, where possible, directly help, Communist groups in different countries. Now it is arguable that it is important to encourage any group that will, in the purely technical sense, do sabotage and throw spanners in the works and put sugar in the petrol tanks, and so forth, but to encourage Communism, to appeal to Communist sentiments, to further the spread of Communism, is a fatal as well as a dishonest policy. The stronger Communism becomes during the war, the more difficult it will be to restore a decent order in keeping with the European tradition. . . . The other great danger is that at the end of the war, Britain will only make a show of restoring peace to Europe and will retire into isolationism. . . . The peoples of Europe most emphatically do not want Russia to make the peace."

It was vacillations, misgivings, and deliberate calculations of this kind that paved the way for the sinister side of church activity in Europe—collaboration. On the other hand, despite all the prophecies, the Soviet churches stood boldly by their people and government and, by so doing, paved the way for a new rapprochement between church and state. The effect of these two courses was felt in England and it was to guide his wavering forces that the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote in his *Diocesan Gazette*:

"There are many to whom any definite alliance with the Soviet Government brings not unnatural misgivings. It may seem strange to combine alliance with Bolshevik Russia with the claim that we are contending for a Christian civilisation. But such misgivings are really misplaced. For—

"(1) The first and essential aim of the whole widespread struggle is to overthrow the tyranny of evil embodied in the rulers of Germany, and all who are engaged in the cause must needs be our allies.

"(2) The victory of the Nazi power would destroy any kind of tolerable form of human government.

"(3) Russia is but the latest country suffering unprovoked attack by Nazi Germany. It is contending for the principles of

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national freedom and independence, for which the British Commonwealth and United States of America are standing.

"(4) It may well be that Russia's defence of its own land and the new unity this will bring may lead to a new tolerance of religion by the Soviet Government, and a new resurgence of the interests of religion, always deep-rooted in the heart of the Russian people. It is significant that at the outbreak of the war thousands flocked to the churches for prayer in Moscow and elsewhere.

"We must, therefore, wish every success to the valiant Russian armies and people in their struggle and be ready to give them every possible help."

Addressing his Diocesan Conference a few weeks later a new note crept in:

"In view of the mighty issues at stake, we must now think not of the past, but of the present and the future.

"We are now concerned not with any party or economic system but with the new and most moving uprising of the whole Russian people, of the same spirit of passionate devotion to their land and to its independence which once broke the hitherto all-conquering power of the great Napoleon. . . . It is our battle as well as their own they are fighting—the battle of all nations still free and of all nations now enslaved for the overthrow of an intolerable tyranny.

"Who can tell of what the effect might be upon the ordering of the post-war world of a closer relationship between, on the one hand, a new Russia, united by affliction and emancipated from the errors of the past and on the other, the British Commonwealth and the United States of America? *We have something to learn from Russia* in the bold and far-seeing planning of economic resources for the good of the whole community. They have something to learn from us in giving scope for the freedom and responsibility of human personality. I suppose it is upon a synthesis of the claim of the community with the full and free development of each person within it, that the hopes of the future must largely depend."

There were others also, apart from such stalwarts as the Dean of Canterbury, who saw the issue clearly.

The *British Weekly* wrote:

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"The sacred rights of the individual, irrespective of race, colour, or religion, are respected in this strange land, which is practising Christianity without accepting its theory."

Outstanding among the Anglicans was the Bishop of Chelmsford. In the course of a long article in the *Chelmsford Diocesan Chronicle* he said:

"No doubt many good Christian people have been shocked by things which have happened in Russia. So have I. I said so at the time and I have nothing to withdraw, but the behaviour of the so-called Christian nations in Europe has been an eye-opener. The conduct of Vichy France, Spain and Italy in particular has not been a very edifying example of Christianity in action. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is more religious to repudiate openly all religion than to manipulate it in the fashion of these nominally Christian nations. Such action approximates to the 'unpardonable sin.'

"I could shake hands with a non-praying Stalin, but I should beg to be excused from doing so with a Petain, Darlan, Mussolini or Weygand who can go happily to their Mass with dishonour and trickery in their hearts. A religion which allows a man to be dishonest and untruthful does not amount to much.

"I gather that a good many people in this country are afraid of the Soviet Union and what it stands for. It has been suggested that after the European tragedy has come to an end, Russia might be left as the 'residuary legatee' and proceed to force Communism on the world and the last state would be worse than a German victory.

"This is the kind of temper that Nazi propaganda seeks to foster, and it should be suspect on that ground alone. But there are other reasons for regarding it as a complete mistake.

"I do not think that history anywhere affords an example of a nation going to war for purely ideological reasons. . . . If a nation is happy and contented nothing is less likely than that it will go to war with its neighbours in order to elevate them to a similar state of happiness and contentment. Presumably Russia enjoys its present method of government. I should nevertheless find it impossible to believe that it would ever bother its head how the other nations governed themselves much less engage in war to

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force them to adopt a similar constitution. Why on earth should it?

"I darkly suspect that there lies in the minds of many people a deep fear of the results of all liberalising movements. Anything which looks like a challenge in a social order which sustains their privileges is regarded with horror and labelled at once as 'communism.' I can imagine nothing more calculated to foster communism than this delusion."

This catalogue could be continued indefinitely. It shows both the confusions and the considered stands of church spokesmen at a critical period of history. Out of such views there crystallised on the one hand religious collaboration with fascism and on the other hand the wide religious movement for rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. Between these groups however there was, and is, a "third force" which resembles, not only in its political expressions, but in the reality of its "independence," all similar movements in the field of politics. It crystallised around the movement known as "œcumenical" which brought into being in 1948 the World Council of Churches.

This movement was a fusion of two previous movements, "Faith and Order" and "Life and Work" which had laboured from the beginning of the century in the field of church reunion. They both represented the drive to unity produced by a world in which the ideological differences of the Protestant Reformation have ceased to have significance. Necessarily, however, contemporary struggles have affected the movement and a tendency has grown to use it as a rallying ground for the ecclesiastical opposition to the real challenge of our time—the challenge of socialism.

In the Amsterdam Conference of 1948 this trend was markedly there, although it did not appear in a simple form and it did not pass unchallenged. The message of the Assembly "to all who are willing to hear" assumed a lofty objectivity.

The world, it said, "is filled both with great hopes and also with disillusionment and despair. Some nations are rejoicing in new freedom and power, some are bitter because freedom is denied them, some are paralysed by division, and everywhere there is an undertone of fear. There are millions who are hungry, millions who have no homes, no country and no hope. Over all mankind hangs the peril of total war."

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To people in this condition the Assembly offered hope. It went so far as to say:

“We have to remind ourselves and all men that God has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble and meek. We have to learn afresh together to speak boldly in Christ’s name both to those in power and to the people, to oppose terror, cruelty and race discrimination, to stand by the outcast, the prisoner and the refugee.”

To speak, yes. But to what end? The Assembly had abundant opportunity to talk of “terror, cruelty and race discrimination” in Spain, Greece, China, South Africa, Indonesia and Malaya. It said not a word.

One of the Assembly’s Commissions took as its subject “The Church and the Disorder of Society.” It noted “a social crisis of unparalleled proportions.” It then urged Christians to—

“recognise the hand of God in the revolt of multitudes against injustice that gives communism much of its strength. They should seek to recapture for the Church the original Christian solidarity with the world’s distressed people, not to curb their aspirations towards justice, but on the contrary to go beyond them. . . . Christians who are beneficiaries of capitalism should try to see the world as it appears to many who know themselves excluded from its privileges and who see in communism a means of deliverance from poverty and insecurity. All should understand that the proclamation of racial equality by communists and their support of the cause of the colonial peoples makes a strong appeal to the population of Asia and Africa and to racial minorities elsewhere.”

From this we came naturally to a survey of what is wrong with communism. Objection is taken to:

1. “The communist promise of what amounts to a complete redemption of man in history.”
2. “The belief that a particular class, by virtue of its role as the bearer of a new order, is free from the vices and ambiguities that Christians believe to be characteristic of all human existence.”

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3. “The materialistic and deterministic teachings . . . are incompatible with belief in God, and with the Christian view of man as a person.”

4. “The ruthless methods of Communists in dealing with their opponents.”

5. “The demand of the party on its members for an exclusive and unqualified loyalty which belongs only to God. . . .”

This list makes it quite clear that it is a very difficult thing for churchmen to condemn communism on any recognisable moral grounds. The Pope has been more frank and has stated openly that his root objection to communism is that it seeks to abolish private property, which, he claims, is a God-given right. To a certain degree, at any rate, the pundits of the World Council are more farsighted. They can see that if this objection is made they will fail completely in their task of persuading well-disposed and honest people to join the anti-communist cause. So they look for more subtle objections and, in finding them, dispose on the one hand of many of their own supposed beliefs and on the other hand expose the inadequacy of their own philosophy to cope with the problems of the contemporary world.

Few have remarked the astonishing nature of the fact that Christians should object to “a complete redemption of man in history.” Away with the Kingdom of God on earth! Away with any Christian concern for the changing of society and man now! There must *not* be pie before we reach the sky!

From this the descent to straightforward misrepresentation (a reflection no doubt of the fact that the authors have not been redeemed within history) is easy. So we are asked to accept as a fact that communists believe that the working class is “free from the sins and ambiguities. . . .”

What utter rubbish! It obscures, of course, the important communist belief that the working class will eliminate many of the “sins” of society and, in doing so, will learn how to shed many of its own.

Marxism, again, is not determinist. It is a philosophy which rests on the supposition of constant creative activity by man. It is not simply but dialectically materialist, using this word in its philosophical sense which has nothing whatsoever in common with the vulgar sense from which the members of the Council failed to escape. The Marxist parties, in expecting loyalty from their

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members (no new thing in human affairs) are not asking a loyalty apart from loyalty to society but as an expression of loyalty to society and to man himself. Is the position of the World Council that loyalty to man is incompatible with loyalty to God?

There is truth in the suggestion that communists have been ruthless in dealing with opponents, but not so much truth as is sometimes supposed. The history of the civil war in Russia reveals all too many examples of a generosity to opponents that was ill-requited. The important issue here, however, is the moral one. Is ruthlessness (which presumably means severity) never right? The pacifist would say no. But the majority of Christians are not pacifists and the World Council did not take a pacifist stand. Indeed it had not one word to say about current atrocities in Spain, Greece, and Indonesia. When it has reached this point it may be justified in resuming a discussion on ruthlessness.

Communism was condemned. To the indignation of many, however, it was not alone. The formulation used was: "The Christian Church should reject the ideologies of both communism and *laissez-faire* capitalism." (The significance of this will become apparent when we look at the work of Dr. Brunner.) It is to seek instead "new creative solutions."

We are not told what these solutions are and the debate on "The Church and International Disorder" failed to disclose them. This debate revealed the tendencies at work within the Council. One of the main spokesmen was the well-known American foreign policy expert, Mr. John Foster Dulles. His presence goes some way to explain the reluctance of Eastern Churches to associate with the Council.

The Churches, said Foster Dulles, could not escape their responsibility in world affairs. They must oppose the drive to war. They must form a public opinion against it. They must work for the recognition of moral law and the dignity of man. They must, however, face the fact that these things were reflected in political organisations in the West, which were also susceptible to Christian influences. Communism, on the other hand, rejected the moral law. Marxism knew nothing of the rights of man. There was, certainly, a resemblance between the economic and social end which the communists proclaimed and what the Christians sought. Nevertheless, there was a gulf between the methods they could adopt. The Soviet communist régime was not peaceful and did not pretend to be. It opposed, on principle, peaceful change. So we faced the

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communist problem. It could not be resolved by force. If time were left to us, however, there was a solution. Example was infectious, and if the moral application of Christianity could be enshrined in a state system this would point the way.

This was almost the perfect example of the combination of righteous generalities with direct distortion and straightforward mendacity. It was answered by the Czech Professor Hromadka, who challenged the whole idea of Western supremacy. Hromadka, it needs to be remembered, is more an existentialist than a communist. He is, however, a member of the National Action Committee of Czechoslovakia.

"What we are witnessing," he said, "speaking in secular and political terms—is the end of Western supremacy within the realm of the international order. The repercussions of this appalling upheaval are noticeable everywhere, in politics as well as in trade and business, in literature as well as in spiritual and moral life. I am not speaking about the decline or fall of the West. What I have in mind is simply the fact that the Western nations have ceased to be the exclusive masters and architects of the world. The era of Western man is approaching its end under a terrific storm which is sweeping through all humanity. For several decades many a deep and responsible observer has been pointing to the portentous omens of the forthcoming crisis. At the peak of the political and economic prevalence of the West, many inclinations of moral, spiritual and political decay have been observed; a malady of spirit, a growing lack of self-commitment and self-dedication, a mood of sceptical indifference and pessimistic frustration, an absence of strong faith and convictions. All that could hardly be counter-balanced by the increase of wealth, comfort, prosperity and technical achievements. Somewhere deep under the ground we can hear a resounding echo of the millions of the underprivileged, the underdogs of society, marching and claiming a full share in the material and cultural goods of modern society. . . . The prosperity and the relative political and international security under the flags of the Western nations has made the leaders and the rank-and-file citizens of the West either self-complacent or reliant increasingly on material power, either economic or military, rather than on moral and spiritual resources. The last ascendancy of Western prestige came after World War I, when the Western democracies appeared to be

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for a moment the unchallenged, unrivalled makers of the world's politics. . . .

"At this moment, three years after World War II, the situation is in many ways more serious than it was ten years ago. Western man has not yet recovered and is losing more and more the last remnants of his world leadership. Even the enormous wealth, the military and atomic power of the American nation must not deceive us. I am not saying that the West is irrevocably and incurably condemned to a final collapse or decay. What I have in mind is Western man's apparent fear, frustration and helplessness in dealing with the great issues of our times. The anxiety about the advancing social transformation under the leadership of the Soviet Union is depriving the average Western citizen of a real grasp of the situation, of an adequate understanding of what is actually going on. What he has taken for granted is slipping out of his hands, and that makes him confused, restless, scared, nervous or disillusioned and apathetic. He has not much to offer along the lines of moral, philosophical or spiritual leadership. His political decisions are not free of doubts and uncertainty. He is losing the trust and confidence of the former colonial nations which—rightly or wrongly—are looking to Soviet communism and the Soviet brand of democracy as being a more reliable and trustworthy guide through the labyrinth of this world.

"The international crisis in which we find ourselves cannot be overcome and solved by material means and military weapons. There are politicians, military men, statesmen, and even ordinary citizens who predict, and perhaps hope for, a clash of arms. . . . Let us not deceive ourselves. The victory of the West must not be taken for granted. . . . The world cannot be organized on an anti-communistic, anti-Soviet basis. . . . What would happen if the Soviet régime and present governments in the so-called People's Democracies were crushed? All the elements responsible for the catastrophe of 1939-45 would revive. . . ."

After some remarks critical of communism, Hromadka concluded:

"Nevertheless, communism represents, although under an atheistic form, much of the social impetus of the living Church, from the Apostolic age down through the days of the monastic orders to the Reformation and liberal humanism. Many barbar-

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ians are, through the communist movement, coming of age and aspiring to a place in the sun. The perils of communism cannot be overcome by equating it exclusively with totalitarianism and by marshalling all the possible and impossible groups against it. It is our great task to understand our own failures, omissions and intangible selfish motives, to acknowledge the right of the new barbarians 'to become co-builders and heirs' of the treasures that were accumulated through the centuries and enjoyed only by some few nations of Europe and America."

If it was surprising that an existentialist should so defend Eastern Europe it was at least just that it should be a Czechoslovak who should remind the delegates that the West "has not much to offer along the lines of moral, philosophical or spiritual leadership." If this could just be brooked it was, however, felt by many that the defection of Barth was intolerable.

No modern theologian has enjoyed a greater international reputation than Karl Barth. Nobody has been more "other-worldly." Nobody has been less infected by economic communism or dialectical materialism. Yet before, during and since Amsterdam he has resolutely refused to join the struggle against communism and has even conducted throughout Hungary a mission for the Reformed Church.

His position is well described in an article of his appearing in two issues of *World Review*.¹ He is against communism. Politically he stands for neither East nor West. There is a "third way." But:

"Ten years ago it was a question of National Socialism, and that was not a movement which had a single serious question to put to us, but it was quite simply a mixture of madness and crime in which there was no trace of reason. . . . There was a curious softness and adaptability in the whole European attitude towards the Nazi movement and above all, even at that time, a great and trembling fear of it. Incidentally, ten years ago it cost something to say the one-sided, unequivocal 'No' that it was necessary and imperative to say at that time . . . he saw himself surrounded by the careful silence of most of the fine people who are so excited to-day. . . ."

"And so everybody is rushing about to-day saying that the same 'No' must be said again, with the same intonation, by the

¹ July and August, 1949.

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Church, or at least by those in the Church who spoke out ten years ago, against the East, against Soviet Russia, the 'People's Democracies.' As if such simple repetitions ever occurred in history! . . .

"Red is just as bad as Brown; one totalitarianism is as bad as another—so what! That is what people are crying out at us to-day. Now at least none of the many contemporaries and fellow Christians are justified in joining this cry who were rather glad to see Brown at one time because Brown was so much against Red: none of those, that is, who thought the good thing about National Socialism was that it seemed to form such a strong dam against communism. Neither are those entitled to join in—and certain circles in the Allied Military Governments in Germany seem to belong to them—who consider it right to play off the newly awakened nationalistic instincts of the Germans against the Russians. Neither are any of those entitled to join in who do not find anything amiss in the fact that the West has so far not hurt a hair of the head of the Spanish dictator Franco, but that it is by no means averse to including this totalitarianism, of which the Spanish Protestants can tell us a good deal, in the planning of its future eastern front. And why was so remarkably little said here when shortly before Christmas last the Dutch, with whom, generally speaking, we have so much in common, attacked their Indonesians with a *Blitzkrieg* which inevitably reminded one to a remarkable degree of certain proceedings in May, 1940? This is what we want to ask: is it really totalitarianism and its methods which we are being called upon to fight? For if that is really a Christian call to battle, then it ought to be directed against every totalitarian system. The battle-cry in which we are being asked to join to-day is, in fact, not a Christian battle-cry, because it is only directed against the East. It is, in a word, not quite honest. Therefore, we must refuse to make it our own."

Barth's reference to "the careful silence of most of the fine people who are so excited to-day" was barbed. During and since the Amsterdam Conference he has been publicly attacked by his own former chief disciple, Emil Brunner. It was largely in reply to him that this article was written.

Brunner's own position is stated concisely in a pamphlet called *Communism, Capitalism and Christianity*.¹ Superficially it adopts

¹ Lutterworth Press, 1s. 6d.

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the Amsterdam line that Christianity opposes both communism and capitalism. It insists, however, that "individualistic capitalism in its original form, and if I may so express it—in its purity," no longer exists. It has been "modified and tempered" by three forces, the trade-union movement, state intervention, and "the slowly-developing awareness of capitalism that it must take into consideration the interests of all. The question whether there is a third way has been long since answered by the course of events. The third way has been followed for a long time; the only question now is, how can these three forces which check and restrain capitalism work together most fruitfully?" Only communism remains to oppose.

The Amsterdam Conference was widely attacked in the right-wing press of the U.S.A. for not having given a sufficiently clear anti-communist lead. On the other hand there were those, even among its delegates, who saw it as reflecting Anglo-American dominance. One of them wrote in *The Œcumenical Review*:¹

"Perhaps it would be an unfair criticism to say that the opinion of the Younger Churches² on many issues was not clearly heard at Amsterdam. There were, of course, certain reasons for this fact. The preparatory material was regrettably one-sided, as the contribution from Christian thinkers from the Younger Churches was totally inadequate to give it the needed balance. . . . More than half the population of the earth lives in the lands of the Younger Churches and their delegates represent not only their particular churches, but also the countries in which they live and the cultures in which they move. Judged from this angle, we cannot say that the conference was made to feel the full impact of the contemporary world. This is clearly seen in the way in which the East-West conflict [a misnomer if ever there was one, for the East does not end at the Bosphorus!] dominated the political thought of the conference. Many of us wished an Asian speaker could have followed after John Foster Dulles and Professor Hromadka had spoken, to tell of the difficulties which the Anglo-American bloc is creating for other peoples of the world. It might have given a new perspective to the whole discussion of the East-West conflict. But what chance did a Malayan or an Indonesian delegate have in the atmosphere which prevailed?"

¹ Winter, 1949.

² The reference is to Missionary founded churches mainly in the Far East.

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The American Press criticisms of the Conference reflect the widespread anti-communist hysteria which to-day dominates the public life of that country and which has deeply infected the churches. The outstanding example of this is what is known as "the Melish case." John Howard Melish was for forty-five years Rector of the famous Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn. His career had been most distinguished. On four occasions he was elected a clerical deputy to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church and was secretary of the Joint Commission on Social Service of the Convention. He has now been dismissed because he did not stop the activities of his assistant (his son), the chief of which was that he acted as chairman of the National Council for American-Soviet Friendship.

The outcry caused by this case has shown, however, something of the strength of the better elements in the American churches. The Bishop of Missouri is one of those who is supporting the fight for Melish's reinstatement and the widely-circulated and influential *Churchman* has come out clearly on the side of Melish.

When the Central Committee of the World Council met in Chichester it had behind it the well-directed outcries against both the Mindzenty and Bulgarian Pastors trials and a press campaign demanding that it 'speak out.' The Dean of Chichester had attacked it for not being sufficiently anti-communist and the *Observer*¹ had warned that "the attitude of the Protestant Churches towards the Communist régimes in Eastern Europe is still confused. . . . There are those who emphasise the likelihood that Cardinal Mindzenty was a reactionary politician."

It reacted to the situation by passing a vaguely worded statement which is unlikely to satisfy either the Dean of Chichester or the *Observer*, but which went some way to meet them. It was, it said—

"deeply disturbed by the increasing hindrances which many of its member Churches encounter in giving their witness to Jesus Christ. Revolutionary movements are on foot and their end no man can foresee. The Churches themselves must bear no small part of the blame for the resentments among the underprivileged masses of the world, since their own efforts to realise the brotherhood of man have been so weak. But justice in human society is not to be won by totalitarian methods. . . . We call statesmen and

¹ June 26th.

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all men who in every nation seek social justice to consider this truth: a peaceful and stable order can only be built on foundations of righteousness, of right relations between man and God and between man and man. Only the recognition that man has ends and loyalties beyond the state will ensure true justice to the human person. . . . We declare the duty and right of the Church to preach the word of God and to proclaim the will of God. . . ."

It should also be noted—it was not so widely advertised in the Press—that the Central Committee in another statement said:

"Disturbed by evidence of discrimination and repression exercised by dominant religious majorities against minorities, [we] reiterate the statement in the report of Section IV of the Amsterdam Assembly . . . especially the affirmation that we oppose any Church which seeks to use the power of the state to enforce religious uniformity. . . ."

Willing as so many are to join the Vatican crusade against communism in the name of a religious liberalism, the anti-liberal attitude of the Vatican itself makes this path difficult. It was, indeed, the Jesuit Father Robert Rouquette, writing on the Central Committee of the World Council in the September issue of *Etudes*¹ who commented;

"First and foremost, a painful dilemma of conscience. We must realise that the Spaniards² are only pushing to their extreme limit a number of principles admitted by the Catholic Church in the first half of the nineteenth century and not yet discarded in so many words. On the other hand where the [Catholic] Church is persecuted or out-numbered, Catholics do not hesitate to demand religious freedom in the name of the right of conscience. We cannot but allow that our attitude is disconcerting for non-Catholics." He goes on to plead for a change: "Is it not possible, while denouncing error *qua* error, to allow broad rights of individuals to seek truth at their own risk, even given the danger of embracing error . . . collectively and sociologically?"

Father Rouquette is a brave man. He has, however, more support in his own ranks than many are apt to suppose. The anti-liberal campaign of the Vatican and the anti-communist campaign

¹ Paris.

² In their treatment of Protestants.

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of the churches in general have gone a long way, but they have never been able to command universal Christian assent. On the contrary. Although the forces within the churches which fight these views are minority forces, they are deeply entrenched and they are in a powerful position. It is they who can appeal to all that is best in the Christian tradition. It is they, indeed, who can appeal freely to scripture. The whole tenor of the New Testament is: "Blessed are the peacemakers" and not "Blessed are the warmongers." The woes of St. Luke and the execrations of St. James are reserved for the rich, not for the poor. It is, indeed, no accident that the Pope condemned jointly in 1846 communism on the one hand and the spread of the Bible in the vernacular on the other.

It is important at this juncture of world history to realise that, in his drive to war, Hitler fought hard for the German churches, but was never quite able to win. The drive of the warmongers of to-day is slightly more subtle. They fight not for physical control, but for the soul of the churches.

Christianity to-day, as for many centuries, is divided into different churches or groups. Nevertheless, it remains an international movement and all its component parts are affected by movements of thought in the others. Once this is realised, the significance of the religious situation in the U.S.S.R. and in Eastern Europe becomes clear. Despite all the *furor* in Britain and America, the strongest coherent current of opinion in world Christianity to-day is in the socialist countries. Theologically, it believes that society can and should be reordered for the benefit of the mass of individuals, and politically it supports the developments that have taken place in these various countries. If the Orthodox and Hungarian Reformed and Czechoslovak Churches have led this advance, it is also true that significant Catholic and other groups move in the same direction. In the Far East similar tendencies are at work.

In the West the situation is different. The church machine is able to ensure that, with few exceptions, only "safe" men are preferred to leading positions. Nevertheless, in America, Britain, France and elsewhere the position is challenged. The essential conflict between anything that can be called "Christian" and the drive to a third world war leads to a rank and file opposition to official policies which is stronger than is often realised.

Those who work for war can no more escape a church opposition than Hitler could. They, in turn, will not win their battle.

Beatrice Webb; and the Other One

BY DOUGLAS GARMAN

WHEN *My Apprenticeship* was published in 1926, Beatrice Webb intended it to be the first instalment of a much longer work, *My Creed and Craft*, in which, with the help of her copious contemporary diaries, she would relate the story of her long career as a public figure. As she was then nearly seventy, she might reasonably have assumed that no substantially new or significant experience would upset her plan of work. But though having completed the first volume she at once began to write the impression of her husband that now serves as Introduction to *Our Partnership*, it was not until 1948, five years after her death, that it finally appeared. The reason is neither that she lost interest in the work, nor that with old age her intellectual vigour began to wane; but the much more remarkable one that, as she explains with dramatic modesty, "other tasks intervened." She had yet, that is to say, to serve a second term as a Cabinet Minister's wife, and then—one of the few phoenixes to rise from the ashes of 1931—to experience her grand climacteric, the discovery of *Soviet Communism: a New Civilisation*.

In attempting any serious appraisal of Beatrice Webb's life and work, even of that restricted part of them she has publicly recorded, it is necessary at the outset to stress emphatically the significance of this concluding phase. In the first place, as she insists in the closing pages of the present volume, "in case I should not live to finish this autobiography," it indubitably represents the supreme fulfilment of her life's work. "Soviet Communism with its multiform democracy, its sex, class and racial equality, its planned production for community consumption, and above all its penalisation of the profit-making motive and its insistence on the obligation of all able-bodied persons to earn their livelihood by serving the community," supplied the final and satisfying answer to that "search for a creed" to which, as she describes in *My Apprenticeship*, she had unreservedly committed herself in the lonely years of adolescence. Subjectively, its discovery was her ultimate spiritual and intellectual triumph. But objectively, too, at least in her own considered opinion, "the two ponderous volumes published in 1935 were the final and certainly the most ambitious task of *Our*

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Partnership." In the second place, only in the light of this foreknowledge of the outcome is it possible to appreciate sympathetically the single-mindedness and tenacity of purpose underlying the apparently superficial political fumbblings of this period of her life. Without it, *Our Partnership* might all too often be held to justify the malice of H. G. Wells's satirical portrait of the Webb household in *The New Machiavelli*. "You felt you were in a sort of signal-box with levers all about you, and the world outside there, albeit a little dark and mysterious beyond the window, running on its lines in ready obedience to these unhesitating lights, true and steady to trim termini. And then with all this administrative fizzle, this pseudo-scientific administrative chatter, dying away in your head . . . you realised that quite a lot of types were unrepresented in Chalmers Street, that feral and obscure and altogether monstrous forces must be at work, as yet altogether unassimilated by those neat administrative reorganisations." Of course, Wells was too percipient to leave it at that. He recognised that his Altiora "was an altogether exceptional woman, an extraordinary mixture of qualities"; and he showed real insight when he added: "I don't know what dreams Altiora may have had in her schoolroom days. I always suspected her of suppressed and forgotten phases." But even though the two volumes of autobiography have since revealed that her dreams and phases were more compelling and persistent than Wells was capable of perceiving, their influence on her development might still have escaped us without the knowledge of how fully they were eventually to be realised in the last amazing decade of her life.

And there is yet a third reason for insisting on the significance of *Soviet Communism*, which, though more superficial, is perhaps of greater immediate importance. For if Communist critics fail to do so it will certainly be concealed or distorted by the neo-Fabian critics, who, in their anxiety to disguise their own betrayal of Socialism, will attempt to pass off their pallid moonshine as the authentic lustre of the great Partnership. Just as Mr. Attlee, with smug effrontery, recently denied William Morris's fearless adherence to revolutionary Marxism in order to claim him as a forerunner of Labourism, so the commentators are already attempting, though more circumspectly, to denigrate or explain away the Webbs' uncompromising admission that where they "went hopelessly wrong was in ignoring Karl Marx's forecast of the eventual breakdown of the capitalist system." In Margaret Cole's short

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biography, for example, while admitting that Beatrice Webb's admiration for and devotion to the achievements of Communism continued to grow as her knowledge of them deepened, there is the undoubted suggestion, no less misleading because perhaps unconscious, that this was due rather to a weakening of her critical faculties than to objective intellectual conviction. Nor is the Preface to *Our Partnership* (for the otherwise admirable editing of which we have to thank Barbara Drake as well as Margaret Cole), altogether free from a similarly disingenuous implication. For while attributing "the appeal made to her later by Soviet Communism . . . at least partly, to the passionate, almost religious, faith of its founders in the 'brotherhood of man,' " as well as to "their deliberate use of science as a means of achieving their end," they continue: "Its political intolerance and fanaticism during its bitter struggle against enemies, both at home and abroad, she was wont to compare with the religious intolerance and savage persecutions of earlier centuries." But in justification of this comment they quote opinions that Beatrice Webb expressed, *not* when she had come to understand the significance of the Russian Revolution as the major episode in the world-wide struggle of the working class against capitalism, but in 1926, at a time when she was still assuring the women electors in her husband's constituency that the Russian Revolution was the "greatest misfortune in the history of the Labour movement." To such dubious shifts are the advocates of the "middle way" reduced, in their efforts to convince themselves and others that that fabulous tight-rope has any existence outside their own timid imaginations.

But even regardless of its heroic and still only partly recorded conclusion, *Our Partnership* is in its own right a social record of profound and lasting interest. And much of its peculiar fascination is due to the way it was compiled—extracts from the personal diaries in which, without interruption, she recorded the immediate impact of events on an uncommonly receptive and sensitive mind, being strung together with a lucid and coherent historical record, that never condescends to self-justification nor attempts, in the light of later experience, to explain away old prejudices or mistaken enthusiasms. Already while the plan of the whole work was taking shape she had decided that "the ideal conduct would be to treat the diaries exactly as I should treat them if they were someone else's." But despite the phenomenal objectivity to which she had disciplined herself by long years of practising the craft of social

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investigation—of which the introductory sketch of the Other One is an almost terrifying example—no one knew better than she that, when the subject of that objectivity happens to be oneself, “it is almost impossible to get into that frame of mind.” Thus, though she describes the book as “practically an autobiography with the love affairs left out,” it is autobiography of an almost unique kind. For the very conflict between her ideal of objectivity and the subjective demands of her passionate and introspective nature infuses *Our Partnership* with a creative tensivity that distinguishes it from any of the works produced in collaboration, signing it, despite its title, with her own unmistakable personal signature. And in this respect no future editor, however elsewise able, can hope to replace her. The contents of the voluminous diaries that are still unpublished—recording, as they must, the rise and fall of the Labour Party, the impact of the first imperialist war, the waning of half a century’s belief in the inevitability of gradualness and the waxing recognition of the necessity of social revolution—must inevitably surpass in interest the dog days of Liberalism, whose decay, between 1892 and 1911, form the background of *Our Partnership*. But though their publication will almost certainly prove to be the most important single contribution that scholarship can make to our understanding of these events (and may well throw such a light on them as will blister many of the principal actors in them), the resulting volumes will lack the authentically æsthetic quality of Beatrice Webb’s own editing, which gives to *My Apprenticeship* and its sequel their charm and vital immediacy.

Indeed, in order to grasp the full significance of *Our Partnership*, whether as social or as personal history, it is advisable to read it as the sequel to *My Apprenticeship*. By the end of the earlier volume, published when Beatrice Webb was sixty-eight, Beatrice Potter had reached the age of thirty-four and was already in most respects a mature woman. Under the personal supervision of Herbert Spencer, she had wrestled, though never definitively, with the God of late Victorian Christianity. Entrancingly beautiful, as may be seen from the photograph in the present volume, and financially a most eligible match, she had decided that the drawbacks of becoming the second Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain outweighed the attractions; and, unlike her eight sisters, had made up her mind that a socially successful marriage was no satisfying alternative to a career. Instead, she had diverted her energies to the Charitable Organisation Society. But acquaintance with its

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principles soon convinced her, not only that the argument underlying them “pointed not to any organisation of charity, but to its abandonment as a harmful futility,” but also that whatever the personal heroism of its leaders “the facts collected by philanthropists . . . were too doubtful and restricted to lead to any proven conclusion as to the meaning of poverty in the midst of riches.” Nevertheless, it was in the course of reaching this conclusion that what was to prove the central problem of her life had first clearly presented itself to her. And since it continued to exercise both her mind and imagination with growing insistence she had, when her cousin, Charles Booth, undertook his pioneer survey of London poverty, readily agreed to play a part in an enterprise that aroused her “whole-hearted sympathy and admiration.”

It was this experience that, on the one hand, completed her apprenticeship as a social investigator. On the other, it awoke in her the determination “to discover whether there was any practicable alternative to the dictatorship of the capitalist in industry, and his reduction of all the other participants in production to the position of subordinate ‘hands.’” But though the chapter of *My Apprenticeship* in which she describes how this determination took root is called “Why I Became a Socialist,” it was not as yet to the socialists that she turned in her quest. As she explains: “*Fabian Essays* were still unwritten and unpublished: and such socialists as I had happened to meet at the East End of London belonged to the Social Democratic Federation, and were at that time preaching what seemed to me nothing but a catastrophic overturning of the existing order, by forces of whose existence I saw no sign, in order to substitute the vaguest of incomprehensible utopias.” Instead,—being as she has since described herself at that time, “conservative by temperament and anti-democratic through social environment,”—she sought her alternative in the Co-operative Movement; and so found the subject for her first full-length sociological study. Nor was this to prove the whole of her first “Co-op divi.” For, becoming aware in the process of writing her book that she “lacked historical background,” and having quickly convinced herself that the “kindly and lengthy explanations” of W. E. H. Lecky were leading her nowhere, she also discovered the Other One. A friend having assured her that “Sidney Webb is your man,” she had promptly invited him for inspection over dinner at the Devonshire House Hotel and at once made up her mind, not only that he was eminently suitable as a collaborator, but also that “I like the man.” But

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though almost two years were to pass before the deeds of *Our Partnership* were formally signed, her record of a "day out in Epping Forest" proves that if their intimacy grew slowly it thrived in a severe climate. For not content with the overwhelming information that on leaving her the previous evening he had gone "straight to the club and read right through Marshall's six hundred pages," he followed it up with the strenuous proposition that "since economics has still to be remade . . . either you must help me to do it, or I must help you." And the entry concludes with one of those glimpses of their mutual delight in one another's company that recur so unexpectedly and vividly throughout the sequel. "He read me poetry, as we lay in the Forest," she notes, "Keats and Rossetti, and we parted."

By the time of their encounter the two Partners, as different in temperament and character as in appearance, had arrived at very similar, but by no means identical, conclusions as to the possibility of diminishing poverty by "collective control and collective administration." But the routes they had travelled could hardly have been more devious. Through a phenomenal aptitude for assimilating and organising facts, he had graduated from the lower middle class to the senior Civil Service; and then, having served in three government departments, had become sufficiently successful as a journalist and pamphleteer to retire in order to devote himself to the life of a professional Fabian. Her very different experience—"born and bred in the world of the big business of two continents," dashing about the "outer ring of London 'society,'" week-ending at the lesser country houses, and, for the last six years, devoting her spare time to investigating the sweated industries and to establishing friendly intercourse with the leaders of the Co-operative and Trade Union movements—combined with his to provide a solid basis for their chosen career of public service. Coupled with "an unearned income of £1,000 a year" (which, though she numbers it first amongst the assets of the Partnership, was to be the cause of endless heart-searching lest they should fail to repay it to society with substantial interest), enabled them forthwith to proceed, as Wells describes them, "to make themselves the most formidable and distinguished couple conceivable. . . . They devoted themselves to the elaboration and realisation of this centre of public information she had conceived as their role. They set out to study the methods and organisation and realities of government in the most elaborate manner. They did

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the work as no one had ever hitherto dreamt of doing it. They planned their research on a thoroughly satisfying scale, and arranged their lives almost entirely for it."

This tribute to the scope and energy of their highly organised industry was to be substantiated, as everybody knows, by a succession of scholarly works, which, beginning with *The History of Trade Unionism*, had already in the less than twenty years recorded in *Our Partnership* established their international reputation. Thus Beatrice's prediction on the eve of their marriage, that "a considerable work should be the result if we use our combined talents with a deliberate and persistent purpose," was abundantly confirmed. But neither their achievements in the field of scholarship nor the temporary successes of their manifold political and social activities caused her to change the opinion she had at the same time privately formed, that "we are both of us second-rate minds." And since she was publicly to reiterate it, first at the close of *My Apprenticeship* and again in *Our Partnership*, the question arises as to what was the basis for it? Is it to be sought in a tendency to perfectionism, springing from the streak of introspective morbidity so movingly revealed in many of the passages she quotes from the diaries, and to which more than once she consciously directs attention? Or was there, in fact, some specific and palpable defect in their combined intellectual processes, of which she, at least, was intuitively aware?

Had she lived to complete her autobiography as it was originally planned, she herself would perhaps have supplied the answer. But even the two instalments that we have indicate pretty clearly where it is to be found, for they abound with evidence of her conviction that neither in theory nor in practice was the Partnership successfully resolving the problem of social injustice. Again and again she seeks to reassure herself that their ingenious wire-pulling and elaborate personal intrigue were a justifiable substitute for independent political action. Realising with ever-growing conviction that there was fundamentally nothing to choose between the Liberal and Conservative leaders, she yet shared with them their contempt for the working-class masses who alone offered a genuine political alternative. And at the same time as she fluctuates between what she realised to be an emotionally determined idealism and the materialism to which their sociological studies progressively urged her, she expresses also a poignant sense of spiritual ill-ease. Her acute and persistent awareness

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of this double dilemma is the measure of her integrity; but her inability to escape from it explains why she should insist that, by her own stringent criteria, their intellectual gifts were only of the second order.

The fact is that despite the generally accepted notion that they were Socialists, to which they themselves subscribed, the Webbs remained deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century tradition of radical Liberalism; and though the first world war and the experience of two Labour Governments undoubtedly loosened their roots, it was not until the last decade of their lives that they were finally snapped. Moreover, and as a corollary, they never transcended—or, indeed, experienced the need to transcend—the limits of nineteenth-century scientific empiricism. Already in 1886, in an essay dismissing the claims of political economy to be regarded as a science, Beatrice had written of her suggested alternative: “A necessary implication of this new classification would be that what have to be investigated, described and analysed are the social institutions themselves, as they exist or have existed, not any assumed ‘laws’ . . . comparable with the law of gravity.” And though later she was to modify this view—as, for instance, when, in 1900, describing their purpose in founding the London School of Economics, she maintained that “the study of the structure and function of society was as much a science as the study of any other form of life. . . . Hypothesis ought to be used as an order of thought to be verified by observation and experiment”—what was modified is less significant than what remained unchanged. She would, indeed, have endorsed whole-heartedly the first part of the advice that her great contemporary, Pavlov, offered to his students: “Study, compare, accumulate facts . . . facts are the air of a scientist, and without them you will never be able to fly upward.” But she would have shrunk from the dialectical implications of his conclusion: “But when you study, experiment, observe, you must not stop at the surface of facts. Do not become a keeper of records. Try to penetrate into the secret of their origin. Persistently search for the laws that govern them.” And precisely because they did “stop at the surface of facts,” the Webbs remained, for all their scrupulousness in observing and verifying them, essentially “keepers of records,” for whom the science of society consisted primarily in the meticulous “investigation, description and analysis of the social institutions themselves.” Dominated by, instead of dominating, their laboriously accumulated hoard of

Beatrice Webb; and the Other One

knowledge, and therefore blind to the understanding that history is the science of the future as well as of the past and of the present, they lacked the innovating, creative ability which, as Beatrice knew, is the prerogative of first-class minds.

But underlying their limitations as sociologists was a deeper philosophical flaw: and this, too, riveted them to the past. Rejecting the superficialities of contemporary idealism, but at the same time shying away from the stultifying implications of metaphysical materialism, they nevertheless disdained even to acquaint themselves with the new philosophy of dialectical materialism, which, in many respects, they were so well equipped to understand. And as a result they remained, in Engels’ biting phrase, “shame-faced materialists”—ready, as Sidney put it, “to give the Almighty God the benefit of the doubt”; or prepared, as Beatrice informed Graham Wallas, deliberately to believe that “for my own children, and for those of other people, the lie of materialism [is] more pernicious and more utterly false than the untruths which seem to me to constitute the Christian formula of religion.” Essentially their philosophical dilemma was the same as that which Marx, in the third of his *Theses on Feuerbach*, had long ago detected as the central weakness of eighteenth-century materialism. For while recognising “that men are the products of circumstances and upbringing and that, therefore, changed men are the products of other circumstances and changed upbringing,” they, too, forgot “that circumstances are changed precisely by men and that the educator must himself be educated.” And the result of this “forgetfulness” was a doctrine which, as Marx had predicted, “necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one towers above society. . . . The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can only be conceived and rationally understood as revolutionising practice.”

And it was precisely for thus dividing society into an educated élite and an ineducible mass that Engels, in a letter written less than a twelve-month after the formation of Our Partnership, pilloried the practice of the Fabians as, half a century earlier, Marx had demolished their theory. “An ambitious group who have understanding enough to realise the inevitability of the social revolution, but who could not possibly entrust this task to the rough proletariat alone and are therefore kind enough to set themselves at the head. Fear of the revolution is their fundamental principle . . . and hence follow their tactics . . . of permeating Liberalism

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with Socialism. . . . That in the course of this process they are either lied to and deceived themselves or else betray Socialism they do not of course realise."

But though *Our Partnership* is a documented substantiation of Engels' indictment, fully justifying Keir Hardie's bitter remark, to which even in 1895 Beatrice conceded "some truth," that "the Webbs were the worst enemies of the social revolution," their crime is extenuated by the fact that, even at the height of the prestige and authority accorded to them by capitalist society, they never allowed themselves to be reconciled to its corruption and injustice. For the ruling class, with many of whom they were on terms of familiarity and even of affection—the Balfours and Asquiths, the Greys and Churchills, the Crippses and Haldanes—their abiding feeling was the contempt so scathingly expressed by Beatrice. But though observation and verification convinced them that "this life of unconscious theft," was only maintained by the class dictatorship of the capitalists,¹ their theoretical limitations prevented them, until at last the dictatorship of the proletariat had established the empirical fact that Soviet Communism was indeed "a new Civilisation," from recognising the only possible historical alternative. And by then it was too late for them to devote their great talents and heroic energies to educating and organising a genuine party of the working class in Britain. They had frittered them away in building those monuments to the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, the Fabian Society, the London School of Economics and the *New Statesman and Nation*. Yet had they lived to see how soon the degenerate progeny of *Our Partnership* was to allow them to be transformed into mausoleums for the "Third Force," one can imagine Beatrice choosing as the epitaph for their tragic mistake the words of Volumnia:

"Leave this faint puling, and lament as I do,
In anger, Juno-like."

¹ See *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, pp. 4 and 30, written after the 1914-18 War.

Reviews

The Freedom of Necessity. By J. D. BERNAL. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 15s.

NO feature of the intellectual life of our time is more significant than the absence, in the thought of wide sections of our scientists and men of letters, of any consistent world outlook. More and more often, as the general crises of world capitalism develops, there is, in some circles, a tendency for the specialist—outside his own discipline and in his approach to the great contemporary social issues on which everything depends—to display a narrow philistinism, an impotent distress, or a cynical despair.

Against this background, Professor Bernal's latest book stands out. In place of despair, there is a message of confidence and hope in the future of humanity; in place of a modest competence and a narrow specialisation, a mastery and breadth of scope; instead of vague abstractions, a capacity to grapple with problems in the most diverse fields of human activity, and to find ways to their practical solution. Such a book, in our times, could have been written only by a Marxist.

The Freedom of Necessity is a collection of thirty-two essays written at different times during the last twenty years. The essays are arranged in eight sections, according to their subject matter, and each section is provided with a short introduction which serves to indicate briefly the circumstances in which the work was written.

The present work makes quite a different impact from Bernal's earlier book *The Social Function of Science*, for in place of a single coherent theme we are presented with a variety of topics, the treatment of which is remarkable for the great depth and content of the thought, the originality and the freshness of expression, and the encyclopædic character of the resources on which the author is able to draw for his illustrations and examples.

A collection of essays is often unsatisfactory in being discursive; in treating a large range of topics with little relationship to one another. This is compensated in the present work by the fact that we are able to see the development, under the impact of events and experience, of an author whose scientific reputation was already established before the first of the essays was written.

The essays on "Science and the Humanities" are certainly amongst the best, and it is a matter of importance that they will now be available to a much larger audience than that to which they were originally addressed. Discussing the continuing tendency towards specialisation in the education of scientists, the author shows clearly that this is maintained at the expense of the kind of knowledge which is of most concern to the scientist as an individual—knowledge about society and its history, about philosophy, art and religion. It is this tendency which has encouraged the popular mistrust of the scientist as one who is

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indifferent to human needs and aspirations; and in turn has led scientists to isolate themselves from the business and problems of everyday life. Both these tendencies are dangerous and destructive in an age when the widespread adoption of the scientific method in every field of knowledge and practice are of decisive importance, and when the closest co-operation between people with a variety of experience and skill is vital if the urgent practical problems are to be solved.

The author is not content merely to point out the problems arising from excessive specialisation in the education of the scientist. In the essay entitled "Science teaching in general education," he makes contributions of the greatest importance to the current discussion. This essay should be read by all those who are interested in educational advance. At least one of his proposals—that of providing the opportunity for all students to acquire an understanding of the main features of the scientific method—has already been adopted in the reform of the German universities, and must be given serious consideration in the near future in this country.

"Science and the Arts" is a great theme which is still in the earliest stages of its development, and a treatment at the same level as that of some of the other sections could hardly be expected. There are, however, many good things and a characteristic example is the suggestion that architects should study symmetry and topology. This proposal, symbolic of the author's emphasis of the vital importance of the interplay of science and its applications, would, he suggests, allow that which is haphazard and intuitive in the work of the architect to be replaced by a rational process; and would, on the other hand, restore reality to these abstract branches of mathematics.

Two important themes which have been the subject of recent discussion are found in the essays on "The Relevance of Science" and in the "Marxist Studies." In the essay on "The Irrelevance of Scientific Theory," written in 1929, the author was already drawing the important distinction between the role of theory in the development of a science, and the use made of theories, especially those of modern physics, for the support of particular philosophical tendencies. This distinction has an important bearing on the recent discussions in Moscow on Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. It is often overlooked that this principle is in fact a source of positive knowledge; that it gives us, for example, a method of determining the lifetime of atomic objects which cannot be deduced by any other method at present available.

A second question of contemporary interest is that of the application of dialectics to particular sciences. Those who are interested in the application of dialectical materialism to their own field should read the essay on "Dialectical Materialism," the substance of which appeared in *The Modern Quarterly*, 1848 Centenary Number for March, 1948 (which the author does not mention). "The application of dialectics to experimental

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Science," writes the author, "is much more its application to the history of science and the directions of fruitful future scientific fields of discovery than it is to the actual descriptions and deductions from concrete experiments."

"Marxism is a world-outlook." When in this book we survey the great range of problems which await solution, the many fields in which our knowledge is rudimentary, we see it also as a potential world-outlook; as one which will reach its full maturity only in a society based upon a world socialist economic system. Out of the intellectual confusion and decay of capitalist society in decline, a new intellectual life is coming into being; one to which the forces already available in this country are sufficiently great to make substantial contributions. For many years, our generation will find in this book a rich source of ideas for discussion, research and experiment. It will take its place on our bookshelves beside Diderot, *Dialectics of Nature*, *Anti-Dühring* and *The Crisis in Physics*; and it will make a contribution of the greatest importance to the recognition of Marxism "not as an abstract system into which the future has to be fitted, but as a live and flexible method by which we ourselves can determine it."

D.

Feudal Order. By MARION GIBBS. Past and Present Series. Studies in the History of Civilisation, Vol. VIII. Cobbett Press, 7s. 6d.

THERE are still scholars who believe that the decline of the Roman Empire was followed by a relapse into barbarism, from which Europe only recovered with the Renaissance, which they interpret as a revival of the "eternal values" of Greece and Rome. Others contend that Rome fell, like Babylon, because she was corrupt, and that in the Middle Ages, under the guidance of the Church, the supremacy of spiritual over material values was maintained until it was challenged by modern industrialism. In either case we are intended to conclude that to-day those values are once more in danger from the barbarian at the gates.

These views enjoy little support among specialists; and, if they are still current, it is largely because the historians of the period cannot or will not relate their studies to the problems of the contemporary world. The great merit of this book is that, besides being a work of careful scholarship, it is animated by a conscious desire to rescue history from such sterilising falsifications so that it may be used as an instrument of human progress. It presents a coherent argument, which, just because it throws so much light on the Middle Ages, serves also to illuminate the present day.

The first five chapters show how the feudal system took shape out of the disintegrating elements of tribal society after the collapse of the western Empire. The Romans failed in Britain because they deserved to fail. They had the technical resources for raising the productivity of agriculture, but they did not use them, because their sole concern was to

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enrich themselves. It was not they but the barbarian invaders who ploughed up the forests and so effected a revolution in the mode of production which brought into being a new social order.

In the new order the old tribal relations were transformed into feudal relations. When the Saxons landed on these shores, their tribal institutions were in decay, and in their new settlements they made extensive use of slave labour. With the consolidation of the feudal system slavery disappeared. The reorganisation of agriculture was carried out with the assistance of the leaders of the Church, who, besides being big land-owners, had preserved the Roman traditions of estate management. The struggle between the Roman and Celtic Churches was essentially a struggle between the old and new modes of land tenure, which ended in the triumph of the new.

If slavery had disappeared, so had the community of free and equal peasants bound by ties of kinship. The new unit was the manor. Under the manorial system the landowning class, organised in a hierarchy of ties of personal allegiance, exploited the unfree peasants and serfs. The class struggle had been extended and intensified, and so, especially after the Norman Conquest, the growth of the new order was accompanied by the development of a state apparatus centred in the king. This is the subject of Chapter V, and it is resumed in Chapter VII, where we see how the development of the state led to the growth of Parliament.

Chapters VI and VIII, which deal with the growth of trade and the decline of feudalism, are difficult, mainly because the subject is one that needs to be studied in connection with the rise of capitalism, as Dobb has done. The result is that the concluding stage of the argument is not altogether clear. It would have been better, I think, to stop short at the thirteenth century and devote the final chapters to the ideology of feudalism. What the author says on this subject—she argues that the Renaissance was “the continuation by a new class, for a new purpose, of the intellectual activity of the Middle Ages”—is so interesting that we should have been grateful for more.

Let me stress the importance of the early chapters as a contribution to the understanding of the transition from slave society to feudal society. It is to be hoped that the author will continue her investigation into the origins of the open-field system and the conditions in which slave labour was superseded by serfdom. By so doing she will throw light on problems far removed from hers in place and time. The open-field system, based on the strip, is not, as some have supposed, confined to north-western Europe, or even to Europe; and the more we know about the decline of slavery in the so-called Dark Ages, the better we shall be able to understand the growth of slavery in ancient Greece and the Near East.

Finally, let the second edition be provided with a glossary of technical terms. I am sure that more than one reader will be prompted to ask, who is a sokeman and what is church scot?

GEORGE THOMSON.

Discussion

THE MODE OF PRODUCTION

A COMMENT ON DR. S. LILLEY'S REVIEW OF PROFESSOR V. G. CHILDE'S BOOK *HISTORY*

I

DR. S. LILLEY, in his review, criticises Professor Childe for an exposition of the Marxist conception of history and of the mode of production in particular which carries the “taint of his trade.” He sets out his own view as follows:¹

“My own view is that the mode of production must be treated as a whole. The division of the technological from the organisational side is convenient for many purposes, but neither can be said to be more fundamental than the other. Man is not merely a tool-making animal who in consequence of his tool-making takes up economic co-operation. If one had to guess whether the tool-maker or the economic co-operator came first, one would guess the co-operator—one can imagine man-like creatures grovelling a living in small co-operative groups and then learning to use tools to help them, but I for one cannot imagine an isolated man learning to control fire or split a stone to make a sharp edge and then calling on other men to help use his discovery. However, this hen-or-egg problem hardly matters. The important point is that in observable history the two aspects of the mode of production interact on roughly equal terms, and it is only by taking the two of them together as the basis that one can reasonably assert that they govern the general evolution of other aspects of history” (*The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 264-5).

This viewpoint should not be mistaken for that of Marx. In his famous preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx writes that “these relations correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production.” The relations of production, in the same paragraph, are spoken of as turning from “forms of development of the forces of production” into “their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.” Lilley considers that Childe has misunderstood the meaning of this paragraph by Marx; but has he not himself misunderstood Marx?

Again, in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, Stalin devotes eighteen pages to a discussion on Historical Materialism and the mode of production, in the course of which he writes:

¹ In this contribution, I am concerned only with Lilley's statement of his own standpoint and not with the correctness or otherwise of his criticism of Professor Childe's book.

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"Consequently the productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production but are also the determining element in the development of production. Whatever are the productive forces such must be the relations of production."

If I enter here into an argument on definitions, it is only because there are real differences of principle involved. My own view is that Lilley's statement contributes nothing to the materialist conception of history but, on the contrary, blunts its real edge.

First, it should be noted that Lilley finds it more "elegant" to talk about the *technological* and the *organisational* sides of the mode of production, instead of the *forces* and *relations* of production. But elegance should give way to accuracy and the use of these terms leaves the reader unclear throughout. The "technological" aspect covers up the clear and important distinction made by Stalin in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* between the *instruments* of production and the *people* who operate them. And "organisational" aspect confuses the lay-out of machines in a factory with the question: who owns the means of production? Relations of production involve property-relations. Forces of production express man's control over Nature. It is because Lilley has not made this clear distinction between productive forces and productive relations, that he can write:

"The division of the technological from the organisational side is convenient for many purposes, but neither can be said to be more fundamental than the other."

For the same reason, as I point out later, he obscures the *class* issues involved.

Secondly, Lilley's hen-or-egg problem is his own creation and should be fathered neither on Childe nor on Marxism. Since men cannot exist in isolation (except in the imagination of Defoe and the theories of the Manchester school of economics) productive forces only exist within and necessarily involve a given state of productive or social relations. They are inseparably connected.

But this leads us to the crucial issues.

Is it true that *human* society, social and not animal relations, become possible only with the development of tools? Men, says Marx, "begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence . . ." (*The German Ideology*, p. 7). On Lilley's theory we must consider the "interaction" of technology and organisation. But we could contemplate this interaction for a thousand years and come no bit nearer to understanding the transition from animal to human society.

The development of the productive forces involves and leads to a

Discussion

further division of labour. Out of the development of the division of labour, which, as Marx notes, "represents so many different forms of ownership," class society emerges. Given the backward state of the productive forces, primitive communist relations were a *necessity*; with the development of these forces to the point where they could produce a surplus over and above the subsistence needs of the communally organised producers, class society became a social necessity, in the sense that without the relations of class society, the productive forces could not develop. The basis for the great leap from primitive communism to class society must surely be sought *primarily* in the development of the productive forces. To see this advance as the result of interaction between the "technological and organisational" aspects "on roughly equal terms" would not in fact help the historian to discover the prime source of movement of society from primitive communism to class society.

Certainly it would be mechanical materialism which does not see the effect changes in the relations of production have on the productive forces. That connection is put by Stalin as follows:

"While their development [of the productive relations—S. A.] is dependent on the development of the productive forces, the relations of production in their turn react upon the development of the productive forces, accelerating or retarding it" (*Dialectical and Historical Materialism*).

Lilley's view that productive forces and productive relations "interact on roughly equal terms" leads, I think, to curious results.

Towards the end of his review, he writes:

"Revolutions, of course, occur when technology outgrows the existing relations of production and forces a change in them; but this technological growth was itself made possible by the previous relations of production."

It should be possible, on the basis of Lilley's definition, to reverse this statement with ("roughly") equal truth. It would then read:

Revolutions of course occur when the existing relations of production outgrow technology and forces a change in it; but these relations of production were themselves made possible by the previous growth of technology.

Yet these two statements are not at all equal.

Let us agree that feudalism, and the feudal relations of production were "made possible by the previous growth of technology." But is the disintegration of feudalism (and the bourgeois revolutions) to be explained by the relations of production outgrowing technology? Again,

we should certainly agree that the development of capitalist relations were "made possible by the previous growth of technology." But is it equally true that the transition from capitalism to socialism (and the necessity of that transition) can be explained by capitalist relations of production outgrowing technology?

To misunderstand the "determining" role of the forces of production can undoubtedly lead to quite different interpretations of historical development.

II

In his review of the same book, Christopher Hill suggests that Professor Childe should have brought out more clearly and more explicitly the conception of class struggle. The historical process, he wrote, "is not the automatic reflection of blind economic forces. History is the class struggle." This valuable criticism has not simply been overlooked by Lilley; he has pushed the class struggle even further into the background.

The conflict between the productive forces and productive relations has, since the time of primitive communism, expressed itself in class struggle. It is fought out by men in their social classes. To replace these conceptions by "technological and organisational aspects" distinguished from each other as "a matter of convenience" is to blur over the economic basis of the class struggle.

To-day, we see that the further development of the productive forces is held back by capitalist relations of production and that through capitalist crisis and war, productive forces (including the working people and not simply the instruments of production) are being threatened with destruction. Such is the position of the proletariat within the capitalist mode of production that it alone stands at the head of the growing productive forces; it is its "historical mission" by the seizure of power to abolish capitalist relations, so that to the growing *forces of social production*, there may correspond *social ownership*. These new relations of production alone can guarantee the further development of the productive forces which in turn will bring about still further changes in society.

The problem created by his own approach is further illustrated at the end of Lilley's review. He writes:

"Of course, there is one great distinction between the means and relations of production which Professor Childe is right in stressing—namely that technology seldom slips back, so that technological history has a certain uni-directional quality about it, whereas changes in economic relations tend to show something of an oscillatory as well as progressive character (e.g. in extreme case of change from primitive communism to class society, and thence to advanced communism).

But apart from this point, I think it cripples the materialistic view of history to isolate the technological aspect of the economic basis from its organisational aspect, and to assert that the former is a primary motive force and the latter only secondary."

My *Concise Oxford Dictionary* tells me that to oscillate means to swing like a pendulum. Is it Lilley's argument that the transition from primitive communism to class society represented a step forward in technology but a swing backwards in productive relations? Are we to regard the development of modern socialist relations as a "swing forward" somehow unconnected (or only accidentally connected) with the immense growth of the forces of social production? We have in this argument a formal separation of the forces of production from the productive relations; a failure to see the inseparability of these two aspects of the mode of production.

If our earlier argument has shown that Lilley has not grasped the *opposition* of productive forces and productive relations, it is evident here that he has not grasped their *unity*.

In conclusion: these comments are not made out of any belief that a set of definitions are a substitute for the painstaking, concrete researches of the historian, excellent examples of which have been given by Lilley himself. They are made only as contribution to clarifying the fundamental principles that I consider are involved in Lilley's restatement of historical materialism.

SAM AARONOVITCH.

THE general tenor of the reviews (*The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3) of V. Gordon Childe's *History* was that the author gave insufficient emphasis to the class struggle. To this there will be general assent. But Dr. Lilley's own argument seems incorrect in several particulars. His definition of the means of production clearly goes beyond the mere instruments of production, but does it go so far as the productive forces? As the producers themselves are not included in his definition we can only infer their inclusion from the mention of skills. In fact, Dr. Lilley's means of production seem to fall between the instruments of production and the productive forces. Later he says that Childe gives "undue emphasis to the means of production at the expense of the mode." Has he not used "mode" when he meant "relations"?

Lilley denies a primary motive force to either the means or the relations of production. Does this not contradict the materialist view of history, whether Lilley equates the means of production with the instruments of production or the productive forces?

He states:

"Man is not merely a tool-making animal who in consequence of his tool-making takes up economic co-operation."

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Engels wrote, "Labour begins with the making of tools,"¹ and of labour he had already said—

"it is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself."²

Marx writes:

"The use and fabrication of instruments of labour . . . is specifically characteristic of the human labour-process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal."³

Dr. Lilley goes on to say:

"I think it cripples the materialistic view of history to isolate the technological aspect of the economic basis from its organisational aspect, and to assert that the former is a primary motive force and the latter only secondary."

If we turn to Stalin, however, although he emphasises the reaction of the relations of production upon the development of the productive forces, he clearly states that the changes and development of production—

"always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production. First the productive forces of society change and develop and then, *depending* on these changes and *in conformity with them*,⁴ men's relations of production, their economic relations change."⁵

Dr. Lilley's formulation therefore appears incorrect.

May I add a comment from a letter by Mr. E. A. Levett with which I entirely agree:

"The fact that the instruments are primary and the relations are secondary is no reason for arguing that the former ought to progress 'at a steady rate.' The relations of production interact with the instruments once they have come into existence, sometimes progressively, sometimes restrictively."

JOHN H. PRIME.

¹ Engels, *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition From Ape to Man* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1949), p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 159.

⁴ Stalin's italics.

⁵ J. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1947), pp. 585, 586.

Review of Foreign Publications

BULGARIA

Istoricheski Pregled, the non-specialist periodical of the Bulgarian Historical Association, was first published in 1945 after the liberation, and has since built up a wide circulation as a Marxist historical journal. Volume 5, like previous volumes, contains articles on various aspects of world history, e.g. on the background to the victories of the Chinese People's Army, on Czechoslovakia in the last thirty years, and on the English Revolution; but the majority of contributions, as always, are devoted to the exposition and interpretation of Bulgaria's history, particularly since 1878.

A long article by D. Koseff examines the history of the Bulgarian agrarian movement in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, with special reference to the foundation of the Agrarian Union and the attitude of the Social-Democratic Party to agrarian questions. The failure of both parties to recognise the rapid differentiation taking place within the body of the peasants is clearly brought out.

Professor R. Karakoloff contributes an article on the historical materialism of Dimiter Blagoeff, the father of Bulgarian socialism, in which he shows how far in advance Blagoeff was of such leaders of the Second International as Plekhanov and Kautsky. Already in 1901 he proclaimed, independently of Lenin, the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a stage in the building of a classless society. Close as they were, however, to the Bolsheviks in the development of their theory and practice, Blagoeff and the "narrow" socialists—ancestors of the Bulgarian Communist Party—shared many of the errors of the Second International; their tendency to regard history as an automatic process, their failure to realise that a series of gradual changes may result in a sudden, catastrophic transformation, their schematic and inflexible analysis of social relations in the countryside, were all reflected in mistakes and weaknesses of the Bulgarian socialist movement in the first quarter of the present century.

These and other articles are of partic-

ular interest inasmuch as Bulgaria was the country of south-eastern Europe in which the remnants of feudalism were soonest swept aside, and in which, therefore, capitalist relations developed in their clearest form.

Earlier history is represented by a series of articles by Professor Chr. M. Danoff dealing with the social and economic development of the Balkan peoples up to the end of the fifth century, and an article by D. Angeloff, in which he continues to examine the way by which the ideology of the Byzantine church and state was adopted and adapted by the ruling class of the medieval Bulgarian kingdom.

R. B.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Nova Mysl (*New Thought: a Review of Socialist Humanism*. Published by Socialist Academy, Prague. Ed. Dr. Jaromir Dolansky) August No., 1949.

In "Marxism and Personality," Dr. J. Linhart deals with the views of bourgeois ideologists, and of Marxists, on human personality in relation to society and history. The former include not only such theories as that of the "hero" deciding the fate of the stupid masses, and that of "mechanical materialism," "economism" (the complete negation of the role of the human personality) but the era of the crisis of capitalism has also produced the ideas of bourgeois individualism, of which Karel Capek and T. G. Masaryk are taken as examples. Capek's "humanism which could better be called personalism," and Masaryk's return to religion (to which, as he points out, "modern," i.e. bourgeois, science and philosophy are no longer opposed) both fall back on faith to save the individual from suicide in face of a world he cannot influence. Variations on this bourgeois "humanism" appear everywhere (e.g. Bertrand Russell, Jacques Maritain), while the political actions of those who officially applaud them are scarcely humanistic. After an historical sketch of the different conceptions of personality current in slave, feudal and bourgeois society, Linhart considers the individual

as seen by Marxism-Leninism, and the "new man," Socialist man. To the dialectical materialist man is not the slave of the laws of nature or of economics, but "the co-creator of the history of humanity, the creator of himself." Socialist society offers previously unknown scope for the development of the individual personality (cf. the explanation, by an English journalist, of the Red Army's victory at Stalingrad as that of "an army of people who think"). Characteristics of the new Socialist man are, in brief, "a realisation of the significance of his social, productive work, a consciousness of both his rights and his duties, conscious discipline, a feeling of responsibility towards society, a sense of honour, a moral conscience." To sum up: "only where there is self-discipline, conscious self-subordination to the will of the collective, can there exist freedom and security for the human personality."

Other articles include "New Features in the Development of People's Democracy," by N. P. Farberov (a Soviet jurist), discussing this new form of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and "Kow-Towing to Bourgeois Economics," criticising contributors to the Czech *Statistical Review* for preaching the gospel according to Keynes.

R. E.

Tvorba is a cultural and political weekly, published by the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and contains articles on all current topics from a political point of view among which are some with content corresponding to that of *The Modern Quarterly*. Some examples from this year's issues are:

Literature: "Eighty Years of Martin Anderson-Nexö" (Louis Furnberg); "The Historical Significance of Julius Fučík" (Jan Štern); "The Living Goethe" (Eduard Goldstücker).

Science: "The Work of I. P. Pavlov" (Michalová and Horváth); a serialisation of Professor Blackett's book on the atom bomb; "The Results of the Soviet Discussion on Biology" (Dr. I. Málek).

History: A Soviet criticism of the work of the Czech historian, Macurka.

Politics: "The Legend of the Battle of Britain" (M. Gus); "On the Eve of February" (Jan Neuls); "Ideological Example of the Soviet Press" (Miroslav Galuška).

Among other literary articles, Jan Štern's "Against the Liquidation of Poetry" is a guide to the struggle of the young Czech poets of to-day against formalism and vulgarity. Many welcome articles deal with Julius Fučík's heroic role in life and literature and the worldwide impression made by his book, *Written at the Foot of the Gallows*. A review of President Gottwald's book, *Culture and the Intelligentsia*, shows the highest mission of the intelligentsia to be the service of the people.

"The Black Magic of Freudian Psychoanalysis," by Dr. J. Linhart, argues that psychoanalysis is not only idealist in giving primacy to the instincts, but recreates religious myths by its "death instinct," and takes its place with Catholic theology and Trotskyism as a weapon of American imperialism.

A trenchant article by Jan Pachta, "Against Cosmopolitanism in Our Historical Science," shows how accounts are being settled with the remnants of bourgeois ideology in Czech historiography and exposes its treatment of Hus and the national question. Minister Kopecký's "Truth about the Origin of the Republic" decisively relates the Russian October revolution to the foundation of the Republic and its influence on the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the attitude of the 1914-18 allies to a Czech state. Two very important articles by Karel Kosík on the "Class Struggle in the Czech Revolution of 1848" show "the Czech proletariat arising for the first time as an independent class" and the Czech bourgeoisie thrown into the arms of reaction by its fear of the proletariat on the one hand and German expansion on the other.

On the fifth anniversary of the Slovak National Rising in August were published an article by Dr. J. Hradský on the role of the Rising in the war and on the political forces within it, and, in Slovak, "Industrialisation—Inheritance of the Slovak National Rising," by Ing. S. Takáč. "The preparation for the National Rising was at the same time preparation for the victory of February," which guaranteed the final liberation of Slovakia from its former position of economic dependence within the Czechoslovak Republic. And in September, "Undiscovered Slovakia," by M. Galuška, urges a more positive recognition among Czechs of the significance of Slovakia in transformation.

Political articles, such as "The Revolutionary Tradition of the Hungarian People," by Vladimir Kaigl, open up a whole new page of history about the People's Democracies previously deliberately lost. Kreibich's "An Important Chapter from the History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia" shows the deep roots of the Czech Communist Party in the people. There is also up-to-date reporting and research into events in the capitalist world.

R. E. and M. E.

FRANCE

La Pensée (No. 25, July-August) opens with the introduction to Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*, translated (into French for the first time) from the new (1948) O.G.I.Z. Moscow edition of this classic.

This is followed by a reprint of the address, "Is there a Threat to Scientific Research?" given by Frederic Joliot-Curie to the National Union of Intellectuals last February.

It seems that 14 milliard francs (£14,000,000) is the amount allowed for research, 80 per cent. of this going to "defence," while 50 per cent. of this at least is needed to put French science on its feet.

Joliot-Curie denounces the official policy of false economy, so reminiscent of pre-war days and their woeful tale of "astronomical total of milliards mispent on defence, with the results we know..."

He demands adequate funds and efficient organisation (such as his Atomic Energy Department has been able to achieve) and the development of the colonies in co-operation with the native peoples, as a prerequisite to establishing French science at a high level. Without science France cannot live; given proper conditions she could be the equal of almost any country in the field of peaceful research.

Marcel Prenant concludes in this *La Pensée* his series of three articles on "Hereditary and Environment," in which he "seeks to show through the examination of several cases a certain number of points in common between the Mendelian geneticists and Michurin," at the same time explaining his views and his reservations on the Lysenko controversy. At the end of the article he adds a note that he has just read the verbatim report of the Academy proceedings, and that his

outlook has greatly altered after reading the written evidence, "admitting with joy certain mistakes" and "accepting the new and impressive details of the results of Soviet agrbiology."

"Proletarian science will develop and assimilate the best results of bourgeois science and develop them in its own way; . . . then to all scientists of good faith . . . it will appear as not only performing a great work, but as deserving to become the guide to all biologists."

This is the theme of another article—in *La Nouvelle Critique* (8)—by Darciel, Dessanti, and Vassails, ("Bourgeois and Proletarian Science"); their main points are that (a) socialist science uses and is used by the whole of society in which it exists; (b) it produces a new type of scientist, a man of the people, working among the people; (c) science acquires a new *raison d'être*, and thereby a new power; (d) socialist science is constantly expanding in a double sense, in its contacts with society, and in its ever-growing knowledge and domination over nature.

Two other scientific articles are "The Problem of Heredity," by E. Kahane and V. Nigon; and a critique by Schatzman of "The Cosmological Theory of Milne-Haldane"—(*La Pensée*, 25).

In the literary section of *La Pensée*, André Parreaux writes a long and enthusiastic review of Aragon's latest novel *Les Communistes*: "not merely a new Aragon—a new kind of book," he says at the beginning; and at the end: "a book which will most powerfully help us win the battle for peace."

Without going into details about *Les Communistes*, it may be mentioned here perhaps that this book (*Bibliothèque Française*, 1949) is to be the final work of Aragon's series of novels "Le Monde Nouveau," and will appear in several parts, covering the period February, 1939, to January, 1945. The first volume (February to September, 1939) conveys most movingly the atmosphere of the painful days of the Spanish exodus, and the tension of the time of the Soviet-German Pact. Characters from his previous books reappear and their lives are interwoven with many new characters, most of them communists, militants, workers, intellectuals.

Aragon invited readers of his book to meet him at a hall in Paris and criticise and discuss the novel—surely an unprecedented event. *La Nouvelle Critique*

reprints the author's answer to his critics and his explanations of certain parts of his book, and of the previous books, which he claims are an essential part of the whole.

While *Aurélien* and *Les Beaux Quartiers* show a picture of bourgeois decadence and pessimism with one or two struggling opponents, *Les Communistes*, started at the time of Stalingrad, breathes optimism and belief in humanity in every page.

Art: André Fougeron, the formerly abstract painter, writes an article in *La Pensée* on "The role of the 'Subject' in Painting," of particular interest in view of his fairly recent conversion to realism.

Francis Jourdain contributes "Reflections of an Old Painter."

Economics: *La Pensée* contains an extract, from a Soviet review, by I. Bloumine on the "American Bourgeois Economists at the Service of the Monopolists." *La Nouvelle Critique* publishes the Soviet economist Varga's most interesting "self-criticism"—"Against Reformist Tendencies in Works on Imperialism."

F. S.

GERMANY

A general survey of the German monthly journals *Einheit* and *Aufbau*, their character and aims, has already appeared; the present notes deal only with a single number of each publication.

In the September *Einheit* the articles perhaps most striking to English readers are those reflecting the problems of eastern Germany, where the advance towards a new social order has begun under such complex conditions and where Marxist theory has to be turned to practical account by a working-class Party largely inexperienced and untrained. The Junker estates are divided up among the peasantry but the problems of peasantry in relation to proletariat remain; thus, Fred Oelssner's "Leninism and the Peasant Question" conveys theoretical teaching of urgent import. "Some Features of Socialist Industrialisation" (Hanna Wolf) and "What do We mean by Planned Finance?" (Professor Lola Zahn) enumerate clear distinctions between capitalist and Socialist characteristics or trends; the exposition of planned finance as the master key is particularly illuminating.

In contrast the position of western Germany as an American colonial area

is analysed by E. Glückauf, and the Marxist theory of capitalist crisis illustrated by J. Winternitz and J. Kuczinski. The latter shows that, despite the benefits accruing from large-scale rearmament, American monopoly capitalism cannot thereby solve its post-war crisis. But if the way out seems to be by war, as in 1939, immeasurably greater forces of peace and socialism have now to be reckoned with.

A united Germany, however, has not yet arisen to strengthen peace. Ernst Hoffman, in stressing the importance of the Soviet "ideological offensive," ably traces the historic development of German "cosmopolitanism," and frankly criticises weaknesses in the Socialist Unity Party: it has still to attain understanding of "the new role of the modern working class." On other pages a tribute to the true patriotism of the great writer Thomas Mann and Fritz Heckert's study of Ernest Thaelmann are reminders of German traditions.

The September *Aufbau* is so rich in content (including some interesting drawings and the conclusion of Lukacs' study of Goethe's *Faust*) that we can only note the width of range shown in the articles planned to illustrate the theme, "freedom of individuality." The great teaching of Goethe (J. R. Becher) and Marx's treatment of human individuality distorted by class society (Ernst Bloch) set the key.

Harmonising with it we find the work and limitations of Freud, Adler and Jung treated in historic perspective, with a glance at Sartre (Müller-Hegemann); a brilliant description by the late A. S. Makarenko of his first work among child delinquents ("Hopeless Cases"); a study of Henry Fielding and his novels, with due emphasis on *Jonathan Wild the Great* and English society in the period of "primitive accumulation"; and a discussion of the development of the natural sciences in Germany up to the present day, including the relation to materialism and some special reference to Haeckel.

D. T.

HUNGARY

"*Társadalmi Szemle*," the theoretical organ of the Hungarian Working People's Party (M.D.P.), Budapest, May, 1949.

In the May issue of *Társadalmi Szemle* there appears among other important

articles a study by Áládar Mód of "The Five Year Plan and the Transformation of Hungarian Economy." This is of particular importance because it analyses the new Plan, not just in terms of its specific objectives, but in the light of its significance for the building of Socialism in Hungary.

Hungarian capitalism developed within the framework of Austrian imperialism. During the nineteenth century, the power of the big landowners was buttressed against social change and industrialisation retarded. The semi-colonial character of the economy in relation to stronger capitalist states prevented a development of the basic industries.

The Hungarian ruling classes committed themselves more and more deeply during the inter-war years to dependence on foreign powers, in particular on Nazi Germany. This subjection to the German economy was essentially in the same line of development. What economic development took place in Hungary between 1938 and 1943 was in direct response to the needs of the Nazi war machine. Indeed, as Mód shows very concretely, it was not so much a development as a more intensive exploitation of Hungary's economic resources.

The Three Year Plan which was launched in 1947 had the central objective of reconstruction of the economy so as to bring the standard of living up to pre-war. This involved large-scale industrialisation, and has resulted in the transformation of Hungary into an agrarian-industrial country. As against this, the new Plan aims at a great leap forward, which is summed up in the overall aims of an 80 per cent. increase in industrial output, and a 50 per cent. increase in the standard of living over pre-war. It is highly significant for the transformation of the economy that the proportion of heavy industry in the total will rise from 30.8 to 35.4 per cent.

From this can be seen the overall significance of the Plan for the industrialisation of the country. This aspect will be paralleled by the projected developments in agriculture, which, by greatly raising output and productivity, are an essential condition of industrialisation.

Finally, Mód stresses that the implementation of the Plan involves the elimination of remaining elements of reaction. It means the forging of closer

unity with the U.S.S.R. and the other People's Democracies. Thus the Five Year Plan, Mód concludes, must be seen in the context of the sharpening crisis of capitalism and the strengthening of the Socialist forces. The fight for the Plan is therefore part of the fight for peace, for the defence of democracy and the sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle.

J. J.

ITALY

The editorial to the first number of the new series of *Società* (May-June, 1947) brings out clearly the special problems that face Marxist intellectuals in Italy. The masses are either semi-literate or illiterate. The industrial worker, who has left school at fourteen, has almost no facilities for further study. The fascist régime killed the "people's universities" which had grown up in the period after the 1914-18 War; adult education and even adequate public libraries are lacking. On the other hand, Marxism has had a stronger appeal to intellectuals in Italy than here. Antonio Gramsci, who died in a fascist prison before the last war, attracted round him a group of philosophers and men of letters. This is reflected in the scholarly character of the contributions to *Società* and in the thoughtfulness of the discussions. Another Marxist quarterly, *Studi Filosofici*, is devoted to philosophy, ethics, political science. No wonder that Marxist intellectuals in Italy should be preoccupied with the problem of bridging the gap between the intellectuals and the people and of spreading a knowledge of Marxism among those who either cannot read or have no facilities for reading. One thinks of the tremendous effort that has been made in the U.S.S.R. to overcome illiteracy. Central and southern Italy would demand an effort on the same scale.

Another difference between England and Italy is that for historical reasons Italian culture is literary rather than scientific. In the twentieth century the Italian bourgeois intellectuals made their biggest contribution to learning in the field of history, historical criticism and philosophy of history. Hence the small proportion of articles on scientific subjects in Italian Marxist periodicals.

The editorial begins by stating that contributors to *Società* are either Marxists or sympathisers. As Marxists,

they believe in the possibility of building up a new culture to replace bourgeois culture. As Marxists, however, they are experimental in their method and realist in their approach. Therefore they do not aim at creating "a new culture." Instead, they have two objects: (1) to criticise the shortcomings and failures of bourgeois ideology, stressing, especially, its idealism and its escapism, and its tendency to fall back into a narrow provincialism rather than grapple with the social and economic facts of contemporary life; (2) to demonstrate the effectiveness of Marxism as a method: "We intend to show Marxism alive and active, both in the problems that it treats and in the method by which it treats them. And the method will be the more Marxist in so far as it studies the facts and keeps close to experience." *Societa* refuses to indulge in vague polemic and in opposing Marxist to idealist formulations. It will only discuss general principles in dealing with a problem after a preliminary effort of research and observation. Here the editorial claims that *Societa* is carrying on the revolutionary tradition of the *Risorgimento* and is developing the most promising side of Italian culture.

"Naturally, the centre of our interests is in history. The world for Marxists is a historical world. The elements in Italian culture most alive to-day are historical studies, although historians have reverted to the limited and abstract traditions of the old humanist learning, purely rhetorical and literary." The idealist historians themselves, who made progress in so far as they were historians and not idealists, had owed much to Marxism. *Societa* therefore confronts the actual problems of contemporary Italian culture, taking account of Italian history and linking itself with the progressive tendencies in that history.

The papers in *Societa* carry out the plan with striking fidelity. First come extracts from Gramsci's notes written in prison (afterwards published in book form). Gramsci reflects on the key problem of how to bring the philosophy of an *élite* to the masses, in its historical context. He discusses the relations between the intellectuals and the masses in the Catholic Church and in the "age of enlightenment." The philosophy of the *élite* percolates down in time, to become the "common sense" of the man in the street. The common sense of the

common man to-day tends to be the mechanical determinism of eighteenth-century philosophers. This has had a progressive role in the past: it gives endurance and resignation in the face of suffering and oppression. It does not teach the workers to take their fate into their own hands. When the workers become the rulers, as in the Soviet Union, they need a philosophy fit for rulers. Gramsci points to the role of the Communist Party in bringing together theory and practice and creating a monolithic in place of a class-divided culture. In a second note, Gramsci discusses the revolutionary element in Machiavelli's *Prince*. The prince is a symbol, designed to embody the collective will of the people and to rally them to action.

Among other contributions may be noted G. Manacorda on the origin of the labour movement in Italy. (March-April, 1947.) It is a well-documented piece of historical research, showing how under the impact of industrialism the workers organised themselves first in mutual benefit societies and then passed to political action of a new kind. English readers on the look-out for comparisons will note that the active nucleus of the labour movement in Italy was republican and rationalist and anticlerical. Any student of Italian socialism or communism or indeed of nineteenth-century Italian history should look through *Societa*: the historical papers are too many to enumerate.

I should pick out, among the studies of contemporary problems, F. Barberi on the "permanent crisis" of Italian libraries. He explains the social and historical reasons for the backwardness of Italian libraries (untrained and inadequate staff, lack of specialisation, few modern buildings) in comparison with either the Anglo-Saxon countries or the U.S.S.R., and calls for a drive to arouse public opinion to create adequate library facilities as an indispensable means to educating the people. Also A. Donini on Church and State in Poland since the liberation. The Vatican has lost ground in one of the most Catholic countries in Europe owing to its reactionary and pro-Nazi policies. The Primate of Poland himself declared in June, 1948, in favour of the transfer of German population from Western Poland after this had been denounced as an atrocity by the Pope. The Polish Government permitted the formation of

a Catholic Party in Poland on the model of the Catholic Centre Parties in France, Germany and Italy, but this came to nothing owing to a split between the right and left wings. The non-provocative policy of the Polish Government up to the date of writing is illustrated. Both these papers are in the March number, 1949.

A propos of Poland, a non-Marxist Italian professor describes the visit of a party representing Italian universities to Polish universities in 1947 in an essay: G. Devoto, *Polonia*, Florence, 1947. I do not think that so objective an account of the new Poland has come from academic circles in England. The writer describes the problems and achievements of the new Poland sympathetically. He compares the general acceptance of a censorship in Poland to the acceptance in England of rationing and material restrictions; small business has more freedom in Poland. In each case, the writer says, there is a sacrifice of individual freedom for the sake of the national good, whether it be foreign policy or economic stability. The sketches of members of the Polish landed aristocracy who have accepted the democratic régime and are working for it, adapting themselves to new conditions, are most revealing.

The paper in *Studi Filosofici* which has most topical interest is probably R. Cantoni on "Myth and Scepticism in Marxism" (September-December, 1948). He takes up again the problem of the relations between the intellectuals and the masses. Marxism has to be presented in concrete terms and yet it must not "harden into a dogma." There must be constant criticism and development.

The current number of *Rinascita* (June, 1949) has a paper by P. Ingrao, "Towards a Clerical Totalitarianism," on the June congress of the Christian Democratic Party. He analyses the weakness of the left-wing groups and points to the increasing tendency for the right-wing to dominate.

B. S.

POLAND

Mysl Współczesna (Contemporary Thought) Warszawa-Łódź, Nos. 6-7, June-July, 1949.

In this issue Dr. Marian Muszkat contributes an article entitled "Cosmopolitanism in the Law of Nations as a Tool of Imperialism" (pp. 361-80).

Cosmopolitanism in this field he defines as the shower of plans for wider political affiliation, which pass under different names—"World Federation," "The United States of the World," "World Government," and, he adds, even "The United Nations." The original aim of U.N.O. was not only the preservation of the sovereignty of existing nations, but also the development of the sovereignty of colonial and backward peoples who have not yet achieved nationhood. This aim, Dr. Muszkat says, presupposes a condition of co-operation between all states, irrespective of their internal organisation, whether capitalist or communist, which condition did exist in the war years because the U.S.A.'s policy was determined by the bourgeois, but progressive, Roosevelt. The fruits of this co-operation were Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam. Dr. Muszkat quotes Stalin's reply to Alexander Werth (September 17th, 1946), his conversation with Stassen (April 9th, 1947), and his letter to Henry Wallace (May 18th, 1948) as evidence that the U.S.S.R. has not ceased to consider such co-operation possible. The plans for World Government have served as the ideology of the political offensive which the capitalist powers launched simultaneously with the dropping of the atomic bomb. Such federation, says Dr. Muszkat, would have the effect of, first, giving the most powerful nation in it the decisive voice and thus overriding the individual sovereignty of the component nations; second, of producing a state of social petrification of those nations; and, third, of dividing the world irrevocably into two groups, with the consequent danger of war. In this form of Cosmopolitanism Dr. Muszkat sees the lineal descendant of *Mittel-Europa* and the *Cordon Sanitaire*, and urges that only the complete possession of sovereignty by the individual nations of the world can preserve both peace and the principles of U.N.O.

As in Britain, there has recently been much discussion in Poland of the function of the University in society, the possibility of increasing the number of students and the reform of the examination system. Professor Jozef Chałasiński in his article, "The Reform of Humanistic Studies" (pp. 273-95), which he makes clear represents his own views, agrees with Sir Walter Moberly that the atomisation of learning, with the result that there is no common language

between the arts and the sciences, is one of the main causes of the crisis in the University: "It is an ominous type of scholar who is satisfied with the technical perfection of his academic skill, but has lost the feeling of a social and moral sense in his activity. Ominous indeed is the loss of the tradition of humanism, of that tradition which connected all knowledge with the idea of Man and his responsibility for the history, which he himself makes, and the culture, which he himself shapes." Chałasinski demands not an individual humanism, but a socialist humanism, which can only be achieved in the University by a sense of common purpose and by the collaboration of all branches of learning. Collaboration does not mean the limitation of the individual's initiative in the actual academic department, but an awareness that Culture and Education are rather the heritage of the mass of the nation, than the exclusive possessions of an *élite*. In other words, the problem is not so much the students who receive a university education, but those who do not. The University has a responsibility to the citizens beyond its walls, who are reached by cultural workers in the field of adult education and by other agencies.

Chałasinski, urging that the content of university instruction should encourage such a social consciousness, cites E. A. Kosminsky's *Issledovanie po Agrarnoj Anglii vili Veka*, Akademi Nauk Sojuza S.S.R., Moscow-Leningrad, 1947, as the type of monograph which arouses such a feeling. Surely it is time that Kosminsky's work was translated into English.

R. F. L.

U.S.S.R.

The leading theoretical and political journal published by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., the fortnightly *Bolshevik* (80 pages; 500,000 print) is a frequent and important source of historical material and appreciation. In the fifteen issues for the present year available up to the time of writing, the following may be noted.

No. 1 printed a series of hitherto unpublished papers of V. I. Lenin. One set, bearing on the international socialist movement during the First World War, has since appeared in English in the *Labour Monthly*. Three other documents are of importance for the role of the State Bank in the period

of N.E.P.—particularly in developing State trading, which Lenin calls "the root question."

A review (No. 2) of No. XI of the *Marx-Engels Archives* (published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute) is of exceptional value for students of Marxism, containing an account of those manuscripts of the great revolutionaries which consist of summaries of, and extracts from, Russian economic and political authors. Their comments, abundantly quoted in the article, also throw much light on Russian history, particularly on the Emancipation of 1861.

For the history of imperialism and the Russian Revolution, the complete edition of Stalin's works, now appearing, and the fourth edition of Lenin's, are quite indispensable. The *Bolshevik's* reviews of the volumes, as they appear, are a convenient introduction for those whose Russian quails at the sight of the full work. Those noticed at length this year are: *Lenin*, Vols. XXII (No. 7), XXIII (No. 8), XXIV (No. 12); *Stalin*, Vols. X (No. 10), XI (No. 15).

No. 14 contains a valuable essay by D. Blasoi on the outstanding eighteenth-century Russian revolutionary, philosopher and writer, Alexander Radischev, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of his birth, analysing the main motive forces of his social thought.

Voprosy Istorii, the leading Soviet monthly historical journal (published by the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences: 160 pages; 33,500 print) naturally devotes much space to the history of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. But its range is far wider. The history of those nations which have entered the path of Socialism through the road of People's Democracy is the subject of considerable Marxist study. Western Europe and the imperialist world generally also present many fruitful themes of research and communications.

Among numerous special studies in the field of Soviet history, an article in No. 1 of the 1949 series, by E. Gerkina, on the struggle of the Bolshevik Party on the ideological front in the first years of N.E.P. (1921-2), is a useful reminder that the battle of ideas is no novelty in the life of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Many of the struggles described in the article—against bourgeois ideology, sometimes in would-be "Socialist" garb—are of great significance for the

young Socialist States of to-day and of the future. Many striking documents from the pen of Lenin and Stalin enhance the value of the article.

Nearly five months elapsed between the appearance of No. 1 and No. 2 of the journal: a gap caused by a profound discussion within the ranks of Soviet historians precisely on expressions of bourgeois ideology—cosmopolitanism and colourless, non-partisan "objectivism"—which have in recent years appeared among them, in such spheres as historiography (artificial detachment of historical schools from the concrete historical process, the class struggle, in which they grew up), history of Russian culture (main emphasis on borrowing from and "influence" of Western civilisation), modern world history (uncritical repetition of American and British "liberal" historians), etc. An editorial in No. 2 deals at length with this problem; another, in No. 3, treats of the "tasks of Soviet historians in the sphere of modern history"; and a third, in No. 4, of what is expected of Soviet Orientalist historians.

M. Kim, in No. 3, makes a careful study of Stalin's works as a guide to the history of the Soviet multi-national State—a topic on which Stalin has developed Marxist theory and practice immensely since Lenin first wrote of him as "our marvellous Georgian," precisely because of the new ground he broke in his first work in Russian on the national question (1913).

A number of articles on the history of the peoples of eastern Europe provide important contributions to the understanding of their advance to People's Democracy. A. Schnitman (No. 1) makes an interesting and extensive study of available printed matter showing the influence of the Russian revolutionary movement between 1885 and 1903 on the evolution, during those years, of the Bulgarian "Narrow" Marxists—forerunners of the Bulgarian Communist

Party. V. Karra (No. 2) summarises the stages through which the struggle for the creation of a People's Democracy in Rumania has passed since 1944.

The struggles of the peoples of the West are dealt with at length in detailed articles by P. Manova (No. 1), "The January Struggles in Berlin in 1919"; N. Surin (No. 2), "The Resistance Movement in France in 1942-3 and de Gaulle"; and N. Lavrov (No. 4), "The Agrarian Question in the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17."

R. Yuriev, in a short survey of published French and German material, provides a timely reminder of "British and French Preparations for Attacking the Soviet Union from the South in 1939-40" (No. 2). He draws the conclusion that the plan for such an attack originated in 1939 *some months before* the war with Germany; that the British and French Governments actively developed this plan, particularly after Finland surrendered in March, 1940; and that operations were timed to begin in June that year. He does not seem to know the very relevant data given two years later by Philip Jordan in his *Russian Glory*.

It is of particular interest just now to read detailed studies of the role during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-7 of British imperialism (R. Vyatkin in No. 3) and of American imperialism (L. Berezny in No. 4). The first article begins with a short account of the shameful part played by the first Labour Government of 1924 in supporting the counter-revolutionary insurrectionary forces of the Cantonese "compradore" bourgeoisie with gunboats and ultimatums.

Another brilliant success of the Transport House variety of Socialism is described at length by N. Somin in "The Meerut Trial in India and the Colonial Policy of the Labour Party" (No. 3).

A. R.

Our Contributors

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Speaker, John Sibley, B.A.

March 1st. "Rumania—Satellite of the U.S.S.R.?" Speaker, Miss
Enid Mayell, B.A.

April 19th. "The English Revolution." Speaker, Christopher
Hill, M.A.

All meetings in the Satis Café, 40 Cannon Street (off New Street),
at 8 p.m.

BRISTOL

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Mansfield.

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