

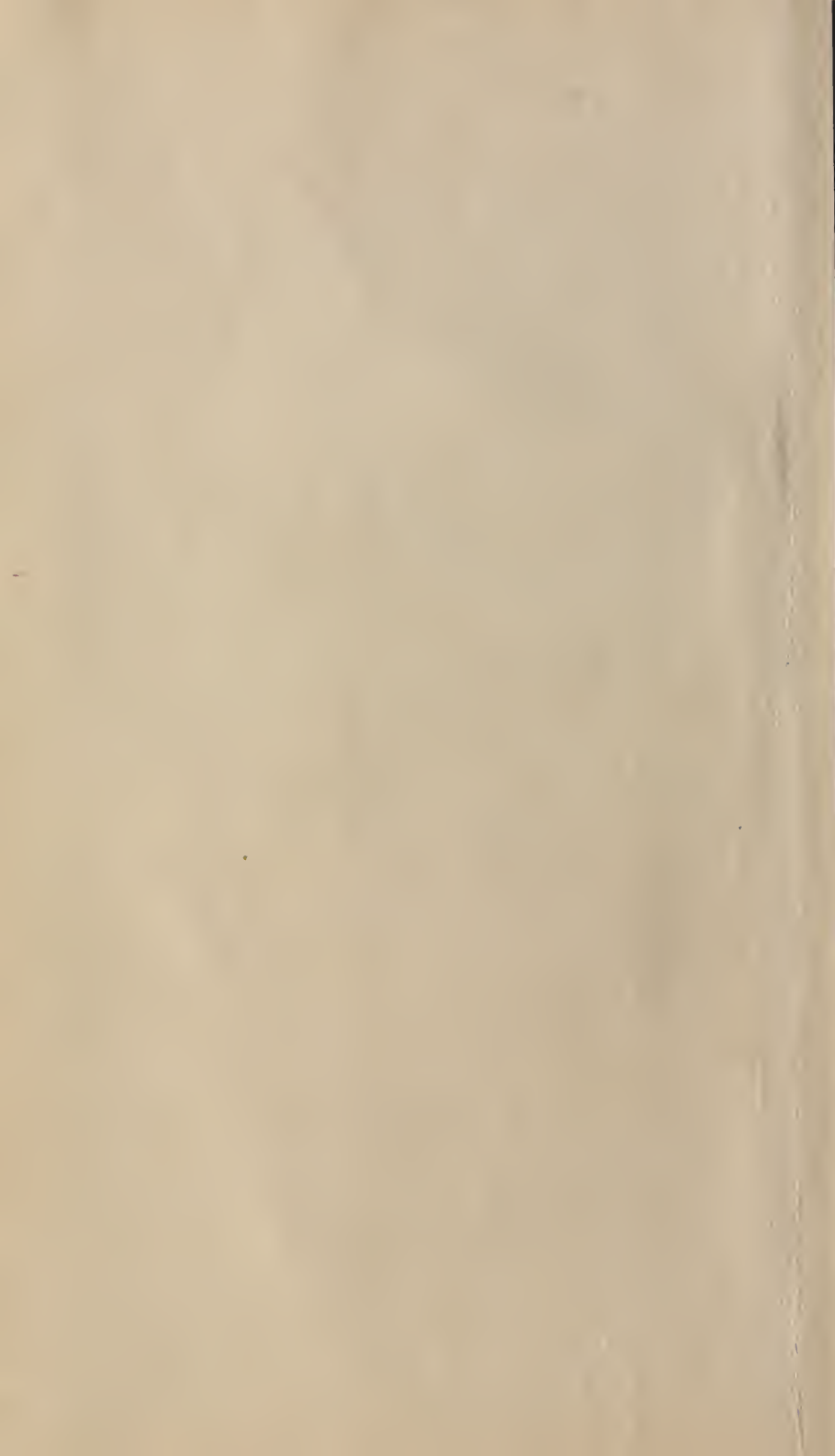
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Vol. 1 & 2

# FACTS ON COMMUNISM

VOLUME I  
THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY



# FACTS ON COMMUNISM

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## VOLUME I THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY

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*U.S. Congress, House*  
COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
EIGHTY-SIXTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION



DECEMBER 1959



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COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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H. Con. Res. 449

Passed February 9, 1960

Eighty-sixth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday, the sixth day of January,  
one thousand nine hundred and sixty*

Concurrent Resolution

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),  
That the publication entitled "Facts on Communism—Volume 1, The  
Communist Ideology" prepared by the Committee on Un-American  
Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-sixth Congress, first ses-  
sion, be printed as a House document; and that there be printed  
thirty thousand additional copies of said document of which six thou-  
sand shall be for the use of said committee and twenty-four thousand  
copies to be prorated to the Members of the House of Representatives.*

Attest:

RALPH R. ROBERTS,  
*Clerk of the House of Representatives.*

Attest:

FELTON M. JOHNSTON,  
*Secretary of the Senate.*

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1961

Vol. 1 & 2



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PUBLIC LAW 601, 79TH CONGRESS

The legislation under which the House Committee on Un-American Activities operates is Public Law 601, 79th Congress [1946], chapter 753, 2d session, which provides:

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, \* \* \**

PART 2—RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RULE X

SEC. 121. STANDING COMMITTEES

\* \* \* \* \*

18. Committee on Un-American Activities, to consist of nine Members.

RULE XI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

\* \* \* \* \*

(q) (1) Committee on Un-American Activities.

(A) Un-American activities.

(2) The Committee on Un-American Activities, as a whole or by subcommittee, is authorized to make from time to time investigations of (i) the extent-character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (ii) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution, and (iii) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.

The Committee on Un-American Activities shall report to the House (or to the Clerk of the House if the House is not in session) the results of any such investigation, together with such recommendations as it deems advisable.

For the purpose of any such investigation, the Committee on Un-American Activities, or any subcommittee thereof, is authorized to sit and act at such times and places within the United States, whether or not the House is sitting, has recessed, or has adjourned, to hold such hearings, to require the attendance of such witnesses and the production of such books, papers, and documents, and to take such testimony, as it deems necessary. Subpenas may be issued under the signature of the chairman of the committee or any subcommittee, or by any member designated by any such chairman, and may be served by any person designated by any such chairman or member.

\* \* \* \* \*

RULE XII

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT BY STANDING COMMITTEES

SEC. 136. To assist the Congress in appraising the administration of the laws and in developing such amendments or related legislation as it may deem necessary, each standing committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall exercise continuous watchfulness of the execution by the administrative agencies concerned of any laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of such committee; and, for that purpose, shall study all pertinent reports and data submitted to the Congress by the agencies in the executive branch of the Government.

RULES ADOPTED BY THE 86TH CONGRESS

House Resolution 7, January 7, 1959

\* \* \* \* \*

RULE X

STANDING COMMITTEES

1. There shall be elected by the House, at the commencement of each Congress,

- \* \* \* \* \*
- (q) Committee on Un-American Activities, to consist of nine Members.
- \* \* \* \* \*

RULE XI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

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\* \* \* \* \*

26. To assist the House in appraising the administration of the laws and in developing such amendments or related legislation as it may deem necessary, each standing committee of the House shall exercise continuous watchfulness of the execution by the administrative agencies concerned of any laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of such committee; and, for that purpose, shall study all pertinent reports and data submitted to the House by the agencies in the executive branch of the Government.

## PREFACE

The Committee on Un-American Activities herewith presents the first of a series of volumes designed to give a comprehensive survey of communism in both its theoretical and practical aspects.

This volume and succeeding volumes to be published are the fruit of collaboration between the Committee's research staff and a number of eminent scholars with specialized knowledge of certain aspects of communism.

Volume I of the *Facts on Communism* is published with the Committee's special acknowledgment to Dr. Gerhart Niemeyer, professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, for taking the responsibility of analyzing and interpreting Communist ideology.

FRANCIS E. WALTER, *Chairman.*



## INTRODUCTION

Communism is called, by its own followers, a "philosophy in action." As a philosophy, it is characterized by a basic attitude of uncompromising hostility to all non-Communist societies and the ideas held in them. Beyond this, however, it is a philosophy armed with means of power.

First, it is armed with the strength and resources of a big country and the more than 200 million people living there. Using this country's might, it has added to itself the further strength of an empire of over 700 million more people. Second, this philosophy is the guiding motive for a network of organized adherents in all countries whose loyalties are basically alienated from their respective nations and fellow citizens and committed to the overthrow of the existing social order in favor of the Communist alternative.

At present, communism has concentrated its hostility on the United States as the most powerful among the nations not yet under its sway. The United States thus finds itself under attack by an enemy whose motive for hostility is not any practical grievance or limited aspiration but rather the basic will to destroy the order of life in the United States in order to make room for a Communist rule.

The enemy has engaged us on many fronts at once. In the field of international power relations, he has pursued an aggressive policy seeking to isolate the United States in order to destroy our power, an objective toward which he has pressed with or without war, by means of diplomacy, propaganda, trade, and subversion. In the framework of internal political and social order, the enemy has sought to influence, paralyze, or disintegrate the processes of our common life, operating under the facade of ostensibly responsible citizenship. In the realm of ideas, finally, the enemy has attempted to use many kinds of intellectual and cultural activities (education, science, literature, art) in order to destroy all loyalties other than those to Communist leadership.

This multifarious attack, unprecedented in history, differs so much from the normal pattern of relations between nations or political groups within nations that many people fail to grasp the full extent of the threat. Some tend to mistake communism for a mere part of what it is and does. Others are not informed about the concealed aspects of communism. Still others find the Communist philosophy strange and incomprehensible.

Ignorance of communism in all its aspects is a dangerous weakness in this struggle. The committee has therefore considered it one of its

most urgent tasks to assemble all the salient facts about communism for a full, undistorted, and revealing picture of communism's true nature. This is no small undertaking. It amounts to a comprehensive and intelligible, as well as fully documented, description of the Communist philosophy, the rise of the Communists to power in Russia, the regime they have established there, the expansion of Communist rule from Russia, and the methods used by Communist imperialism.

By way of an introduction to the more detailed treatments of these various topics, it behooves us briefly to identify the political movement with which we are dealing, the men who originated it, and the place they and their ideas occupy in contemporary history.

The term "communism" is now commonly confined to the organization and ideology of the revolutionary movement centering in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This party, in turn, acknowledges as its undisputed authority Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Lenin confessed himself a faithful pupil of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and he began to organize his Communist Party within the framework of the larger organized movement initiated by Marx and Engels. Lenin, however, was also influenced by a specific Russian revolutionary tradition which had its own thinkers—notably Nechaev and Tkachev—and its own succession of revolutionary organizations, which indirectly affected the Russian Marxists.<sup>1</sup> The ideology of communism, as finally elaborated by Lenin, formally adopted all of the thoughts of Marx and Engels, even though in substance these ideas were developed and revised by Lenin. Its organizational and operational methods are, however, strongly influenced by non-Marxist revolutionary traditions in Russia.

In the following we shall briefly identify the men, ideas, and organizations that contributed to communism in its present form.

### Marx and His Time

For a brief survey of the biographical data of Karl Marx, we rely on the following sketch by Sidney Hook:

. . . Marx was born in 1818 in the little Rhenish town of Trier which boasted of its origins as a distinguished Roman outpost of early times. On both sides of his family he was descended from a long line of Jewish rabbis. For social reasons, Marx's father became converted to Protestantism and his son grew up without any consciousness of himself as being Jewish. After a conventionally brilliant career at school, Marx attended briefly the University of Bonn and then the University of Berlin where he developed strong intellectual interests in law, philology, and theology. Upon the completion of his doctorate he was made editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, which was shortly suppressed because of its advanced liberal views. In 1843, Marx married. He then moved to Paris where he plunged into a study of

<sup>1</sup> Eugene Pyziur, *The Doctrine of Anarchism of Michael A. Bakunin* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1955), especially chapter 6.



French communism and political economy. While in Paris he met Friedrich Engels and forged a lifelong friendship with him. Engels, son of a wealthy manufacturer, shared, helped develop, and popularized Marx's ideas. He also relieved the burden of crushing poverty on Marx's family. Exiled from Paris, Marx went to Brussels where he joined the Communist League and on the eve of the Revolution of 1848 wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. He took a lively part in helping to organize the Revolution of 1848 in Western Europe, was banished from Brussels, arrested, tried, and freed in Germany, and compelled to leave France again. He finally found political asylum in London, where he spent the rest of his life in research, writing, emigrant squabbles, political journalism of the highest level, and in organizing the First International Workingmen's Association. He published comparatively little during this period aside from the first volume of *Capital*, although he left behind the draft of several other volumes.

Fame and acknowledgment came slowly to Marx, and when he died in 1883 few outside of the circle of his political followers were aware of his work and stature.<sup>2</sup>

Who were the French Communists whom Marx went to Paris to study, and what place does Marx occupy in comparison with them? Socialist movements had taken form in the wake of the French Revolution (1789) which had powerfully propagated the ideas of freedom and equality. In the framework of the developing industrial society, people began to ask how these ideas applied to the industrial workers.

. . . The workingman was told by respected economists that he could not hope to change the system in his own favor. . . . He was told by the Manchester School, and by its equivalent in France, that the income of labor was set by ineluctable natural laws. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

There were two means of escape. One was to improve the position of labor in the market. This led to the formation of labor unions. . . . The other means of escape was to repudiate the whole idea of a market economy. It was to conceive of a system in which goods were to be produced for use, not for sale; and in which working people should be compensated according to need, not according to the requirements of an employer. This was the basis of most forms of socialism.

Socialism spread rapidly among the working class after 1830. In France it blended with revolutionary republicanism. There was a revival of interest in the great Revolution and the democratic republic of 1793. . . . In Britain, as befitted the different background of the country, socialistic ideas blended in with the movement for further parliamentary reform.<sup>3</sup>

It was in the Western countries where socialist ideas had been developed by various schools of thought and various political movements that Marx found men with revolutionary minds akin to his own.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Hook, *Marx and the Marxists, The Ambiguous Legacy* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1955), pp. 12, 13.

<sup>3</sup> R. R. Palmer, *A History of the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950), pp. 475-477.

Marx was a revolutionary, and his mission to prepare the proletariat for revolution. This is the simple and important fact about him which is the clue to all his public life. The real difference between him and such socialists as Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier—the Utopians, as he called them, although he also spoke of them with considerable respect—was not that he was scientific and they were not. That was only the difference as he and Engels conceived it. Saint-Simon had a theory of history at least as intellectually respectable as Marx's. . . . Marx compared Saint-Simon's theory with his own and found it unscientific; but the impartial student, looking at the two theories, finds one characteristic common to them: they both claim to be scientific.<sup>4</sup>

The three "Utopians" mentioned in the above-quoted passage were contemporaries of Marx. Robert Owen (1771–1858) was a British reformer and socialist who reconstructed a community into a model town with nonprofitmaking stores and advanced working conditions. He also pioneered a number of cooperative societies and instigated the Factory Act of 1819. Saint-Simon (1760–1825) was a French social philosopher of noble birth. His writings foreshadowed socialism, European federation, and the positivism of Comte. His pupils constructed a political program calling for public control of the means of production, abolition of inheritance rights, and the emancipation of women. Fourier (1772–1837) was also a French social philosopher. He called for small economic units based on common property.<sup>5</sup>

As soon as Marx, in polemical discussion with other socialists, had defined and proclaimed his own "scientific" socialism another revolution broke out, spreading from France to all of Europe (1848).

. . . Governments collapsed all over the Continent. Remembered horrors appeared again, as in a recurring dream, in much the same sequence as after 1789 only at a much faster rate of speed. Revolutionaries milled in the streets, kings fled, republics were declared, and within four years there was another Napoleon. Soon thereafter came a series of wars.

. . . only the Russian Empire and Great Britain escaped the revolutionary contagion of 1848, and the British received a very bad scare.<sup>6</sup>

This revolution, coming in little more than half a century after the Great Revolution in France, seemed to confirm Marx's theory of revolutions as the driving force in history. Together with other revolutionaries, Marx now began to prepare systematically the ground for further revolutionary upheavals. He was, however, to see only one more, and that a minor one: During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, an uprising occurred within the walls of besieged Paris and a revolutionary regime established itself in the city for a few months. This was the

<sup>4</sup> John Plamenatz, *German Marxism and Russian Communism* (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1954), p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> The above data based on *The Columbia Encyclopaedia* (2d ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1950).

<sup>6</sup> Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 479, 480.

so-called Paris Commune, a movement first rejected and then eagerly espoused by Marx who succeeded in incorporating this event into the revolutionary tradition acknowledged and venerated by his own adherents.<sup>7</sup>

To turn back again to the relation between Marx and other contemporary socialists:

What really distinguishes Marx from the socialists falsely called Utopian is therefore not science but revolutionary zeal; and what distinguishes him from the other socialists who believed in the class war, from Blanqui, Proudhon and Bakunin, is again not science but the peculiarities of the theory he invented to explain his faith in the proletariat. Proudhon had no developed philosophy of history; his theory of exploitation was different from Marx's; he wanted to abolish private capitalism without substituting for it the public ownership of the means of production and exchange; and he did not believe that the workers should try to capture political power. He was a more confused thinker than Marx, but just as determined an enemy of capitalism. Bakunin was an anarchist, an almost incoherent doctrinaire, and an irresponsible political leader, but as much a friend of the proletariat and as ardent a fighter as Marx. It is his immense learning, the greater coherence of his theories, his ability to work hard, his tenacity of purpose, his sense of responsibility and—dare I say it?—his bourgeois morality, that distinguish Marx from Bakunin.<sup>8</sup>

Here we meet three more contemporaries of Marx. Blanqui (1805–81) was a French revolutionist and radical thinker, as well as a leader in the Revolution of 1848. The Commune of Paris in 1871 was largely controlled by his followers. Proudhon (1809–65) was a French social theorist who achieved prominence through his pamphlet *What Is Property?* He sought a society of loosely federated groups in which the government might become unnecessary. Bakunin (1814–76) was a Russian anarchist who was exiled to Siberia from where he escaped. In the First International he was opposed by Marx who had him expelled. He believed “anarchism, collectivism, and atheism” would give man complete freedom and advocated violent revolution.<sup>9</sup>

. . . Blanqui, the most famous active revolutionary leader of the nineteenth century, was not really a theorist at all; he merely invented a social philosophy to justify his practice long after he had adopted it, and then only because it was the fashion to do so. Blanqui, like Marx, had nothing to say about the future society, it would emerge of itself and no one could know beforehand what it would be like. His business was merely to destroy bourgeois society; and to that business he devoted his whole life.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> R. N. Carew Hunt, *The Theory and Practice of Communism* (New York: the Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 104.

<sup>8</sup> Plamenatz, *op. cit.*, p. 119. The phrase “bourgeois morality” obviously intends to indicate that Marx was governed by certain scruples which Bakunin had entirely shed.

<sup>9</sup> The above data based on *The Columbia Encyclopaedia*, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Plamenatz, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

There were, in other words, besides Marxist socialism a number of other similar ideas which had gathered unto themselves social movements, mainly in France. There was Fourierism, and Saint-Simonism; there was the anarchism inspired by Proudhon, and the conspiratorial revolutionary movement led by Blanqui. Marx was certainly influenced by all of these movements and yet developed the main features of his own thought in the effort to define the difference between himself and them. Thus he fought a running battle against the anarchists, he separated his own brand of socialism sharply from what he called the "Utopian" variety, and kept at some distance from Blanquism. These efforts took shape above all in the long-drawn-out struggles to impose his ideas on various revolutionary organizations. After the original Communist League, which soon dissolved, the earliest of these organizations was the First International.

### The First and Second Internationals

What was the First International? In 1864, at a meeting attended by French, German, Italian, Swiss, and Polish Socialists, an international association was formed. It was called an "International Federation of Working Men" and "pledged to destroy the prevailing economic system." The association comprised many heterogenous elements, whose general agreement on some revolutionary mood could not cover their profound disagreement on the nature, time, occasion and aim of the revolution. The drafting of its constitution was entrusted to Marx who also became a member of the Executive Committee.<sup>11</sup>

From 1866 to 1869 the First International held annual congresses either in Switzerland or Belgium. Marx and Engels did not attend them, for neither thought such gatherings of much importance as long as they themselves controlled the General Council in London. . . . the elements of which the International was composed were too heterogeneous to render possible agreement on any positive policy. . . .

None the less, the First International . . . grew yearly in numbers. By the end of the sixties it was believed to have a regular dues-paying membership of 800,000. . . . Marx . . . saw in the International great possibilities. . . . he wrote to Engels in September 1867. "By the time of the next revolution, which may perhaps be nearer than it seems, we (that is you and I) will have this powerful engine in our hands. . . ."

The revolution came at last with the Paris Commune of 1871, but its result was to destroy the International . . .

The final dissolution of the First International was due to Marx's controversy with Michael Bakunin. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>11</sup> Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

... His personality dominated the Basle Congress of 1869—which Marx did not attend—and a resolution drafted by Marx was voted down by a large majority. Marx therefore became persuaded that Bakunin was out to capture the International; and thus he and Engels attended the next congress, held at The Hague on September 2nd, 1872, where they succeeded in getting him excluded. But his [Bakunin's] influence in the International was still dangerously strong; and rather than allow it to come under his control, Marx carried a resolution transferring its headquarters to the United States . . . where it was finally dissolved at the Congress of Philadelphia of 1876.<sup>12</sup>

Marx and Engels themselves did not attempt to revive the International. Before a successor organization was founded, there took place a remarkable growth of socialist parties in the major countries of Europe, particularly in Germany, parties in which Marx's principles often played a dominating role.

... in Germany . . . at the Reichstag elections of 1890, the Social Democrats polled nearly a million and a half votes. . . . It was by far the largest political labour group in Europe, and its leaders were regarded, even by the Russians, with an extreme respect. In England the "Democratic Federation" was founded in 1881 by H. M. Hyndman, and became known in 1884 as the "Social Democratic Federation". . . . In France the *Parti Ouvrier Francais* had been founded in 1879 by Jules Guesde, and Marx had drawn up its statutes. . . .

In 1889 two congresses were held in Paris, the one attended by Marxists, and the other by non-Marxists. The two, however, were persuaded to combine; and thus on July 14th . . . there was founded . . . the Second International, which held congresses every two or three years up to the First World War. It formally adopted Marx's basic principles—the class struggle, international unity, proletarian action and the socialization of the means of production; . . .<sup>13</sup>

The Second International had put great hopes in international labor solidarity as an effective barrier to international war. When it was not able to prevent the outbreak or continuation of the World War in 1914, its prestige suffered a fatal blow from which it never recovered. However, even before this time, its ranks had been badly split by disagreement over the character of the coming revolution.

### Reformism and Revolutionism

Between approximately 1900 and 1917, a split produced itself within the Second International, or rather within the parties affiliated with the Second International. It took place in the form of violent discussions over party strategy, particularly in the German Social-Democratic Party, and particularly as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1905.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113–118.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 126.

That revolution raised the question whether Marxists should proceed to make a revolution by direct mass action or should rather work for increasing influence of the party's parliamentary representation. Another issue was raised by the prospective European war, which posed the question whether Marxist parties should unconditionally refuse to support the military establishments of their nations, or should rather press for social improvements as the price for socialist support of military appropriations.<sup>14</sup>

. . . In the German Social Democratic Party the 1905 revolution in Russia was the parting of the ways. The leader of the Marxist faction was then Karl Kautsky [1854–1938] . . . in . . . 1906 he published an article . . . suggesting . . . the necessity of a change of tactics within the Party. . . . “It is,” he said, “of course an error to say that the Social Democrats are working to bring about a revolution. That is not at all the case. What interest have we in producing catastrophes in which the workers will be the first to suffer?” Thereafter the Party split into three groups—the reformist right-wing, whose doctrine every congress condemned in theory but increasingly applied in practice; the Centre, led by Bebel and later joined by Kautsky; and the Marxist left-wing under Rosa Luxemburg, and Karl Liebknecht who were to be the founders of the German Communist Party.<sup>15</sup>

It turned out that Marxism could produce two courses of action which were mutually exclusive even though they sprang from the same foundations. Kautsky's position, sketched in the above passage, is that of a Marxist who challenges the capitalist society in the name of a higher morality which, of course, induces him to compete with the rulers of that society for better solutions to current political problems. The opposite course, eventually formulated in its sharpest consistency by Lenin, is for Marxists to consider themselves as utter strangers in the present society, to put all their eggs in the single basket of the socialist future, and therefore to hasten the historical cataclysm of the Revolution by all the means at their disposal. The latter course came to be called *revolutionary*, and the former *reformist*. The split between adherents of these two courses resulted from the political choices they had to make when Marxist parties became powerful enough to influence the politics of their countries and had to make up their minds what they should do in matters of military appropriations, credits for colonial rule, and how they would behave in the case of a general war. It is from this split between two wings of Marxism that eventually resulted the two different and antagonistic party systems of Communists and Social-Democrats, the former organized in the Third International and the latter continuing in the Second International.

<sup>14</sup> Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905–1917* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), particularly parts I and IV.

<sup>15</sup> Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

## Lenin and Bolshevism

The above passage mentions a "reformist" right wing of the German Party. This "reformism" actually, in a negative way, produced much of the impulse for Leninism. "Reformism" was started by the ideas of Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), the first leading Marxist daring publicly to admit that Marx's predictions had not come true, and to draw from this the conclusion that Marx's principles should be revised. Thence his approach is also called "Revisionism."

Bernstein called attention to the fact that the reforms achieved as a result of the pressure of trade unions, and the Socialist Party had altered in some ways the grim economic prospects of capitalism as predicted by the orthodox Marxists. He inferred from this and other social phenomena that the workers could gain both more allies and more victories by the extension of democratic methods than by preaching and practicing class war. Class struggles were endemic to the economic system. But they need not take violent form. Bernstein in effect made the socialist *program* subordinate to the democratic *process* and the interest of class a means of furthering the good of the community.<sup>19</sup>

Bernstein's main work was published in 1898, and from then on a violent discussion rent the ranks of the Marxist Socialist parties. One of those who reacted very strongly against Bernstein's revisionist ideas was the young Russian Marxist Vladimir Il'ich Ulianov, who later adopted the cover name N. Lenin (1870-1924). He had been introduced to Marxism by Georgi Plekhanov (1856-1918) who had founded, in 1883, a Marxist group among Russian exiles in Switzerland. At a congress in Minsk in 1898, the Social Democratic Party of Russia was founded, but, since the party was illegal in Russia, its leaders operated in Switzerland. It was among this group that Lenin, in 1903, developed the principles of the Communist Party.

In Russia, the impact of Western ideas on a rigidly autocratic regime had produced a revolutionary tradition which had developed independently of the Western revolutionary movements, even though Western socialist notions had from time to time inspired its leaders.

. . . The first revolutionary effort made by the Decembrists, in 1825, was fomented by circles of officers and aristocrats without popular support. In the second half of the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) the radicals realized that a literary movement addressed to intellectuals, particularly students, could not obtain practical results. Instead, they pinned their hopes on terror and on the peasants. Some expected that attempts against the lives of high officials and the Tsar himself would be a signal for a revolution of the masses. Others held the romantic belief that the Russian peasant for whom village communities without individual land property were characteristic, had a particular affinity for socialism. . . .

<sup>19</sup> Hook, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

This sentimental-utopian attitude was opposed from the 1880's on, especially by Russian Marxism (spread first among emigres) of which Plekhanov was the most outstanding representative.<sup>17</sup>

Among these Russian Marxists, ideas resembling the revisionism of Bernstein made headway. Like Marx in earlier times, Lenin worked out his own position in bitter ideological and organizational fights against the "revisionists." In addition, however, he had been strongly influenced by some ideas about the coming revolution which were developed by the Russian terrorist revolutionists Nechaev and Tkachev.

"Neither now nor in the future," Tkachev had written in 1874, "will the common people by its own power bring on a social revolution. We alone, the revolutionary minority, can and should do that as soon as possible."<sup>18</sup>

At the Second Congress<sup>19</sup> of the new Russian Social-Democratic Party, Lenin advanced these ideas against the other Marxists who had more conventional notions about party organization.

. . . Only if professional revolutionaries devoted their whole lives to the fight against Tsarism, could they achieve the collapse of absolutist defenses, and only a careful organization could secure and guarantee a continuity of the revolutionary movement. This conception of the party as a kind of military organization, based upon orthodox Marxian doctrine, as interpreted by Lenin (whose views were regarded as *the truth*), resulted in a split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the London Social-Democratic Party congress of 1903.<sup>20</sup>

Thus was born not only the nucleus of the Communist Party, but also a new version of Marxism, later called Leninism. The party existed for a long while as a mere faction of the Social-Democratic Party of Russia until, in 1912, it became a party with its own organization.<sup>21</sup>

Communism as we know it today—an organized and armed ideological enterprise—was born at the 1903 Congress of Russian Marxists. Here took place the merging of the characteristic elements which in their combination since then have identified communism: a dogmatic, exclusive, and aggressive ideology, a centralized, quasi-military and totalitarian combat organization, the unquestioned intellectual authority of Lenin, and the conspiratorial, dictatorial, and disingenuous attitudes toward fellow men which are peculiar to Communists. In the complex and yet unified phenomenon of communism, the ideas of Marx and Engels have actually played no more than a partial role within Communist ideology which, as such, is Lenin's brainchild.

<sup>17</sup> Waldemar Gurian, *Bolshevism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952), p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> David Shub, *Lenin* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1949), p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> The Second Congress took place in Brussels and London and was attended not only by the Russian Marxists in exile but also by a number of delegates from Russia who came to the West in order to be able to meet without fear of arrest.

<sup>20</sup> Gurian, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Gurian, *op. cit.*, p. 31.



There is little worthy of note in Lenin's life before 1917. He was the son of a district school inspector in Simbirsk, one of six children. His father was a member of the minor nobility. When he was 16, his older brother Alexander was executed for taking part in a conspiracy against the Tsar. At this time, according to Lenin's later testimony, he "ceased to believe in God." In 1887, he entered Kazan University from which he was soon expelled for student disorders. He took his law degree at the University of St. Petersburg in 1891. In 1893 he once more returned to that city and joined an underground Social Democratic circle. A few years later, on a trip abroad, he met Plekhanov. Back in Russia, he was arrested in 1895 and sent to exile in Siberia. After the end of his punishment, he left Russia in 1900 and joined Plekhanov's group in Geneva.<sup>22</sup>

Together with the Marxian emigres around Plekhanov, who later became his most bitter enemy, Lenin, as co-editor of the *Iskra* (Spark) (1900-1903), fought all reformist or revisionist Russian socialists. . . .

From 1903 to 1917 Lenin appeared to be only a more or less isolated leader of a political sect which needed not to be taken too seriously. His demand for an armed uprising did not play an important role during the revolution of 1905-1906; the uprising in Moscow remained a local affair. Such men as Bogdanov, with whom he cooperated for a time, were soon repudiated; he explained all conflicts with his friends and followers in terms of their defection from true Marxism. Any interpretation of Marxism that differed from his was denounced with the utmost bitterness. In numerous conferences and congresses he continued his struggle with the Mensheviks, who formed various groups in opposition to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

After 1903 Lenin openly established a group of his own, though it was not until 1912 that the Bolsheviks officially established a separate organization. However, the factions of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks claimed even afterwards that they belonged to one party. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

After a brief stay in Russia during the Revolution of 1905 he lived abroad, but, although an emigre, he remained leader of the party. From Western Galicia, which at this time belonged to Austria, he determined the policies of the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma of 1912 and directed the editors of the Bolshevik party organ, *Pravda*. . . . After the outbreak of World War I Lenin moved into Switzerland. . . .

While in Switzerland Lenin participated in the Socialist international conferences at Zimmerwald (1915) and Kienthal (1916). . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

After he heard about the end of Tsarism, Lenin . . . succeeded, despite all the difficulties created by the Allies, in returning to Russia; . . .<sup>23</sup>

The events after his return—the seizure of power by the followers of Lenin in the fall of 1917, their suppression of all other parties, and the

<sup>22</sup> Shub, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 22, 25, 27, 29, 41.

<sup>23</sup> Gurian, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31, 34, 35, 37.

beginnings of dictatorial rule by Lenin and his colleagues—are treated in the appropriate sections of the present work. Lenin died in 1924, and control of the world Communist movement then passed into the hands of Stalin, whose present successor is Khrushchev.

The sharp division between Communists and social-democratic Marxists which had its roots in the debates of 1903 was perpetuated by the foundation of the Third International (Comintern) as a rival organization to the Second International which had survived the World War.

. . . The Third International, founded in Moscow in 1919, aimed to prepare and organize revolution outside Russia by unifying the various pro-Communist groups and directing the development of the various Communist parties. The Comintern imposed 21 points upon parties wishing to join; it kept authority in its own hands and excluded socialist leaders it regarded as untrustworthy.<sup>24</sup>

With the help of this international authority, Leninism and the leadership of the Soviet Union became the elements that unified the Communist movement all over the world. With all the complexity of political, personal, and organizational factors, communism henceforth constituted a unified whole in which Marxist-Leninist ideology, the power of Soviet Russia, the organization of the Communist Party, and the specific and typical attitudes and operations of Communists combine to constitute a movement with a single aggressive purpose. It is to the various aspects of this unified whole that the different volumes of *Facts on Communism* are devoted.

Volume I is meant to present a survey of the entire body of ideas that make up Communist ideology. A systematic presentation of this kind cannot be made except in the form of an interpretation of the Communist "classical" authorities. This interpretation of Communist doctrines also includes criticism of at least the fundamental ideas. The system and the interconnection of the various parts of Communist ideology have been analyzed and interpreted by Dr. Gerhart Niemeyer, and extensive quotations from Communist "scriptures" are provided to document the analysis.

A professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, Dr. Niemeyer's competence in the field of Communist doctrine is attested by the fact that he teaches graduate courses on Communist ideology. Dr. Niemeyer was born in Germany but left that country on the advent of Hitler to power. Educated in England and Germany, he has taught in the United States at Princeton, Oglethorpe, Yale, and Columbia Universities. He has served as Planning Adviser in the Department of State, research analyst in the Council on Foreign Relations, and a member of the resident faculty of the National War College. He is co-editor of the *Handbook on Communism*, published in a German edition in 1958 and about to appear in its English edition.

<sup>24</sup> Gurian, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

# THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY

## Chapter I. The Communist View of History

Communist ideology was originally derived from a philosophy of history. And a view of history is still the very core of communism. What Marx took over from the philosopher G. W. F. Hegel and made the center of his own ideology is not a set of mere observations about historical events, but a complete theory about how history moves, why it moves, and the direction in which it moves. Since history is the entire field of human activities, such a theory of history supplies an explanation of the meaning of all human efforts (the direction of history), instruction on what people should be doing next (the "laws" of historical development), and a yardstick by which the value of men and things should be judged (forward—good; backward—bad). It can be readily seen that a comprehensive theory of history like that offers guidance similar to that provided by religion, and thus can be used as a substitute for religion by people who no longer believe in God.

### 1. Classes and Class Struggle

The centerpiece of the Communist view of history is the doctrine which says that all societies above the primitive level are split into classes engaged in an unceasing and irreconcilable struggle: the doctrine of the class struggle. This is the concept that serves as a guiding criterion to all Communist thinking about society and politics. Communist ideology assumes that the basic reality of anything social is the class struggle. It thus explains in terms of the class struggle all salient events of history, the evils of human life, politics and the state, revolutions, ideas and religions, and many other phenomena. In presenting here the details of this doctrine, it will be pointed out that the doctrine consists of a characteristic mixture of scientific analysis, myth and prophesy, a mixture which enables it to impress men with the appeals of science along with those of religion.

#### *Property as the basis of class struggle*

If some men are able to wield oppressive power over others, Communists say, it is private property, and property alone, which enables them to do so. Property is what has brought about the division of society into classes. Property gives people exclusive control over things.

Those who have exclusive control of the means of economic production can use their ownership as power over their fellow beings who do not own means of production. Thus we have classes, and power, both explained in terms of property.

### *Classes as conscious agents in history*

Marx analyzed society by distinguishing in it several classes of people, according to the type of relationship which linked people with the process of production. As a mere observation, this is, of course, a valid method of scientific classification, just as scientists group plants and animals according to certain characteristics. But Marx went beyond mere observation. He claimed that the classes into which he had grouped people are real social and political forces which can and do act in history—nay, which are the chief actors in history. This is a bold thesis. Since classes have no external organization to act on their behalf, they can “act” as a unit only if the people grouped together in a class are themselves conscious of being parts of a “class.” Classes can be actors in history only if people’s minds are fully aware of their class interests and determined to promote them. This is indeed what communism claims. It asserts that people form different classes not only by virtue of the fact of their economic existence, but also because people living in similar circumstances also think alike. In a similar way, Hitler alleged that people with the same kind of physical build had the same kind of soul. Hitler believed men belonging to different races to *be essentially* different creatures. Marx taught that men belonging to different classes had no common values or ideas; that they had *essentially* differing consciousnesses. Let us note here that to classify phenomena—including people—for the purpose of observation, is one thing; to attribute to such classes will, purpose, and a common consciousness is quite another. To say that the classes into which one has divided people are authors of action, is an assertion which requires elaborate and hard-to-obtain proof.

### *Facts, analysis, and dogma*

Marx went beyond scientific methods in another respect. He described property as a source of power in society. But then he went beyond this analysis and claimed that property is, has been, and forever will be the sole root of oppressive power. In order to maintain this, he must, of course, discount such sources of power as bureaucracies, police machineries, military forces, taxation, or else he must claim that all these are merely derived from the power that flows from property. This indeed is the claim of Communists. It is another assertion that requires proof, a proof which no Communist thinker has ever attempted to offer.

In the following quotations, it will be possible to trace both the elements of scientific observations and the elements of dogma in the Marxist doctrine of class division. First, a dogmatic assertion:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Next, a mixture of historical fact and dogma:

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.<sup>1</sup>

Then, based on dogma, a diagnosis and a prediction:

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.<sup>2</sup>

Back to sober historical reporting, but tied into the myth:

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces: they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

A purely factual statement follows:

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.<sup>3</sup>

From here we move on to a piece of sociological analysis designed to arouse the reader's sympathy and indignation:

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847–January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34 and 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Finally, the analysis furnishes a prediction that the "two camp situation" will surely be realized:

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.<sup>5</sup>

Here a bit of sociological analysis is used to justify a total rejection of the entire social order of the present, its ideas, culture and political authority:

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.<sup>6</sup>

. . . Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class.<sup>7</sup>

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.<sup>8</sup>

. . . The cohesive force of civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively the state of the ruling class, and in all cases remains essentially a machine for keeping down the oppressed, exploited class.<sup>9</sup>

And now we are emotionally and intellectually prepared for this frank proclamation of a dogma:

. . . Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1884), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 323.

economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical, and other ideas of a given historical period.<sup>10</sup>

In these statements we find thrown together facts, analysis, and dogma. It is a fact that there are classes. The analysis of power in terms of relations other than legal authority has validity. But beyond facts and analysis, it is nothing but dogma to assert (a) that *all* human actions are motivated by class struggles; (b) that there are *no* classes except those based on property distinctions; (c) that the ownership of the means of production is the root of oppressive class rule; and (d) that the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is entirely splitting all the people into two hostile camps.

### *Communist explanation of evil*

Other dogmatic beliefs of Communists flow from the basic dogma of the class struggle. Thus they assert that the root of all evil in the world is the exploitation of one class by another by means of privately owned land or capital. But for private property, there would be no exploitation, Communists claim. But for exploitation, there would be no oppressive power. But for oppressive power, there would be no crime.

The Communist doctrine of evil in human life is somewhat more complicated than this (particularly through the concept of man's "alienation" from other men, his work, and himself) but it basically amounts to the dogma that most evil is the consequence of private property, and that, with exploitation and oppression, it will vanish when private property of land and capital is abolished.

## 2. Class Struggles and Historical Change

This concept of class struggle furnishes the Communists with an explanation of history. They say about recorded history (a) that everything that happened has ultimately been an aspect of class struggles; (b) that one can distinguish in these class struggles certain major phases; (c) that history moves along a certain line through these phases and cannot move otherwise; and (d) that this forward movement of history must culminate in communism. Let us take up each of these doctrines in turn.

### *Class struggles as the form of historical change*

*History*, a series of dramatic political changes, has happened, according to Communist ideology, because the division of society into classes

<sup>10</sup> Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 134, 135.

makes the establishment of political power necessary, and political power rises, declines, and falls as its basis changes. The basis of political power, according to the Communist thesis, has been the ownership of the means of production. In the development of society the techniques of production have periodically changed, so that the means of production which were powerful yesterday gave way to new means of production today. The owners of these new means of production then were the up and coming class. But the owners of the old means of production still held sway by means of the machinery of political power they had established. It is political power which prevented a gradual change of peaceful progress from the rule of one class to that of another. So the up and coming class slowly gained influence and economic strength within the framework of political rule established by the old class, until one day this framework would be violently broken and the new class would take over political power. This theory has been laid down by Marx in a well-known passage:

. . . The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, esthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear



before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.<sup>11</sup>

### *Knowledge of the "laws" of historical change*

On the strength of this theory, the Communists believe that they are in possession of the key to history. They believe that the concept of classes, class struggle, forces of production, relations of production, and revolution, enable them not only to explain the past, but understand the present and recognize the direction events are taking into the future. In the realm of history, the process of change seems to them to have become as clear as that of mutation has as a result of Darwin's theories:

. . . It was precisely Marx who had first discovered the great law of motion of history, the law according to which all historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political, religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes, and that the existence and thereby the collisions, too, between these classes are in turn conditioned by the degree of development of their economic position, by the mode of their production and of their exchange determined by it. This law, which has the same significance for history as the law of the transformation of energy has for natural science—this law gave him here, too, the key to an understanding of the history of the Second French Republic. He put his law to the test on these historical events, and even after thirty-three years we must still say that it has stood the test brilliantly.<sup>12</sup>

This is a theory of material causation of all history:

In modern history at least it is, therefore, proved that all political struggles are class struggles, and all class struggles for emancipation, despite their necessarily political form—for every class struggle is a political struggle—turn ultimately on the question of *economic* emancipation. Therefore, here at least, the state—the political order—is the subordinate, and civil society—the realm of economic relations—the decisive element. . . .

. . . If the state even today, in the era of big industry and of railways, is on the whole only a reflexion, in concentrated form, of the economic needs of the class controlling production, then this must have been much more so in an epoch when each generation of men was forced to spend a far greater part of its aggregate lifetime in satisfying material needs, and was therefore much more dependent on them than we are today. An ex-

<sup>11</sup> Marx, Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (January 1859), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, pp. 362, 363.

<sup>12</sup> Engels, Preface to the Third German Edition of Marx's "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1885), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 246.

amination of the history of earlier periods, as soon as it is seriously undertaken from this angle, most abundantly confirms this.<sup>13</sup>

. . . Now Marx has proved that the whole of previous history is a history of class struggles, that in all the manifold and complicated political struggles the only thing at issue has been the social and political rule of social classes, the maintenance of domination by older classes and the conquest of domination by newly arising classes. To what, however, do these classes owe their origin and their continued existence? They owe it to the particular material, physically sensible conditions in which society at a given period produces and exchanges its means of subsistence.<sup>14</sup>

This view of history is called *historical materialism*. It is the special philosophy of Marx who developed it and applied it in his writings. Note that it attributes the ultimate moving power in human affairs to material factors, viz., the "forces of production," but insists that the actual movements are political, and, at the decisive points, violent. "Force is the midwife of history," said Marx.

### 3. The Destination of History

Marx thought he had discovered the secret of social and political change and how it happens in history. His followers, particularly Lenin and Stalin (in most cases following Engels rather than Marx) went much further. They mapped out the entire course of human history, from the earliest beginnings, to what they believed must be the ultimate end. Engels, in a very superficial book called *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, had distinguished certain phases of social development. Engels' already too simplified classification was reduced to even simpler terms, and now all Communists are taught that the history of mankind passes through *five* phases. These phases are distinguished in terms of the techniques of economic production and the relations of production with their corresponding social classes.

#### *Five phases of human society*

In the first and primitive phase, there was supposedly no private property, no class division and no state. With the introduction of private property, there came, according to the theory, the first division into classes. The first class society was a slaveholding society, with slaves owned as private property. When that society had run its course, and slavery was no longer profitable, a new class of feudal landowners supposedly emerged from the ruins and became the ruling class of the next type of society—feudal society.

<sup>13</sup> Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (1886), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 393, 394.

<sup>14</sup> Engels, "Karl Marx" (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 163.

In the framework of feudal society, in turn, the class of merchants grew into a revolutionary force which eventually overthrew feudal power and set up a new regime favorable to its own type of property—bourgeois or capitalistic society. And finally, capitalistic society is expected to nurture in its bosom its own gravediggers, the proletariat. The victorious revolution of the proletariat then would usher in the fifth phase—socialist society. Here the proletariat would be the ruling class, but, for reasons to be discussed later, there would be no more class struggles, no oppression, and no further revolutions.

What this amounts to is a complete outline of the course which human history, propelled by class struggles, must take. This theory is the most important piece in the entire structure of Communist ideology. For on it depends the Communist idea of the meaning of history (and, consequently, of politics), the Communist confidence in ultimate victory, the Communist attitude towards people, classes and nations, the Communist ethic (insofar as one can speak of an ethic here), and the Communist insistence on ideological conformity.

### *Significance of the "five phases" theory*

The five-phases theory goes far beyond Marx's analysis of revolutionary change through class struggle, because it pretends to give a complete and exhaustive list of the types of human society through which mankind must develop. It extends the theory of the class struggle to a comprehensive view of what past, present, and future of human society must be. Marx had left an analysis of capitalism, with positive assurance that capitalist society would engender the proletarian class which, in turn, would by its revolution abolish all classes and the class struggle. Now Communist ideology teaches that all roads of development in the world must eventually lead to capitalism and thus set up the proletarian revolution. That revolution is therefore seen as the destiny of all mankind. Not only is it bound to come about as the result of inevitable historical development, but it is also supposed to do away with the class struggle, the main source of evil, according to Communist thought. So the proletarian revolution is envisaged as something that is both necessary and good, both destiny and hope. To Communists, then, men are divided into those who ultimately help the revolution and those who oppose it. This is the basis of Communists' "ethics," and of the relation between the Communists and mankind. "Revolution" and "revolutionary" to the Communists are what Richard Weaver has called god-words. Those who oppose the proletarian revolution and its agents, the Communists, are not only oriented toward a past that is swept away by the powerful currents of history, but also opposed to the fulfillment of that destiny which holds the only hope for mankind. They stand condemned, in Communist eyes, on two counts: opposition to the march of

history, and refusal to serve the good. Communists, on the other hand, draw from their view of history the double assurance that they are morally justified by their service to the redeeming cause of the proletarian revolution, and also are in accord with the movements of history toward a Communist future. Their struggle and the growth of their power is both good and necessary, because of the view which they have of history. One can therefore hardly exaggerate the importance of the Communist teaching of history, as the main foundation of Communist attitudes toward the world and toward people.

### *Weaknesses of the "five phases" theory*

But the theory, powerful as it may seem, has weak foundations. We have already seen that it rests on the assumption that the struggle between classes is what drives people to act in history. This assumption, in turn, is based on what Engels termed ". . . the palpable but previously totally overlooked fact that men must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, therefore must *work*, before they can fight for domination, pursue politics, religion, philosophy, etc. . . ." <sup>15</sup> When it comes to the five phases, however, Communist ideology cannot even rely wholly on the authority of Marx and Engels. For they, when they distinguished between various phases of society, recognized ". . . Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production. . . ." <sup>16</sup>

What is this "Asiatic" mode of production? Marx referred here to a pattern of social and economic order that was found mostly in Asia. It had been intensively studied by scholars contemporary with Marx, who had described this type of society as being radically different from our own in the sense that instead of a ruling class of powerful property owners, an all-powerful class of state officials held sway.

Now the "Asiatic" mode of production is a *sixth* phase. As Marx knew through detailed studies, it was not based on private property of the means of production, but on state property and the sway of a ruling class of state officials over a generally powerless populace.<sup>17</sup> Asiatic society had been characterized by an absence of "class" revolutions. It had not given rise to feudalism. It thus did not fit into the stepladder scheme of history. This reference to Asiatic society was in effect eliminated from Communist ideology by Lenin. Under Stalin, since 1938, every reference to Asiatic society was authoritatively frowned upon. For if Asiatic society were recognized as a type of society, the chain of class-struggle

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>16</sup> Marx, preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (1859), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 363.

<sup>17</sup> Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 374, 375, gives a more detailed and precise account of the role of "Asiatic society" in Marxist thinking than is possible here.

progressions would be upset by a society which had not engendered the sequence feudalism-capitalism-socialism.

Moreover, Engels in his already mentioned work had said that "The social classes of the ninth century had taken shape not in the bog of a declining civilization, but in the travail of a new".<sup>18</sup> This meant, of course, that the "feudal society," which was then forming, had not "emerged" from the previous, or "slave-holding," society. From this one could only conclude that, if there are such universal patterns of society as Marx and Engels assume, it is not provable that there is a *necessary* progression from one to another. If a new "phase" can start by itself, apart from the debris of the previous society, then history is not predictable, and all kinds of societies may arise when an old order has run its course. Marx's acknowledgment of a sixth type of society, which was later ignored, and Engels' admission of self-starting forces in the succession of societies, remove the props from under the Communist theory of history. But these views of Marx and Engels are not taught in Sovietland. Communists are reared in the belief that history moves forward through five phases, with inexorable necessity, and that the future of mankind is inevitably Communist.

#### 4. The Laws of History

If Communist ideology consisted of nothing but the teachings of Karl Marx, it would not have the view of history which has been here described. The main work of Marx, *Capital*, consisted of an analysis of modern society and its inner laws of development. It was based on the premise that the relations of men in the process of production contain the key to the structure of a society and the forces that make for change. This, as has already been mentioned, is a materialistic explanation of society, and the theory is called *Historical Materialism*. Historical materialism is as far as Marx himself went.

##### *Dialectical materialism*

Modern Communist ideology, however, goes much further. It has developed a theory called *Dialectical Materialism*.<sup>19</sup> This theory goes back largely to the writings of Engels, whose chief characteristic was that he generalized every concept that Marx developed. Marx applied the concept of the class struggle to one society: the industrial society of 19th century Western Europe. Engels wrote a brief book in which he claimed that the same concept applied to all societies ever known. Marx, in his earlier writings, reflected somewhat the influence of Hegel and Hegel's dialectic. Engels took these elements and, again in a short book,

<sup>18</sup> Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 304.

<sup>19</sup> To be more systematically explained in chapter V, below.

expanded them into a principle that explained everything in nature as well as in history. Lenin, following Engels more than Marx, developed a complete philosophy underpinning the Communist view of history, which is now taught under the name of Dialectical Materialism.

### *Dialectic*

First, what is dialectic? In its modern use, the meaning of the term goes back to Hegel. It is a philosophy saying that all things are related with each other, that everything is in continuous flux, and that the flux occurs according to certain laws. In these laws, the concept of "opposites" plays a great role. Change occurs because there are opposites opposing each other. But in the course of the change it turns out that the opposites are not really opposed, but are really united. The "unity of opposites" is the name of this principle. It actually says that whenever we see struggle, there is hidden in it the meaning of unity on a higher level. Or, to turn it the other way around: struggle is the necessary form of progress, and all existing things carry in themselves the seed of something opposing them. Finally, this philosophy claims that all changes ultimately occur by way of a sudden leap, after the tension between opposites has been growing for a certain while; and in the leap something new is born, a new quality or essence.

. . . The principal features of the Marxist *dialectical method* are as follows:

(a) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard nature . . . as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena, are . . . determined by, each other.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

(b) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that nature is . . . a state of continuous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development. . . .

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

(c) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth . . . but as . . . a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another. . . .

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

(d) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature . . . and that the struggle between these opposites . . . constitutes the internal content of the process of development. . . .<sup>20</sup>

This goes far beyond anything Marx had taught and even far beyond an extension of the principle of class struggle to all of history. For this is a philosophy claiming knowledge about the way everything moves and

<sup>20</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 106, 107, 109. Also Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 714-717.

exists—not merely societies and classes, but all of life. Engels expressly extended the philosophy of dialectic to the realm of nature. It is thus a philosophy of *being*, as comprehensive as any philosophy that has ever existed. Communists now represent not merely a political aspiration, or even the revolution of a social class, but an entire view of life which has become indissolubly linked with their political power. Communist power is used now, not only to bring about certain social changes or attain certain political goals, but also to impose authoritatively a world view with all its implications in art, science, literature, philosophy, and education.

### *Materialism*

The dialectic, i.e., a philosophy about the movement of all things in terms of opposites-in-unity, was combined with materialism, i.e., the explanation of all things in terms of matter. This combination does go back to Marx in the sense that Marx had been brought up in the dialectic of Hegel who said that the movement in terms of opposites-in-unity was a movement of ideas, and that history was nothing but the unfolding of ideas rooting in something he called Absolute Mind. Marx went on from there to say that Hegel's view of the world and history was upside down, in that ideas were but a reflection of material conditions. Marx undertook to put it "rightside up," that is, he asserted that the dialectic movement of history was ultimately a movement of matter rather than ideas. We have already seen how he carried out this proposition in his concept of the class struggle. As far as society is concerned, he said "matter" is the process of economic production. Thus matter moves, and its movement is dialectic—i.e., each condition already contains in itself the forces that oppose it, but from the opposition flows change and unity on a higher level. Capitalist society supposedly engenders within itself the tendency toward socialization and the proletarian class which opposes it and struggles with it. At one time, violent change will occur (the Revolution), and then the progressive elements of capitalist society (technology) and the proletarian forces will unite on a higher level (Communist society). As we have already seen, Marx himself dwelt almost exclusively on the materialistic explanation of history. It was Lenin who, following Engels, strongly emphasized the dialectic element and thus founded what is now known as *Diamat* (dialectical materialism.)

. . . The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of the one into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).

In the first conception of motion, *self*-movement, its *driving* force, its source, its motive, remains in the shade (or this source is made *external*—God, subject, etc.). In the second conception it is to the knowledge of the source of "*self*"-movement that attention is chiefly directed.

The first conception is lifeless, poor and dry. The second is vital. The second *alone* furnishes the key to the "self-movement" of everything in existence; it alone furnishes the key to the "leaps," to the "break in continuity," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new.<sup>21</sup>

Nowadays, the idea of development, of evolution, has penetrated the social consciousness almost in its entirety, but by different ways, not by way of the Hegelian philosophy. But as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel, this idea is far more comprehensive, far richer in content than the current idea of evolution. A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis ("negation of negation"), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line;—a development by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions;—"breaks in continuity";—the transformation of quantity into quality;—the inner impulses to development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society;—the interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connection of *all* sides of every phenomenon (while history constantly discloses ever new sides), a connection that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion—such are some of the features of dialectics as a richer (than the ordinary) doctrine of development.<sup>22</sup>

Of the two component parts, materialism carries more evolutionary overtones, while the dialectic emphasizes the sudden, revolutionary change, the struggle of opposites. Lenin's stress on dialectic thus has profound influence on the character of communism.

The materialistic component of the philosophy is, however, all-important in the following respect: Matter, being inanimate, can be observed and known by man, while ideas are creative and unpredictable. If history is a dialectic movement of material elements rather than of ideas, history can be known as much as material evolution can be known. One of the most important points in Communist ideology is the assertion that as history moves forward according to the laws of "matter," the laws of history can be known, and that Marxism-Leninism is the key to their knowledge.

Marx's philosophy is finished philosophical materialism, which has provided humanity, and especially the working class, with powerful instruments of knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

. . . Marxism pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of rise, development, and decline of social-economic for-

<sup>21</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On Dialectics" (1915), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 82.

<sup>22</sup> Lenin, "Karl Marx" (July–November, 1914), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, pp. 17 and 18.

<sup>23</sup> Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" (March 1913), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 5.



mations. People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people; that is: what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings; what is the ensemble of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man; what is the law of development of these conditions—to all this Marx drew attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a uniform and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness.<sup>24</sup>

It is on this pretension of the knowability of history that the claim of the Communist Party to leadership is based, as we shall see. In Leninism, the “laws of history” and their knowledge become more and more the key to revolutionary and organizational policy. While Marx would say that the full development of capitalist society was the prerequisite for revolution, Lenin would claim that the existence of a group of people having the “consciousness” of the laws of history is the decisive factor.

### 5. “Scientific” Socialism

The principle that history follows certain laws which, thanks to Marxism can now be known, is what Communists claim to be their mark of distinction from the so-called “utopian” socialists. Utopian socialists, in Communist definition, are those who dream of an ideal society, a regime of justice and equality, and in whose eyes “Future history resolves itself . . . into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, they are people who envisage a socialist society and believe that they can bring it into being by a direct action of their will.

#### *“Utopian” socialism rejected*

Communists consider this a childish attitude, because it leaves out of consideration the “laws of history”. Utopian socialists, they say, care for “the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them”.<sup>26</sup> The correct attitude, according to Communists, would be to regard the proletariat not merely as the most suffering, but as the “most advanced,” the “only really revolutionary” class, in other words, the class which is destined to bring about the fulfillment of history’s scheme. What distinguishes communism from utopian socialism is that the latter is motivated by feelings of compassion and the will to realize justice, whereas the former is motivated by historical analysis and the will to help

<sup>24</sup> Lenin, “Karl Marx” (July–November, 1914) *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Marx and Engels, “The Manifesto of the Communist Party” (December 1847–January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

the movement of history. Since knowledge of history's laws is considered possible on the basis of the "science" of Marxism-Leninism, the history-motivated Communist calls himself a "scientific" socialist.

. . . To all these Socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. . . . And as each one's special kind of absolute truth, reason, and justice is again conditioned by his subjective understanding, his conditions of existence, the measure of his knowledge and his intellectual training, there is no other ending possible in this conflict of absolute truths than that they shall be mutually exclusive one of the other. Hence, from this nothing could come but a kind of eclectic, average Socialism, which, as a matter of fact, has up to the present time dominated the minds of most of the Socialist workers in France and England. Hence, a mish-mash allowing of the most manifold shades of opinion; a mish-mash of such critical statements, economic theories, pictures of future society by the founders of different sects, as excite a minimum of opposition; a mish-mash which is the more easily brewed the more the definite sharp edges of the individual constituents are rubbed down in the stream of debate, like rounded pebbles in a brook.

To make a science of Socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.<sup>27</sup> What is the "real basis" of the "science of socialism"? The analysis of history with the help of Hegelian dialectic applied to the developing material conditions of society.

. . . Hegel had freed history from metaphysics—he had made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "being," instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing."

From that time forward Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung. . . .<sup>28</sup>

These two great discoveries, the materialistic conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalistic production through surplus-value, we owe to Marx. With these discoveries Socialism became a science.<sup>29</sup>

*Attention focused on the laws of change rather than the goal*

The term "scientific," as applied to Communist ideology, is in itself a jargon term connoting Communist insistence on the difference between their revolutionary cause, which is based on the alleged "laws of history,"

<sup>27</sup> Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

and other revolutionary causes based on ideas of justice, social order, etc. In terms of what is generally known as science, Communist ideology can of course not be called scientific. It is not scientific insofar as it indiscriminately mixes social analysis with prophesy, ignores facts that could refute its tenets, and prohibits critical examination of its basic propositions.

A "scientific" socialist refuses to fix his mind on the conditions of an ideal society. Instead, he keeps his eyes on the class struggle and its historical development. He firmly believes that the class struggle, if energetically pursued, will lead to the victory of a social force whose ascendancy will emancipate all mankind. Ultimate freedom is not a direct product of the human will but of historical development: the development of the political class struggle and of the forces of production. It is a mistake to say that communism is a blueprint for future society. It is rather the pretense of a foreknowledge of history, a trust in a beneficent outcome of a ruthless struggle for revolutionary power.

## Chapter II. The Communist View of the Present Society

### 1. The Communist World View

The Communist world view stakes everything on its pretended knowledge of the ultimate destination of history. This orientation toward the future raises for Communists the problem of what to think of the "present-day society," and how to act in it. Marx's chief work, *Capital*, was an analysis of "present-day society," which he called "bourgeois society." The significance of Marx's analysis may be summarized as follows: (a) Marx left for his followers his explanation that the present society is ruled by the capitalist class that "owns the factories;" (b) Marx morally judged the present social system and concluded that it deserved to be destroyed in its totality; (c) Marx taught that the capitalist society had laws of development which would inevitably lead to its collapse and set up the proletarian revolution. In other words, Marx, in his study of the present society, supplied communism with a *target* (the ruling class and the foundations of its power), a moral ground for irreconcilable *hatred* of today's society, and "scientific" *prediction* of that society's coming collapse.

The substance of Marx's teachings on these matters has been replaced by new doctrines propounded by Lenin. But Lenin, while often changing Marx's analysis into its very opposite, did not depart from Marx's general scheme. Like Marx, he pointed out to Communists the *target* at which they should shoot, a *reason* for total condemnation of the present society, and the *forces* moving irresistably toward victory of "the Revolution." Both Marx's and Lenin's ideas about present society will be presented below.

#### *Two incompatible approaches*

A note about the development of Marxist ideas may be in order here. The Communists think about "present-day society" both in terms of moral judgment and necessary historical development. These two ideas mutually exclude each other. Moral judgment makes sense only if there is free choice, and free choice is barred by inescapable historical necessity. An inexorable succession of historical phases, on the other hand, would imply that everything that exists is necessary as a preparation of the next phase, and so would render moral judgment superfluous.

The inner conflict between these two Marxist ideas became the root of a split of Marx's followers into two main movements: the social-

democratic and the Communist movement. By and large, the Social-Democrats were originally those followers of Marx who emphasized the moral aspects of Marxist ideology. Translated into action, this means positive work for improvement, as well as cooperation with the "best" elements of the present society in all efforts toward progress. Communists, by contrast, are Marxists who have put all their reliance on the idea of an historically necessary collapse of the present society. In practice, this amounts to a rejection of any cooperation with the present society, except for the purpose of hastening its destruction. The split between these two branches of Marxism occurred only when Marxist parties had grown numerous and powerful enough to influence legislation and thus had to make up their minds whether they wanted to use their influence to reform or to destroy the present society. It was then that they found out that Marx had left them with two motives which both in theory and practice were incompatible with each other.

### *Marx's indictment of capitalist society*

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims

gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, Marx states what he considers the central feature of bourgeois society: The enslavement of the workers by the factory owners. The class that owns the machines rules "despotically" over their propertyless subjects. But this despotic power, Marx adds, does not stem so much from a power-lusting will of each capitalist, nor does it depend on the whip and the bludgeon. Rather, it is an integral feature of the entire economic system called capitalism. In this system, which depends on property and freedom of contract as its legal framework, everything is produced as a *commodity*, i.e., for the purpose of sale rather than use. Profit is therefore its dominant motive. Labor, too, figures in this system as another commodity, to be bought and sold.

The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production.<sup>2</sup>

If we . . . consider only the economic forms of (the circulation of commodities), we find its final result to be money: this final product of the circulation of commodities is the first form in which capital appears.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Commodity production and contractual labor*

Now the capitalist and the laborer enter into their relation of "despot" and "slave" through a free contract:

But in order that our owner of money may be able to find labour-power offered for sale as a commodity, various conditions must first be fulfilled . . . labour-power can appear upon the market as a commodity only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labour power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he . . . must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labour, i.e. of his person. He and the owner of money meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights . . . this . . . demands that the owner of the labour-power should sell it only for a definite period. . . .

The second essential conditions . . . in this—that the labourer instead of being in the position to sell commodities in which his labour is incorporated, must be obliged to offer for sale as a commodity that very labour-power, which exists only in his living self.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847–January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>2</sup> Marx, *Capital* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1906), p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 187.

*"Surplus value"*

Commodity production, along with money as its characteristic result, is the first principal basis of the capitalist system of power. The second, already indicated in the passage above, is the capacity of people with money to hire, in a free contract, the services of others who have to offer their labor-power for sale. To these two, Marx adds, as the most essential, another feature: The "exploitation" of the worker in the form of the capitalist's extraction of "surplus value" from labor. "Surplus value" is Marx's formula for the difference between what workers produce in the course of one day, and what they get paid. He assumes that they will be paid only as much as it costs to keep them in existence, and that this corresponds in value to only a part of what a worker creates in full-time work.

. . . The value of a day's labour-power amounts to 3 shillings, because on our assumption half a day's labour is embodied in that quantity of labour power, "i.e.," because the means of subsistence that are daily required for the production of labour-power, cost half a day's labour. . . . The fact that half a day's labour is necessary to keep the labourer alive during 24 hours, does not in any way prevent him from working a whole day. Therefore, the value of labour-power, and the value which that labour-power creates in the labour process, are two entirely different magnitudes. . . .<sup>5</sup>

During the second period of the labour-process, that in which his labour is no longer necessary labour, the workman . . . creates no value for himself. He creates surplus-value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of a creation out of nothing. . . . The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labour, and one based on wage labour, lies only in the mode in which this surplus-labour is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the labourer.

\* \* \* \* \*

The rate of surplus-value is therefore an exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour-power by capital, or of the labourer by the capitalist.<sup>6</sup>

*The significance of the concept of "surplus value"*

We must here distinguish several thoughts from each other. Marx first explains the production of a surplus over the mere necessities of existence. He then attributes both authorship and sole right to this surplus to the manual laborer, and finally claims that the capitalist, with the help of the system of commodity production, takes the surplus value from the worker in order to use it for himself as well as for more capital

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215, 216.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240, 241.

and more "exploitation." The creation of surplus value is itself no mystery: all civilization depends on it. There can be no education, government, science, art, or any refinement of life without the production of some surplus over and above what is needed to keep oneself alive. The question is how this surplus is collected and distributed for the purposes of civilization.

Marx's theory amounts to the assertion that surplus value belongs only to the factory laborer who is robbed of it by the factory owner, by means of a contractual purchase of labor-power. In order to make this assertion plausible, Marx had to assert first that all value results solely from labor.

. . . that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production.<sup>7</sup>

This passage is found on the very first pages of *Capital* and states, as it were, the assumption on which the entire theory rests. The assumption is that, since it is labor which alone creates value and surplus value, the laborer who has sold his labor-power to the capitalist is robbed of the fruits of his effort; the capitalist, since he has money, obtains control over something that of right is not his; therefore the entire system is one of exploitation and despotic power.

### *The "labor theory of value"*

It is obvious that all this hinges on the assumption that the worker is the sole author and rightful master of surplus value. Marx established this assumption with the help of the so-called labor theory of value, a theory then current among economists as an explanation of the economic phenomenon of value. As a tool of economic analysis, it has long since been found utterly useless and has been universally discarded. The truth is that value does not arise from labor alone, but also from organization, invention, capital, the efficient use of machines, coordination of production with the market, etc. In Marx's system, however, the labor theory of value serves not merely for purposes of economic analysis, but as a basis for establishing moral title and rightful claim to the goods produced in a complicated system of market-oriented factory work. Marx slides, without making this clear to the reader, from an analytical concept of economic value to an assertion of the social cause of value, and from there to moral conclusions. It is as if he had passed from a scientific analysis of cooking to the finding that since in a family the mother does the cooking, the mother is the sole provider of the family's food, and from there to the conclusion that the mother has the right to go and sell the family dinner for pocket money.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.



Marx's view appears clearly in the following messages:

Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks. The time during which the labourer works, is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labour-power he has purchased of him.

If the labourer consumes his disposable time for himself, he robs the capitalist.

The capitalist then takes his stand on the law of the exchange of commodities.<sup>8</sup>

. . . Hence, it is self-evident that the labourer is nothing else, his whole life through, than labour-power, that therefore all his disposable time is by nature and law labour-time, to be devoted to the self-expansion of capital. Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free-play of his bodily and mental activity, even the rest time of Sunday (and that in a country of Sabbatarians)—moonshine! . . .

The capitalistic mode of production (essentially the production of surplus value, the absorption of surplus-labour), produces thus, with the extension of the working day, not only the deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical, conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, the system is by its nature inhuman and destructive of human life. (Cause for hatred.) It is also a system of despotic capitalist power:

. . . the cooperation of wage labourers is entirely brought about by the capital that employs them. . . . Hence the connexion existing between their various labours appears to them . . . in the shape of the powerful will of another, who subjects their activity to his aims. . . . As co-operation extends its scale, this despotism takes forms peculiar to itself. . . .

. . . Being independent of each other, the labourers are isolated persons, who enter into relations with the capitalist, but not with one another. This co-operation begins only with the labour process, but they have then ceased to belong to themselves.<sup>10</sup>

### *Criticism of the theory of "surplus value"*

Marx's theory of surplus value, which is the core of his *Capital*, has been criticized along the following lines:

Marx says that capitalism depends on the production of surplus value.—This is true, but the same is true of any other civilized society, including the Soviet society.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 291, 292.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 364, 365.

Marx says that the workers alone produce surplus value.—This he has failed to prove, since Marx does not even consider other producers beside workers, for instance farmers, whose production of surplus value enables other people to move into the cities.

Marx says that the workers, who alone produce surplus value, are being robbed of it by the capitalists.—Actually, it is in the nature of surplus value that someone in society produces it not to benefit by it directly, but to make his contribution to a rising scale of existence.

Marx says that control of the surplus value is the decisive factor.—But surplus value created in a society cannot be kept by any group. What is decisive is not who controls it at any given phase but what use is made of it and how human beings ultimately fare under the system by which it is distributed throughout society.

Marx says that those who collect surplus value from the worker have power to rule all of society. Surplus value, regardless of who produces it, must of course be collected in order to be passed on, if it is to be socially useful. Those who collect it, undoubtedly have some power in the social system, but, unless they are the government, they have only a certain kind of power, and only over a certain aspect of society. They, in turn, are subject to the rigors of a system of distribution, and above all, to political power—which has no trouble in imposing extremely heavy taxes on the collectors of surplus value.

## 2. Marx's View of the Dynamics of Capitalist Society

Having described capitalist society as a system of robbery by means of the law of exchange of commodities, a system in which the capitalist wields despotic and dehumanizing power over the workers and all the rest, Marx goes on to predict that in the course of the development of capitalism, things will not get better, but worse.

Capitalist production, therefore, of itself reproduces the separation between labour-power and the means of labour. It thereby reproduces and perpetuates the conditions for exploiting the labourer. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order that he may enrich himself. . . . It is the process itself that incessantly hurls back the labourer on to the market as a vendor of his labour-power, and that incessantly converts his own product into a means by which another man can purchase him. . . .

Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 632, 633.

*The "law of accumulation"*

The growth of capitalist production is called accumulation. Marx defined a "law of capitalist accumulation" and uses this law to predict future social developments:

. . . The law of capitalist accumulation . . . in reality merely states that the very nature of accumulation excludes every diminution in the degree of exploitation of labour. . . .<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, the whip that drives the capitalistic system forward on its path of development, is competition. Competition compels each capitalist to increase productivity. In the course of competition, "concentration" and "centralization" of capital occurs:

. . . Two points characterise this kind of concentration which grows directly out of, or rather is identical with, accumulation. First: The increasing concentration of the social means of production in the hands of individual capitalists is . . . limited by the degree of increase of social wealth. Second: The part of social capital domiciled in each particular sphere of production is divided among many capitalists who face one another as independent commodity-producers competing with each other. . . . Accumulation, therefore, presents itself on the one hand as increasing concentration of the means of production, and of the command over labour; on the other, as repulsion of many individual capitals one from another.

This splitting-up . . . is counteracted by their attraction. This last . . . is concentration of capitals already formed, destruction of their individual independence, expropriation of capitalist by capitalist, transformation of many small into few large capitals. . . . Capital grows in one place to a huge mass in a single hand, because it has in another place been lost by many.<sup>13</sup>

*"Concentration" and "centralization"*

Accumulation means faster and faster growth of the whole of capitalist production. Concentration means more and more power over all of social wealth in the hands of capitalist. With this goes "centralization," the possibility of controlling more and more from a single center. And wealth, power, control are gathered in fewer and fewer hands.

All the time, the masses of labor are becoming more and more helpless. On the one hand, they are growing in numbers. On the other, capitalism is predicted to produce an "industrial reserve army" of unemployed or half-employed people on whom it can draw for cheap labor.

On the one hand, therefore, the additional capital formed in the course of accumulation attracts fewer and fewer labourers in proportion to its magnitude. On the other hand, the old capital periodically reproduced

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 680.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 685, 686.

with change of composition, repels more and more of the labourers formerly employed by it.<sup>14</sup>

. . . The labouring population therefore produces, along with the accumulation of capital produced by it, the means by which itself is made relatively superfluous, is turned into a relative surplus population; and it does this to an always increasing extent.<sup>15</sup>

. . . this surplus population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation.<sup>16</sup>

### *"Increasing misery"*

Whatever makes for the growth of this "industrial reserve army" also makes for lower real wages, harder work, and all-round misery:

. . . The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital, develop also the labour-power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve-army increases therefore with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve-army in proportion to the active labour-army, the greater is the mass of a surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labour. The more extensive, finally, the lazarus-layers of the working-class, and the industrial reserve-army, the greater is official pauperism. *This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation.*<sup>17</sup>

. . . The law, finally, that always equilibrates the relative surplus-population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, *i.e.* on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.<sup>18</sup>

### *Crises and revolution*

Capitalism thus is supposed to breed vast and concentrated wealth in the hands of a few, and increasing misery for ever larger masses of exploited people. In addition, its repeated crises are supposed to mount in intensity, the rate of its profits is predicted to drop lower and lower, and the entire system presumably is heading for collapse resulting from

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 689.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 692.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 693.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 707.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 709.

its own inner contradictions. The combination of these inner difficulties with the ever-sharpening social antagonism is ultimately supposed to lead to the catastrophe in which capitalism is bound to be supplanted by socialism, the system in which the workers collectively are expected to be masters of their own product:

. . . in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. . . .

. . . The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Lenin's Views on Capitalism

Marx had influence as a thinker whose mind penetrated into hitherto hidden recesses of society which he succeeded in illuminating through analytical thought. On the other hand, Marx's predictions about the development of capitalistic society have turned out to be monumentally wrong.

#### *False predictions*

Marx, wishing to analyze the inner laws of capitalism, concluded that real wages must go further down. In reality, wages in capitalist society have steadily risen not only in terms of money but also in terms of purchasing power.

Marx predicted worse and worse misery of the masses under capitalism. Instead, increasing welfare and well-being has been the lot of the people in capitalist societies.

Marx foresaw that the differences between rich and poor would steadily widen, and more and more formerly well-to-do groups would be drawn into a proletarian existence, while wealth would be concen-

<sup>19</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 45.

trated in the hands of fewer and fewer immensely rich people. Actually, capitalism has produced a steadily growing class of people in the middle income groups, people with comfortable salaries, financial reserves, higher education, and more leisure time.

Marx was sure that capitalism would entangle itself in the contradictions of its own system so that eventually it could not longer function according to its own laws, would bog down in a fundamental crisis of production, and become "unable to feed its own slaves." What has happened instead is a continuous rise of productivity in capitalist countries, a steadily improving distribution of wealth throughout all layers of the population, and a developing ability to cope with maladjustments and crises.

Marx anticipated that the workers would become more and more embittered and revolutionary, and that the class struggle between them and the capitalists would grow in sharpness and tempo. Neither prediction has come true. The bulk of the working classes in capitalist countries have shown less and less inclination to support a revolution, and their relation with capitalist management has evolved along the lines of orderly bargaining within the confines of a mutually accepted system.

#### *The consequences of the failure of Marx's predictions*

Why was Marx so wrong in his predictions? This question cannot be discussed here. The reader must instead be referred to the literature about Marx and the discovery of basic errors in Marx's thought by many critics. In looking back over the very summary statement of Marx's main ideas on the preceding pages, the reader may be struck by the fact that Marx based his entire analysis and ensuing prediction on the theoretical model of a commodity economy and the laws of exchange. He saw the entire structure of power in a capitalist society as a "golden chain," a system in which the workers are "enslaved" to the capitalists by nothing more than the simple logic of trading in an open market on the basis of personal freedom and private property.

What Marx did in *Capital* was to "discover" the inherent logic of a theoretical model of a society. This model was an intellectual construction which, he asserted, actually represented the real system of modern capitalist society. He assumed a system in which the bourgeois class ruled by means of private property, free contract, and the laws of exchange, and he proceeded to prove that this kind of a system was necessarily headed for increasing misery, collapse, and proletarian revolution. In reality, as we have seen, modern capitalism developed quite differently. By the turn of the century, this was plain to everyone. From the failure of Marx's predictions one could, then, draw the conclusion that the logic he unfolded was not that of the real modern society, but merely that of his theoretical model which did not actually

represent the reality of capitalism. Those who drew this conclusion, could, of course, not remain Marxists. There were others, though, who were too deeply impressed with the basic Marxian picture of the world (a class society engaged in class struggle moving from present exploitation of the workers to justice through a proletarian revolution) to abandon it just because Marx was wrong in his analysis of the present society. They proceeded, instead, to re-think the analysis of capitalism in order to allow for the developments that were at variance with Marx's forecast. This "revision" resulted in two divergent branches of Marxist thought. On the one hand, Edward Bernstein (main work: *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, 1899) concluded that in present society the increase of wealth would not necessarily entail the increasing misery of the workers and therefore the bourgeois and proletarian classes were not doomed to irreconcilable struggle. Bernstein's view of the present society, which became the pattern of actual policies of social-democratic parties, endorsed collaboration between the classes insofar as it can produce social improvement. In sharp opposition to this view, Lenin stuck to Marx's assertion that the class struggle is, in the very nature of the system, irreconcilable. It then became necessary to explain why the workers' lot in modern capitalist nations had improved, why capitalism had not yet collapsed, and why people were in no mood to stage a revolution against their capitalist exploiters. Lenin's answer to these questions is contained in his book *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), which will be presented here in its main points.

### *"Monopoly capitalism"*

Lenin, in his revised description of the present society, derived key ideas from two books: *Imperialism* by J. A. Hobson (1902), which discussed the division of the world among the leading European nations, and *Finanzkapital* by Rudolf Hilferding (1910), which showed how huge banking enterprises controlled vast economic processes. These two ideas Lenin combined into the following picture of the present capitalist society.

The salient feature of modern capitalism is the rule of monopoly. Competition (which Marx said was the basic law of capitalist development) has given way to the concentration of enormous wealth in a few hands.

. . . This transformation of competition into monopoly is one of the most important—if not the most important—phenomena of modern capitalist economy. . . .

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Competition becomes transformed into monopoly. The result is immense progress in the socialisation of production. . . .

. . . The framework of formally recognised free competition remains, but the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable.<sup>20</sup>

Marx asserted that power in capitalist society belonged to the factory owner who could buy the worker's labor power and employ it to produce surplus value. Lenin says that power now is in the hands of the financier:

. . . the development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still "reigns" and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the big profits go to the "genius" of financial manipulation.<sup>21</sup>

. . . the concentration of capital . . . is radically changing the significance of the banks. Scattered capitalists are transformed into a single collective capitalist.<sup>22</sup>

The concentration of production; the monopoly arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of banking with industry: this is the history of finance capital and what gives the term "finance capital" its content.<sup>23</sup>

Monopoly, in the form of finance capital, governs the present society in all its aspects:

A monopoly, once it is formed and controls thousands of millions, inevitably penetrates into *every* sphere of public life, regardless of the form of government and all other "details".<sup>24</sup>

### *The "need for foreign markets"*

The driving power of capitalism, as Lenin describes it, is no longer the need of one capitalist to compete with the other, but the need of the banker-monopolist to export excess capital, obtain more foreign markets, and get them under his exclusive control.

Under the old type of capitalism, when free competition prevailed, the export of *goods* was the most typical feature. Under modern capitalism, when monopolies prevail, the export of *capital* has become the typical feature.<sup>25</sup>

This tendency, according to Lenin, explains not only the political system under which modern (capitalistic) nations live, but also the international political developments on a world scale:

Monopolist capitalist combines—cartels, syndicates, trusts—divide among themselves, first of all, the whole internal market of a country, and impose

<sup>20</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January–July 1916), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. V, pp. 15, 21, 22.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.



their control, more or less completely upon the industry of that country. But under capitalism, the home market is inevitably bound up with the foreign market. . . . As the export of capital increased, and as the foreign and colonial relations, the "spheres of influence" of the big monopolist combines, expanded, things tended "naturally" toward . . . the formation of international cartels.<sup>28</sup>

A struggle began which . . . is fittingly called "the struggle for the division of the world."<sup>27</sup>

### *Division and redivision of the world*

Now, this division of the world is not merely a division of economic spheres of influence, but of political control. This is where imperialism enters.

The principal feature of modern capitalism is the domination of monopolist combines of the big capitalists. These monopolies are most durable when *all* the sources of raw materials are controlled by the one group. . . . Colonial possession alone gives complete guarantee of success to the monopolies. . . .<sup>28</sup>

This leads to a double concentration of capitalist power:

. . . First, there are monopolist capitalist combines in all advanced capitalist countries; secondly, a few rich countries in which the accumulation of capital reaches gigantic proportions, occupy a monopolist position.<sup>29</sup>

[Hence, the world is divided] . . . into two principal groups—of colony-owning countries on the one hand and colonies on the other. . . .<sup>30</sup>

. . . Imperialism . . . means the partition of the world, and the exploitation of other countries . . . which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries. . . .<sup>31</sup>

And these rich countries, Lenin continues, do not even produce anything, but lead a parasitical existence by merely "clipping coupons."

. . . The export of capital, one of the essential economic bases of imperialism, still more completely isolates the *rentiers* [the people who live by clipping coupons] from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by the exploitation of the labour of several overseas combines and colonies.<sup>32</sup>

. . . *for this very reason* the parasitic character of modern American capitalism has stood out with particular prominence.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

In such a "parasitic" state, even parts of the working class are corrupted and stop being revolutionary:

. . . Imperialism has the tendency of creating privileged sections even among the workers, and of detaching them from the main proletarian masses.<sup>34</sup>

. . . Imperialism . . . creates the economic possibility of corrupting the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives form to, and strengthens opportunism.<sup>35</sup>

Opportunism . . . in a number of countries . . . has grown ripe, over-ripe, and rotten, and has become completely merged with bourgeois policy in the form of "social-chauvinism".<sup>36</sup>

### *The new image of capitalism*

Now Lenin has just about exchanged all the parts of the Marxist structure for new ones and still retained the structure! The "exploiters" are, in addition to factory owners, the rich countries; the "exploited" are, in addition to industrial workers, the colonies. The "chain of bondage" is no longer the sale of labor-power on the commodity market, but the political control of territory, and the economic control of markets. The ruling power is to be morally condemned, not for "pocketing the product of his employee's labor," but for idly clipping coupons while other people work.

Thus, without giving up Marx's idea of the irreconcilable class struggle and Marx's condemnation of the present (capitalist) society Lenin managed to explain why capitalism has not yet collapsed, why the lot of the people under capitalism has improved, and why workers in capitalist countries are not revolution-minded. His answer is that capitalism has not yet collapsed because the advanced capitalistic societies found a new field of expansion which yielded them new wealth, that the lot of the people under capitalism has improved at the expense of the colonial populations, and that the upper part of the working class has allowed itself to become "corrupted" into preferring this shared wealth to the cause of the revolution. The latter observation served Lenin also as a means to read his opponents, the social-democratic parties, out of the "proletarian movement." Lenin himself characterized the significance of his reinterpretation of capitalism:

. . . the *forms* of the struggle may and do vary in accordance with varying, relatively particular and transitory causes, but the *essence* of the struggle, its class *content*, cannot change while classes exist.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 98.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 68.

In other words, the "class struggle" is for Lenin no longer an object of scientific inquiry—it is a dogma into which one tries to fit the changing facts of history.

#### 4. Lenin's Views About the Dynamics of Capitalism

Among Marx's basic concepts was also that of the inevitably catastrophic development of capitalism. Lenin did not abandon this concept, either, but gave it a new content that seemed compatible with the all but catastrophic course which capitalism had taken since Marx wrote. Monopoly capitalism, Lenin said, is the "highest stage" of capitalism.

. . . Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental attributes of capitalism in general. But capitalism only becomes capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high state of its development, when certain of its fundamental attributes began to be transformed into their opposites, when the features of the period of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system began to take shape . . . Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system. . . imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism.<sup>88</sup>

In other words, the "higher system," socialism, is at hand. But will it grow organically out of capitalism? Will it emerge peacefully? No, answers Lenin, it will come as the result of "inner contradictions" in the capitalist system in combination with a violent struggle between the ruling powers of that system and the "gravediggers" the system has produced within itself. According to Marx, the "inner contradictions" of capitalism were those inherent in its *economic* production, as the producers were driven on by the whip of competition to seek cheaper and cheaper ways of making commodities.

#### *The politics of "imperialism"*

Lenin, writing in 1916, could no longer explain the facts of capitalistic development in these economic terms, because Marx's concepts had turned out to be wrong. Instead, Lenin pointed to *political* contradictions produced by imperialism.

. . . the characteristic feature of this period is the final partition of the globe—not in the sense that a *new partition* is impossible—on the contrary, new partitions are possible and inevitable—but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has *completed* the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely shared out, so that in the future only *re-division* is possible. . . .<sup>89</sup>

One would think that, since monopoly control of markets and raw materials is supposed to be the motive behind the foreign policy of the

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

powers, their international quarrels would be confined to colonial territories. But Lenin reduces *all* of international politics to his formula:

. . . The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agricultural regions, but even highly industrialized regions . . . because (1) the fact that the world is already partitioned obliges those contemplating a *new* partition to stretch out their hands to *any kind* of territory, and (2) because an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between a number of great powers in the striving for hegemony. . . .<sup>40</sup>

*"Inherent contradictions of imperialism"*

There are thus two kind of "contradictions" which, according to Lenin, contribute to the downfall of the system: the "contradictions" between the leading industrial powers, and that between the rich countries and the emerging power of the formerly colonial areas.

Capitalism is growing with the greatest rapidity in the colonies and in trans-oceanic countries. Among the latter, *new* imperialist powers are emerging (*e.g.*, Japan). The struggle of world imperialism is becoming aggravated. . . .

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

We ask is there *under capitalism* any means of remedying the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and "spheres of influence" by finance capital on the other side—other than by resorting to war? <sup>41</sup>

. . . imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under *such* an economic system, *as long as* private property in the means of production exists.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, Lenin has now combined "war" with "exploitation" as the evil for which he indicts capitalism.

In the Marxist concept of history, the reader will remember, it appeared inevitable that capitalist society be supplanted by socialist society. Lenin here adds, as it were, that what is inevitable is also good and desirable. This leads him to ask the rhetorical question:

. . . whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the aggravation of the antagonisms which it engenders, or backwards, towards allaying these antagonisms . . . .<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 90.

<sup>42</sup> Lenin, Preface to the French and German editions of "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism" (July 6, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. V, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Lenin, "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism" (January-July 1916), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. V, p. 101.

Lenin's answer is implicit in the form in which the question is asked. He makes it even clearer when he defines imperialism as—

. . . capitalism in transition, or more precisely, as moribund capitalism.<sup>44</sup>

He puts the "Revolution"—which Marx had described as the action of the "overwhelming majority of the people"—on a new worldwide basis:

. . . Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the people of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries.<sup>45</sup>

The downfall of capitalism, he predicts, will be hastened by the revolutionary action of all the colonial peoples:

The tens of millions of dead and maimed left by the war . . . and the two "peace treaties" . . . open the eyes of the millions and tens of millions of people who are downtrodden, oppressed, deceived, and duped by the bourgeoisie, with a rapidity hitherto unprecedented. Thus, out of the universal ruin caused by the war an international revolutionary crisis is arising which, in spite of the protracted and difficult stages it may have to pass, cannot end in any other way than in a proletarian revolution and in its victory.

\* \* \* \* \*

Imperialism is the eve of the proletarian social revolution.<sup>46</sup>

### *Weaknesses of Lenin's concept*

Lenin's picture of the world as an imperialist, predatory, oppressive system torn by conflict and wars, is, in its way, as impressive at first glance as is Marx's picture of spiralling capitalistic production of wealth and misery. Both have enough support in observable facts to appear plausible. But Lenin's explanation, no less than that of Marx, has been refuted by actual developments, and more and more people realize that there is a fundamental flaw in his basic analysis. The world has not been further divided. On the contrary, most of the formerly colonial areas have now obtained their independence. Capitalism has raised the standard of living of the people, which Lenin declared impossible unless it developed agriculture, which he also considered impossible in the nature of the system. Agriculture is now producing huge surpluses precisely in some of the most advanced capitalistic countries, and the dependence of these countries on "underdeveloped" areas for raw materials and markets has diminished rather than increased.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>45</sup> Lenin, Preface to the French and German editions of "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism" (July 6, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. V, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 12.

The leading industrial countries have developed policies and international institutions to promote international peace, and it is the Soviet Union which rather has been the cause of international conflict in the last fifteen years. The trend toward concentration of capital has not gone unchecked. Big business, though powerful, has turned out to be simply one of several centers of power in democratic society, and it has not been able to check either labor unions or farm organizations, just as it has neither escaped heavy taxation nor had its way in foreign policies. Democratic and capitalistic countries, far from being dominated by a few monopolists, have seen the rise of vigorous labor and farm organizations, as well as of political parties whose competition for voters' attention has secured a diffusion of power among many groups and sections of the people. It is in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, that a monopoly of management, ideological control, and political power has been concentrated in the hands of a small group of Communists. In other words, Lenin's *Imperialism* is—just as little as that of Marx's *Capital*—a true picture of democratic industrial society and its development.

### 5. Communists in "Present-day Society"

It is now becoming more and more clear that the end of the sway of capitalism is drawing near in other countries, too, and that capitalism is a system that has outlived its age and is bound to perish. The future is ours! The future is for Marxism-Leninism! The future is for communism! . . .<sup>47</sup>

This view of "present-day society" is not new for Communists. It has been implicit in Communist doctrine from the beginning.

"Present-day Society" is capitalist society, which exists in all civilized countries. . . .

. . . In this sense it is possible to speak of the "present-day state", in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Communist attitudes toward "present-day society"*

Communist ideas about "present-day society" determine the attitude which Communists take toward their fellow-citizens, with whom they share existence in "present-day society." The proper attitude of Marxists toward "present-day society" has been the chief issue between Communists and democratic socialists. In Germany, for instance, socialists debated at the beginning of this century whether (a) their cause should

<sup>47</sup> Excerpts from Khrushchev speech November 3, 1958; *New York Times*, Nov. 5, 1958, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (May 1875), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 32.

be promoted by revolutionary mass actions or rather by working for increased influence of the party in the legislature; and (b) whether socialists should flatly refuse to support the military establishment or rather obtain social improvements as the price of voting for certain military appropriations.<sup>49</sup> The alternative of cooperation looks toward a gradual reformation of society through the political power of the socialist party. The revolutionary alternative looks upon "present-day society" as something that is utterly corrupt as well as utterly doomed, so that one need take no interest in its problems other than to the end of hastening its collapse and of detaching the masses from its authorities. This view is the one on which Lenin insisted as the core of communism. On this issue, he bitterly attacked the "reformists" whom he accused of treason.

. . . the new "critical" tendency in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new species of *opportunism*.<sup>50</sup>

. . . *The theory of the class struggle* was rejected on the grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society. . . .<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the Communist doctrine forbids any *bona fide* participation in "present-day society" for the purpose of improving conditions in that society. But it treats reforms as a means to "utilize economic agitation" for the fight against the entire structure of society.

. . . it subordinates the struggle for reforms to the revolutionary struggle. . . .<sup>52</sup>

The Communist assumption is that "present-day society" as a whole is worthless.

. . . we must make it our business to *stimulate* in the minds of those who are dissatisfied only with [particular] . . . conditions the idea that the whole political system is worthless.<sup>53</sup>

Marx, who had but disdain for the "Utopian Socialists," nevertheless approved of one element in their literature which "contained most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class." This "valuable" aspect of utopian literature was, to Marx, their attack on "every principle of existing society."<sup>54</sup> By contrast, Marx chided the Utopian Socialists for their endeavor to "deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms," in other words, to improve and reform "present-

<sup>49</sup> Cf., Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), particularly part I.

<sup>50</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 32.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 63.

day society" rather than to look for its destruction, in accordance with the "progressive historical development of the proletariat."<sup>55</sup>

Lenin's writings are full of expressions of a total rejection of the whole "present-day society".

. . . the rottenness, mendacity, and hypocrisy of capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

. . . the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism. . . .<sup>57</sup>

. . . in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false. . . .<sup>58</sup>

Bourgeois democracy . . . remains . . . restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical. . . .<sup>59</sup>

What is more, in "present-day society" no reconciliation of the classes is possible, and therefore the class-struggle must be fanned rather than mitigated.

. . . For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one.<sup>60</sup>

. . . The state is the product and the manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . According to Marx, the State could neither arise nor continue to exist if it were possible to conciliate classes.<sup>61</sup>

. . . preaching collaboration of classes and "social peace" between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It is ridiculous to think that such a position . . . could lead to anything but disgraceful failure.<sup>62</sup>

Thus the Communist sees himself in "present-day society":

. . . surrounded on all sides by enemies . . . under their almost constant fire.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (Nov. 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 133.

<sup>57</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 77.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>59</sup> Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (Nov. 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 130.

<sup>60</sup> Marx and Engels, "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" (March 1850), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 110.

<sup>61</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, pp. 8, 9.

<sup>62</sup> Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (Nov. 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 151.

<sup>63</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 33.



The surrounding society engulfs him with its influences:

. . . They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat. . . .<sup>64</sup>

There is no common ground between the Communists and their fellow-citizens:

. . . *the only choice is*: either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course. . . .<sup>65</sup>

For the Communists do not regard themselves as citizens of "present-day societies" and do not share with others the desire to solve "present-day" problems. They have put all their eggs in the basket of the future.

. . . our people may do stupid things . . . and yet, in the last resort, they will prove the victors.<sup>66</sup>

. . . if, however, we are able to master all means of warfare, we shall certainly be victorious, because we represent the interests of the really advanced, of the really revolutionary class. . . .<sup>67</sup>

Communists should know that at all events the future belongs to them. . . .<sup>68</sup>

Although ideas like these were stated at different times and in different contexts, the appraisal and evaluation of "present-day society" which they contain have become axioms of Communist ideology. Capitalism is the "present-day society." It is the last historical stage before socialism; as a society, it is considered worthless; as a system, it is believed about to tumble down. Revolution is the cause of the future; its adherents look to the future alone and to the present as a mere condition for hastening the advent of the future. It is from these ideological dogmas that Communists derive that characteristic attitude one can describe as "absence of public faith," an attitude which resorts—

. . . to all sorts of stratagems, manoeuvres and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuges. . . .<sup>69</sup>

which works within public institutions with the ultimate end of destroying them because:

The surest way of discrediting a new political . . . idea, and of damaging it, is to reduce it to absurdity while ostensibly defending it.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Lenin, " 'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 84.

<sup>65</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 62.

<sup>66</sup> Lenin, " 'Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 125.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

According to this recipe:

. . . loyalty to the ideas of Communism must be combined with the ability to make all the necessary practical compromises, to "tack," to make agreements, zigzags, retreats and so on, in order to accelerate . . . the inevitable friction, quarrels, conflicts and complete disintegration . . . and properly to select the moment when the disintegration among these "pillars of the sacred right of private property" is at its highest, in order, by a determined attack of the proletariat, to defeat them all and capture political power.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

## Chapter III. The Socialist Revolution

Together with the philosophy of history, the Marxist doctrine of the Socialist Revolution is the core of Communist ideology. Revolution has been a perennial human reaction to intolerable social conditions. Particularly in the modern world there have been many revolutions, and many among these are celebrated as acts of justice and liberation. The United States originated in a revolt against arbitrary rule. Modern France is still devoted to the Revolution of 1789. Because such examples are frequent and familiar, one is often tempted to assume that the "Socialist Revolution" is another concept of a spontaneous popular uprising against intolerable suffering and injustice. This is not so.

### 1. Difference Between "Socialist Revolution" and Other Revolutions

Marx, Engels, and Lenin, when speaking of "Socialist Revolution," were not thinking primarily of a people's aspirations for higher justice and redress of grievances. If they were, they would have dwelt upon such notions as "the people," "suffering," "justice," "right rule," etc. Actually, the Marxist doctrine of the Social Revolution operates chiefly with such notions as "class," "historical development," "political movement." It is a doctrine of revolution as a "necessary" event in the process of history, rather than in terms of human suffering and people's hopes. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx indignantly rejected the views of those who—

. . . are conscious of caring chiefly for the interests of the working class, as being the most suffering class. Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, Marx himself is interested in the proletariat as a "class with historical initiative." Thus the Communist doctrine of Socialist Revolution is something quite different from the doctrines or ideas of revolution that are familiar to us from the examples of America, France, Italy and other modern European nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847–January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 62.

*Meaning of the Marxist concept of revolution*

The doctrine of the Socialist revolution, as a part of the Communist theory of history, is three things at the same time. It is: (a) an appraisal of present conditions and trends, together with a prediction of necessary historical developments; (b) a call to a social class to unify for the purpose of seizing power; and, (c) a justification for the power wielded by this class or, rather, wielded in the name of this class.

The doctrine *predicts*, first of all, that in capitalist society the proletarian class will grow into an ever-increasing revolutionary force which will struggle with the ruling bourgeoisie, eventually overthrow it, and set up its own proletarian rule. Next, the doctrine contains a *call to action* meant to bring about this historical development, by means of organizational, conspiratorial, combative, and political activities aiming at the unity of the revolutionary masses and their dictatorial power. Finally, the doctrine *justifies* not only the Communist Party as a new type of legal/illegal combat organization, but also all power that is wielded on behalf of the revolution, both before and after the overthrow of the bourgeois rulers, by predicting that from the ruthless use of "proletarian" power will eventually arise a universal realm of freedom. The "Socialist Revolution" must be understood as a concept that centers above all in the necessity and the course of history—by contrast with the revolutions with which we are familiar from our past which center above all in the rights and hopes of people. "Socialist Revolution" conveys, to Communists, not so much an idea of what people strive for, but an idea of what must certainly happen as societies move forward. In addition to this idea of necessity, the concept also contains the idea that from the consummation of the necessary course of events, ultimate good will result. And on this double count, it appeals to men to devote their lives to the cause of the Socialist Revolution, regardless of whether or not that revolution would satisfy their needs or improve their condition.

Thus, the concept differs fundamentally from that underlying the American, the French, and other modern revolutions which were considered a justifiable expression of what the people wanted and hoped for. In Communist doctrine, the revolution is not justified because people will it, but rather the will of the people is justified insofar as it aims at the revolution. In the eyes of Communists, "the Revolution" is a "hallowing" concept, a quality that converts into "good" everything it enters, an overriding demand on humans in the name of an "Absolute," a yardstick by which men and things are ultimately "judged."

## 2. "Bourgeoisie" and "Proletariat"

In keeping with the Communist view of "the Revolution" as an expression of "History's Great Design," rather than the aspirations of suffering human beings, is the Communist description of the proletariat

as a class which in its very nature must be "revolutionary." In other words, rather than inquiring whether workers, in actual fact, do have revolutionary aims, Communist ideology from the outside *defines* them, first, as a "class" and, second, as a "revolutionary" class.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.<sup>2</sup>

By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live.<sup>3</sup>

Having first defined a number of people as a "class," Marx then proceeds to declare that they are necessarily engaged in struggle with a certain other class:

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie.<sup>4</sup>

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.<sup>5</sup>

#### *"Revolutionary" and "really revolutionary"*

What does this mean, a "really revolutionary class"? The concept plays a great role in Communist thinking, and should be thoroughly understood. Marx himself elaborates as follows:

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie. . . .<sup>6</sup>

In other words, classes other than the proletariat also are revolutionary. But their revolutionary activities are different in that they merely defend their present interests, they want—

. . . to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class.<sup>7</sup>

That means that someone who revolts against a threat to his existence and his interests, is not "really" revolutionary.

. . . They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.<sup>8</sup>

What Marx says here is that “revolutionary” is not a matter of one’s intention, dedication, or strength of character. The proletariat alone is the “class that holds the future in its hands”; therefore one can be “really revolutionary” only by fighting for the interests of the proletariat which are “the future interests” of all other classes. “Revolutionary” here means thoroughgoing orientation toward the future, rather than the present.

In this sense, “revolutionary” is incompatible with any inclination to reform the “present-day society,” because this would be tantamount to an attempt to maintain “present-day society,” rather than to hasten its downfall and the advent of the future society.<sup>9</sup> The proletariat is conceived to be a “really revolutionary” class because it is described as having no share at all in “present-day society.”

. . . The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices. . . .

. . . They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify. . . .<sup>10</sup>

Since the proletariat is thus divorced from any interest in the benefit of “present-day society” as well as from any future property interests, its rising therefore is supposedly guided not by self-interest, but by a sense of its historic mission.

. . . The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. . . . their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.<sup>11</sup>

This is of great importance. Marx says that the proletariat will make a revolution in which it will not “secure and fortify” its own interests but rather carry out a forward movement of history with beneficial effects for all. While other classes may be “revolutionary” for a while, the proletariat will go on with the revolution after the others have become

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> For clarification of the concept of “reform” in Communist ideology, see footnote 112, p. 110.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

satisfied with what has been attained. For the proletariat, the revolution is a "permanent" assignment.

. . . While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of existing society but the foundation of a new one.<sup>12</sup>

What the proletariat requires to play this role is therefore, above all, a view of history (the Marxist view of history). It cannot be "really revolutionary" as long as it ignores this view and thinks of immediate benefits for itself. This point is so important because it is on it that Lenin bases his concept of the "Vanguard Party," the history-conscious minority group that would lead all others toward the future.

If the proletariat is necessary for the Socialist Revolution as a free and unattached agent of the Future, the bourgeoisie is no less required as the class whose rule engenders the proletariat.

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. . . . The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. . . . What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Marx's and Engels' Idea of the Revolution

The revolution is such a central idea in Communist ideology that the utmost attention has been given to all kinds of concrete questions as to this event. Foremost among these questions are: *When, Where, By Whom, How* is the revolution to be made? These questions were answered differently by Marx and Engels on the one hand, and Lenin on the other.

<sup>12</sup> Marx and Engels, "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" (March 1850), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 110.

<sup>13</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 45.

*When*

The question *When?* is answered by Marx by a reference to the development of "productive forces." When "productive forces," i.e. techniques and tools of production, get out of step with "relations of property," i.e. the legal forms under which production goes on, the explosion occurs. Speaking of feudalism, Marx says:

... At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.<sup>14</sup>

Something similar is then predicted for "bourgeois society."

A similar movement is going on before our eyes.<sup>15</sup>

But the collapse of the bourgeois order cannot occur before capitalism has developed to its full maturity:

... No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself.<sup>16</sup>

Both Marx and Engels thought at first that this moment had come in 1848.

Looking back in 1895, Engels saw more clearly that "the Revolution" could not have taken place then, because capitalism had by no means attained its greatest development:

History has proved us, and all who thought like us, wrong. It has made clear that the state of economic development on the Continent at that time was not, by a long way, ripe for the elimination of capitalist production. . . .<sup>17</sup>

In other words, the prerequisite of the Socialist Revolution is the completion of the capitalist cycle. It is the full development of capitalism which alone brings forth within bourgeois society the revolutionary forces:

... Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of trans-

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Marx, Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (January 1859), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 363.

<sup>17</sup> Engels, Introduction to "The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850 by Karl Marx" (Mar. 6, 1895), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 125.



formation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. . . . Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with the capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.<sup>18</sup>

### *Where*

These passages also answer the question *Where* the Socialist Revolution is to take place. The place is that of the most "advanced" civilization and capitalism.

The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation, and with a much more developed proletariat, than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Addressing himself to the question whether the Socialist Revolution could succeed in a backward country like Russia, Engels wrote:

. . . no more in Russia than anywhere else would it have been possible to develop a higher social form out of primitive agrarian communism unless that higher form was *already in existence* in another country. . . . That higher form being, wherever it is historically possible, the necessary consequence of the capitalistic form of production and of the social dualistic antagonism created by it, it could not be developed directly out of the agrarian commune. . . .<sup>20</sup>

### *Who*

On the question of *Who* makes the revolution, Marx leaves no doubt: the proletariat as a class:

. . . the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, and, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class. . . .<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Marx, "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" (1867), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 460.

<sup>19</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Engels, in a letter "Engels to N. F. Danielson" (Oct. 17, 1893), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 503.

<sup>21</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House 1955), vol. I, p. 54.

What is more, at the time of the revolution, this class comprises the vast majority of all people:

The lower strata of the middle class . . . sink gradually into the proletariat. . . . Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.<sup>22</sup>

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority.<sup>23</sup>

### *How*

And *How* would, according to Marx and Engels, the revolution be made? This turned out to be a complicated matter in which it is difficult to detect clear lines of thought in Communist ideology. A few things about Marxist thought on the manner of the revolution are, however, quite clear. It is clear, above all, that Marx envisaged the revolution as a violent event, an act of force.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution.<sup>24</sup>

Or again:

. . . we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.<sup>25</sup>

The establishment of proletarian rule, however, is not the end of the use of brute force. Rather, it is the beginning of a period in which the government would be used as an instrument of force against the "exploiters."

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.<sup>26</sup>

And what happens then?

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the Bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the *State*, i.e. of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

In other words, the mission of the proletarian power is not to satisfy human aspirations and needs, but to bring about the destruction of the old society and the development of the means of production.<sup>28</sup> It was realized from the beginning that this could not be accomplished except by lawless force.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.<sup>29</sup>

Marx here recognizes that the beginning of "despotic inroads on the rights of property" will lead to "further inroads upon the old social order," that these measures will "appear untenable" but are nevertheless "unavoidable." What he envisages is dictatorial government apart from popular consent and from the restrictions of law, the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.<sup>30</sup>

Marxists are taught that the rule of force *after* the seizure of power is the most important phase of the Socialist Revolution:

. . . A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets, and cannon—authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. Effects of the Revolution

There is a widespread misconception to the effect that communism is based on the blueprint of an ideal society. In actual fact, the advocates of a blueprint of a future society were bitterly criticized by Marx as "Utopians." He accused them of substituting their "personal inventive action" for "historical action," of thinking in terms of "fantastic

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also above, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (May 1875), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>31</sup> Engels, "On Authority" (October 1872), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 638.

conditions of emancipation" rather than "historically created ones," and of looking to an "organization of society specially contrived by these inventors." They are, to him, dreamers of ideals and not students of history.

. . . Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans.<sup>32</sup>

The objection of Marx and Engels to this "utopian" socialism is that it overlooks the struggle itself, the development of which is bound to lead to as yet unpredictable conditions.

. . . The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. . . . It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda. . . . These new social systems were foredoomed as Utopian. . . .<sup>33</sup>

By contrast, Marx and Engels dwelt above all on the continuing struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. To conduct this struggle energetically, effectively, and victoriously, was their concern. Out of the triumph of Communists in this struggle a new society would arise by way of economic and social development, rather than as the result of a blueprint.

. . . While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible . . . it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position. . . .<sup>34</sup>

Out of the continuing struggle of the classes would, "in the course of development" (rather than by an attempt to realize the blueprint of an ideal order!) grow a society without classes and without a state.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. . . .

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847–January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 62.

<sup>33</sup> Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> Marx and Engels, "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" (March 1850), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 110.

<sup>35</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847–January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 54.

## 5. The "Period of Transition"

One delicate question in Communist ideology is how long this "course of development" will take. While the Communist Manifesto and other writings by Marx refer to a "period," Engels commits himself to the confident prediction of an almost immediate change of social order as a result of the seizure of power:

. . . As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production . . . are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. . . . The state is not "abolished". *It dies out.*<sup>86</sup>

. . . We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of . . . classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them, the state will inevitably fall. The society that will organize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of the state where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe.<sup>87</sup>

Marx, more cautious, predicted that after the seizure of power there would be a slow development, in which he distinguished two phases. The first one would be a society in which everyone obtained a fair share of the total product, corresponding to the labor which he had put into it. The distribution of goods in this phase would still be based on *rights* and could therefore not do justice to all the factual inequalities of individual persons. The second phase would not longer rely on rights as a basis of distribution, because material abundance would allow everyone to have as much as he needed. (In later Communist ideology, the first phase came to be called "socialism" and the second, "communism.")

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society. . . . Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society—after the deductions have been made—exactly what he gives to it. . . .

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<sup>86</sup> Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 150, 151. The more familiar translation of the last sentence says: *It withers away.*

<sup>87</sup> Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (March-June 1884), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 321.

. . . The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labour.

. . . This *equal right* is an unequal right for unequal labour. . . . *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.* . . .

But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society. . . .

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour . . . has vanished . . . after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual . . . only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs! <sup>88</sup>

One may sum up the Communist expectations as to the results of the revolution as follows (although care must be taken at this point to distinguish between the views of Marx and Engels): The decisive act would be the seizure of power by "the proletariat" and the turning of the means of production (land, factories, etc.) into state property. From its vantage point as the new ruling class, the proletarian power would then proceed to remove, one by one, all the traces of the former society and its system of production. At the same time it would seek to develop production, under government administration, by means which Marx characterized as "despotic." This is as far as Marxism envisages plans for a deliberate revolutionary action. The rest is "development," that is, something which is expected to occur by itself as a result of the steps taken by the revolutionary forces. There are three key developments that are envisaged: The disappearance of classes, the elimination of the "division of labor," and the "withering away" of the state. Once these developments are consummated, the "realm of freedom" would supposedly have arrived.

## 6. Lenin's Views of Communist Revolution

What Marx left to his followers was the myth of the Socialist Revolution: a great convulsive crisis, a political explosion of the oppressed class of proletarians, which would at one fell swoop end the rule of the bourgeoisie and thus all class societies. It is true, Marx insisted that the new society would be slow in taking shape, that it would evolve in the midst of social patterns left over from capitalism. Nevertheless, his idea of the revolution created the image of a decisive insurrection which, coming at the fullness of capitalism's time, would sweep away the obsolete political superstructure and usher in a new world. As a myth, this image still

<sup>88</sup> Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (May 1875), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 23, 24.

plays a key role in Communist ideology. As a working concept, however, it has been entirely replaced by Lenin's ideas about the revolution which, along with his ideas on capitalism, have substituted new contents while retaining the formal structure of Marx's concept.

Briefly, Lenin, while still making full use of the myth of the revolution, saw in practice not one single threshold event that would separate two ages from each other, but rather a protracted struggle extending over an entire epoch, a struggle in which no single event or explosion could accomplish the passage from one age to the other. In keeping with this idea, he did not speak of the "fullness of time" at which capitalism, wholly ripe, would be ready to be knocked down to make room for the new growth. Rather he looked for recurrent favorable situations that permitted an advance of Communist forces. The period of the struggle extends, in Lenin's views, from the time at which Communist forces organize, through both the bourgeois and socialist revolutions, into an indefinite duration of proletarian dictatorship. Thus, "the Revolution" connotes a continuous conflict including not only the proletariat's seizure of power, but also the so-called bourgeois-democratic revolution (which is supposed to precede the former), and the period of dictatorial rule by the Communist Party in control of the state. Since to Lenin the revolution means not so much a liberating explosion occurring at the point of highest development of capitalism, but rather a protracted class struggle, he made a number of statements which seemed to favor more backward countries as the most suitable theater in which to carry forth this struggle. At any rate, Communist doctrine, evolving from Lenin's concepts, now calls for a concentration of the revolutionary blow on the "weakest link" of the entire "chain" of "imperialism."<sup>39</sup>

Quite logically, then, Lenin expected the revolution in Russia to be decided not solely by the social forces of the proletariat, but rather by the proletariat combined with the peasantry, both led by the party. There are other differences between Lenin's concept of the revolution and that of Marx. All of them, however, center in the decisive distinction between Marx's notion of a single, epoch-making political event, and Lenin's notion of a protracted struggle. The latter, grown out of the revolutionary problems peculiar to Russia, has become the criterion now governing all of contemporary Communist ideology.

The crucial concept in Lenin's view of the revolution is that of an entire period of "transition," a period, that is, of protracted fighting.

. . . The first fact that has been established with complete exactitude by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact which the utopians forgot, and which is forgotten by present-day opportunists who

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<sup>39</sup> J. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 37.

are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage or epoch of *transition* from capitalism to communism.<sup>40</sup>

This transitional period is seen by Lenin essentially as a period of Communist dictatorship, which he calls, in keeping with Marx's revolutionary myth, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

. . . the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but for the entire *historical period* between capitalism and "classless society," communism. . . . The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but in essence there will inevitably be only one: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.<sup>41</sup>

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" is thus a phase of class struggle, a struggle between the Communists and their enemies which continues after the Communist seizure of power, for an indefinite time to come.

. . . The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society.<sup>42</sup>

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, against the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow. . . .<sup>43</sup>

Stalin states the same idea more emphatically:

. . . the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "superrevolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats.<sup>44</sup>

Thus Lenin projects the revolution far into an indefinite future even beyond the Communist seizure of power.

. . . Classes have remained, and everywhere they will remain *for years* after the conquest of power by the proletariat.<sup>45</sup>

But the revolution is also extended into the "past" in the sense that Lenin has it begin with the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution. This

<sup>40</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (August–September 1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 78.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 84.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>44</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 83.



revolution, according to the Communist Manifesto, is the emancipation of the rising bourgeois class from feudal rule; it is a revolution made and led by the bourgeoisie itself, in which the proletariat would at most play a subordinate role. Lenin, however, developed, for Russia and Asiatic countries, the plan that the proletariat should take the lead even in what Marxism calls the "bourgeois-democratic revolution." This is a conclusion which one cannot escape if one assumes that the revolution can be started more easily in countries which have not yet become capitalist and which may even never have had a feudal society. According to the Marxist dogma about the "necessary" sequence of historical events, a "bourgeois-democratic" revolution would always have to take place before there could be a "socialist" revolution. Lenin, significantly, includes the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution in the overall design of the revolutionary struggle to be fought by the Communists.

. . . our revolution is a bourgeois revolution *so long* as we march with the peasantry *as a whole*. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . *First*, with the "whole" of the peasantry against the monarchy, the landlords, the mediaeval regime (and to that extent, the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited; *against capitalism*, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese wall between the first and second revolutions, to separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of unity with the poor peasants, is monstrously to distort Marxism. . . .<sup>46</sup>

Thus, instead of a single climactic event that would terminate the capitalist and usher in the socialist society we have in Leninism the concept of a continuous class struggle in which one can distinguish various phases only in the sense that the Communists may dispose at certain times of different bases and means of their fighting power. The entire world is now pictured as one single system of "imperialist" capitalism in which all countries hang together as by a chain. The fight against this system might concentrate on any point of the chain. No point is decisive. Every attack is an attempt to weaken the system as a whole. This is an entirely new concept of the revolution, as different from Marx's idea as the atom bomb from the battle axe. Stalin acknowledges this:

Formerly it was the accepted thing to speak of the existence or absence of objective conditions for the proletarian revolution in individual countries,

<sup>46</sup> Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (Nov. 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, pp. 190, 191.

or, to be more precise, in one or another developed country. Now this point of view is no longer adequate. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . Now we must speak of the world proletarian revolution; for the separate national fronts of capital have become links of a single chain. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . *not necessarily where industry is more developed*, and so forth. The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest. . . .<sup>47</sup>

The concept of a decisive revolution has here given way to the concept of an interminably ongoing war. As a result, Leninist thought is frequently expressed in military terms. The conditions for revolutionary success are, in this view, not historical-evolutionary, but rather strategic ones. As early as 1902, Lenin spoke of the class struggle as a military problem:

Before us, in all its strength, towers the fortress of the enemy from which a hail of shells and bullets pours down upon us, mowing down our best warriors. We must capture this fortress. . . .<sup>48</sup>

We have never rejected terror on principle, nor can we do so. Terror is a form of military operation that may be usefully applied, or may even be essential in certain moments of the battle, under certain conditions, and when the troops are in a certain condition.<sup>49</sup>

Consequently, the question of the seizure of power is to him also something to be decided on military-strategic rather than on historical-evolutionary grounds. Marx saw the proletarian revolution coming when "capitalism had fully matured." Lenin sees it when "the decisive battle has fully matured":

. . . in such a way that (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently confused . . . have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle beyond their strength; that (2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable intermediate elements . . . have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; and that (3) among the proletariat a mass mood in favour of supporting the most determined, unreservedly bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen. . . .<sup>50</sup>

These conditions can obviously be fulfilled in any country, as Lenin himself points out:

. . . Only when the "*lower classes*" do not want the old and when the "*upper classes*" cannot continue in the old way, then only can revolution

<sup>47</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 36, 37.

<sup>48</sup> Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement" (December 1900), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Lenin, "Where to Begin?" (May 1901), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 137.

conquer. This truth may be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a national crisis affecting both the exploited and the exploiters.<sup>51</sup>

Since there are "upper" and "lower" classes everywhere, this recipe does not depend on a highly developed capitalism. As a matter of fact, says Lenin:

. . . it is easier for the movement to start in those countries which are not exploiting countries. . . .<sup>52</sup>

. . . we must be able to reckon with the fact that the world socialist revolution cannot begin so easily in the advanced countries as the revolution began in Russia. . . .<sup>53</sup>

Once Communist power is established, the fight, however, does not stop. The revolution then continues in the form of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." The fight goes on against the class enemy, the bourgeoisie:

. . . whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow . . . and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital . . . but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small production*. . . . For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Here Lenin changes the last of Marx's concepts which he has still retained, that of the bourgeoisie. For Marx, the bourgeoisie was the capitalistic class, the class which, with the help of capital, developed large-scale production and employed wage laborers. Lenin has shifted the "proletarian" revolution from advanced capitalist countries to backward countries, he has substituted for the proletariat first the combination of proletariat and peasantry and then "all toilers," and now he pins the label of bourgeoisie on the "small producers," which is Communist jargon meaning, in this context, the peasantry.<sup>55</sup>

. . . The abolition of classes not only means driving out the landlords and capitalists . . . it means also abolishing *the small commodity-producers*. . . . They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere. . . . The force of habit of millions and of tens of millions is a very terrible force. . . . It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to "vanquish" millions and millions of small proprietors. . . .<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>52</sup> Lenin, "The Activities of the Council of People's Commissars" (Jan. 24 [11], 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 281.

<sup>53</sup> Lenin, "War and Peace" (Mar. 7, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 294.

<sup>54</sup> Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 60.

<sup>55</sup> For a definition of the peasantry see p. 94, footnote 67.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.

Here Lenin uses the concept of "class struggle" in his own typical way. In the view of Marx, "class struggle" meant the political fight for power of the proletarian class against their bourgeois rulers. For Lenin, the "class struggle" goes on even after the "proletarians" (i.e., Communists) have seized power, as long as the former order of society still continues to mold the habits of people. In the "force of habit," certain elements of hostile class rule persist. So Lenin conceives the task of Communists in power as ongoing "class struggle," which he justifies by the assertion that "classes continue long after the seizure of power." The dictatorial use of power by the Communists is called "class struggle," thus evoking all the morally supporting emotions that used to be associated with Marx's notion of the valiant struggle of the exploited.

. . . A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.<sup>57</sup>

If the "class struggle" continues after the seizure of power, the state and the government must become the main instrument of revolution:

The proletariat needs state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of *leading* the great mass of the population . . . in the work of organising socialist economy.<sup>58</sup>

But the state is to be an instrument of lawless force in the service of the "class struggle," rather than an instrument for the common good of the people.

. . . *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie*. . .<sup>59</sup>

How long must the "class struggle" continue? When can the revolution be considered accomplished? Lenin does maintain the vision of a society without state which Engels had, somewhat rashly, conjured up. But he emphasized that

. . . Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect [i.e. the withering away of the state]. . .<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, there must also be an abundance of goods:

The state will be able to wither away completely when society can apply the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," *i.e.* when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social life and when their labour is so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 51.

<sup>60</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 82.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

In other words, the end of the revolution will come as a "gradual and spontaneous process" of people acquiring perfectly social habits. As long as this has not happened—and no one can make it happen by design—the revolutionary class struggle must continue even where Communists have already ruled for a long time.

Lenin's doctrine of the revolution is thus essentially a theory of—  
 . . . the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism . . . the period of the *overthrow* and complete abolition of the bourgeoisie.<sup>62</sup>

By "bourgeoisie" Lenin means, as we have seen, not only capitalists, but also "small commodity producers," and by "complete abolition" he means the breaking of the "force of habit of millions and tens of millions." Thus he is driven to the conclusion that the "period of transition"—

. . . inevitably becomes a period of unusually violent class struggles in their sharpest possible forms. . . .<sup>63</sup>

Consequently, the state must, in the hands of its Communist rulers, remain a ruthless dictatorship for an indefinite period.

As in the revision of Marx by Lenin on the question of capitalism, we have here the substitution of an entire set of new concepts for the old ones without giving up the structure. Marx created a concept of "the revolution" which evoked, and still evokes, strong emotional powers of devotion among its adherents. The essence of Marx's idea is the violent and climactic upthrust of a hitherto oppressed part of a people, an upthrust that would liberate not only the oppressed from their masters, but also society as such from the very root causes of all oppression and injustice. This vision of a world-liberating deed held out such hope that it became, in the eyes of Marxists, a touchstone of value. Whatever is "revolutionary" is considered good, whatever "reactionary," evil. The revolution is a "holy" cause that alone can justify political action and political power. It is, above all, the sole justification advanced for the dictatorial regime of the Soviet and its deeds. Communist ideology has therefore refused to abandon the Marxist concept of the "proletarian revolution" even though not one single element of that concept has remained unchanged. Instead of industrial workers revolting against factory owners, there are two hostile camps of nations; instead of a climactic upthrust—a protracted struggle; instead of liberation from oppression—an indefinitely prolonged dictatorial regime. All this is still passed off as the "proletarian revolution." In one sense alone is the "proletarian" element a still decisive concept: all of the population ruled by Communist power is slated to be subjected to the work discipline of the factory before Communists will feel that they have achieved their

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

goal of "socialist transformation." Thus what is left as an effective residue of Marx's ideas about the proletarian class is no longer a concept of an active historical mission but rather of a passive role of the proletariat as the support of the party, and also as the class whose existence serves as the mold into which all citizens are to be eventually pressed.

## Chapter IV. Communist Organization and Strategy

Before Lenin, socialist theory concerned mainly such problems as the analysis and development of capitalism, and the general features of the class struggle. Because Lenin conceived of the revolution as a protracted struggle, the bulk of Communist doctrine at present consists in ideas about this struggle, its laws, and the organization required for the struggle. These ideas are not mere rules of expediency, but have become ideological dogmas. They took shape in bitter fights between Lenin and other Russian revolutionaries. Every question of organization and of strategy became an issue of ideology, so that every practical decision also settled a dogma that was henceforth embodied in Communist ideology. One may broadly distinguish between ideological dogmas concerning the Communist Party itself—its organization, relation to the masses, and tasks—and dogmas concerning the revolutionary strategy.

### 1. The Communist Party

The definition of the nature and function of the Communist Party by a whole series of ideological concepts is the central Leninist idea. Marx, in the Communist Manifesto, had declared that "the Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties. They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole." Those working class parties which had formed during Marx's and Engels' lifetime by and large resembled other political parties which operated in the setting of representative democracy: they had mass membership represented by elected leaders and were loosely held together by platforms and programs.

Lenin insisted on a new type of organization. Although this organization is still called a "party," it is not a genuine political party in the sense of considering itself a part of a whole, nor in the sense of functioning mainly for the purpose of organizing voters in a competitive system of politics. Rather, it was from the beginning envisaged as a combat organization, a kind of ideological-military army designed to destroy, conquer and hold positions of power with means ranging from terror to trickery. As he rammed his ideas through against the opposition of other Russian Marxists, he imposed on his followers not merely a certain type of party organization, but also the ideological principles implied therein, particularly principles regarding the position and role of Communists in their non-Communist environment. Basically, the

Leninist concept of the party reflects the underlying idea that the revolution is required by the laws of historical necessity rather than by actual desires or aspirations of living people. It is the remote historical future which is to be realized by the revolution, and, looking toward this future, the party is supposed to be more "advanced" than the more short-sighted interests of the masses ever could be. The party is conceived as the executor of the "laws of history" rather than any actual "will of the people." Its function is to act not in accordance with popular wishes but in accordance with what the "advanced" Communist understanding of history dictates.

As an organization, the party should be set up so as to serve for any conceivable task of political or military combat, it should insist on ideological unity and quasi-military discipline. In other words, the Communist Party thus conceived became a combination of a religious hierarchy, a combat-ready army, and a high-pressure sales organization, all at the same time. The commitment to this kind of party was justified in terms of certain ideological concepts: for instance, the either-or choice between bourgeois and socialist ideologies, between which there could be no middle ground; the idea that the party is most advanced in its insight into unfolding historical truth and therefore infallible; the idea that support of the party is the measure of progressiveness, etc. All of these ideological concepts emerged out of practical struggles within the Russian Social-Democratic Party and are nowhere systematically presented. They must rather be found in the many pamphlets written on the occasion of such struggles.

### *Consciousness*

A key concept that emerged early is that of "consciousness." It is tied to Marx's frequent emphasis that the proletariat must gradually acquire consciousness of its "historical mission." Lenin insisted that there is a fundamental distinction between "revolutionary consciousness" and "spontaneity." "Consciousness" is in his view almost tantamount with "theoretical understanding of the laws of history," and "spontaneity" reflects the desires of people to improve their conditions.

We said that *there could not yet be* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness. . . .<sup>1</sup>

. . . the "spontaneous element," . . . represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an *embryonic form*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>V. I. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 52.



Only "consciousness" is revolutionary because it is future-minded. "Spontaneity" represents essentially the influence of the still dominant "present society" and is therefore bourgeois.

. . . this worshipping of spontaneity, *i.e.* worshipping what is "at the present time." . . .<sup>3</sup>

. . . all subservience to the spontaneity of the labour movement, all belittling of the role of "the conscious element," . . . *means, whether one likes it or not, the growth of influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers.*<sup>4</sup>

The party, by contrast, must not be motivated by the spontaneous wishes of the masses, but rather by the advanced theoretical understanding of history. In this sense, the party is the "vanguard," *i.e.*, it is further ahead in socialist consciousness than the masses of the proletariat.

. . . *the role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory.*<sup>5</sup>

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.<sup>6</sup>

The same idea was later restated by Stalin:

. . . The Party must be, first of all, the *vanguard* of the working class. . . . But in order that it may really be the vanguard, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat. The Party cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working class feel and think, if it drags at the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertness and the political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of the proletariat. . . . The Party must stand at the head of the working class; it must see farther than the working class; it must lead the proletariat, and not follow in the tail of the spontaneous movement.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the party is in a category by itself because, by definition, it is the "conscious element," whereas the masses cannot of themselves have "socialist consciousness." The masses are always subject to the appeals and seductions of "what is present," while the party alone is correctly guided by its awareness of the "laws of history" and thus alone is "really revolutionary." This doctrine puts the party necessarily above all other people in a position where it cannot and must not consider

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> J. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 97, 98.

itself either responsive or accountable to the people's wishes. The sole motive of the party must be its own understanding of the "laws of the struggle." By virtue of this understanding—supposedly guaranteed by "scientific" Marxism-Leninism—the Communist Party can see what nobody else can see. Since it alone is guided by "knowledge" of the unfolding dialectic of history rather than by interests anchored in the present situation, it alone has purely revolutionary motives. Seeing further ahead than others, being more revolutionary than others, the party alone is entitled to leadership and power.

According to the myth of the revolution developed by Marx, the proletarian class is supposed to be the "only really revolutionary" class which through its revolutionary elan will liberate all mankind from the curse of the class struggle. According to the Leninist doctrine, the proletarian masses are by their nature enslaved to the "momentary interests" of the present and tend to fall back into "bourgeois ideology" unless firmly led by the party. The party alone, the "conscious element" is "really revolutionary," because it is not motivated by "momentary interests" but by "revolutionary theory." In Leninist doctrine, the party thus actually takes the place assigned to the proletarian class in the teaching of Marx.

### *"Opportunism"*

Another concept by which Lenin defined the ideas of his opponents is "opportunism." "Opportunism," in Communist jargon is, like "spontaneity," the opposite of systematic, theoretically understood, and historically oriented revolutionary activity. As applied to questions of organization, "opportunism" is Lenin's term of contempt for the idea of a loose party organization, open to all who want to join it, and built up from below.

. . . the entire position of the opportunists in questions of organisation began to be revealed in the course of the controversy over point 1: their advocacy of a diffuse and loose Party organisation; their hostility to the idea of building the Party from above . . . their tendency to proceed from below, a tendency which would allow every professor, every schoolboy and "every striker" to register himself as a member of the Party . . . their inclination towards the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who is only prepared "platonically to recognise organisational relations" . . . their partiality for autonomism as against centralism. . . .<sup>8</sup>

As against this "opportunist" concept of party organization, Lenin set up the Communist Party as an "organisation of professional revolutionaries." Such an organization is required, according to Lenin, because the class struggle is above all a "political struggle." Therefore

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<sup>8</sup> Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (1904), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, pp. 408, 409.

one must not confuse an "organisation of revolutionaries" with an "organisation of workers."<sup>9</sup>

. . . A workers' organisation must in the first place be a trade organisation; secondly, it must be as wide as possible. . . . On the other hand, the organisations of revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people whose profession is that of a revolutionary. . . . In view of this common feature of the members of such an organisation, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals*, and certainly distinctions of trade and profession, must be obliterated. Such an organisation must of necessity be not too extensive and as secret as possible.<sup>10</sup>

The party therefore must be—

. . . A small, compact core, consisting of reliable, experienced and hardened workers, with responsible agents in the principal districts and connected by all the rules of strict secrecy with the organisations of revolutionaries. . . .<sup>11</sup>

It must consist of people—

. . . who will devote to the revolution not only their spare evenings, but the whole of their lives. . . .<sup>12</sup>

The party is thus essentially an organization of the select few.

. . . I assert: (1) that no movement can be durable without a stable organisation of leaders to maintain continuity; (2) that the more widely the masses are spontaneously drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement and participate in it, the more necessary is it to have such an organisation. . . . (3) that the organisation must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession. . . .<sup>13</sup>

This kind of party must be organized "from the top down," strictly centralized and disciplined like an army.

. . . The latter [the "opportunists"] want to proceed from the bottom upward and, consequently . . . supports autonomism and "democracy," which may . . . be carried as far as anarchism. The former [revolutionary socialists] proceed from the top, and advocate the extension of the rights and powers of the centre in respect of the parts.<sup>14</sup>

. . . the opportunists are all for autonomism, for a slackening of Party discipline, for reducing it to nought. . . .<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup> Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement" (December 1900), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, pp. 138, 139.

<sup>14</sup> Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (1904), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, pp. 447, 448.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

One of the most intolerable demands of the "opportunists" is, to Lenin, freedom of criticism. This is one of the points at which the ideological significance of organizational issues is clearly mentioned by Lenin:

... the notorious freedom of criticism implies, not the substitution of one theory for another, but freedom from any complete and thought-out theory; it implies eclecticism and absence of principle.<sup>16</sup>

... Those who are really convinced that they have advanced science would demand, not freedom for the new views to continue side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new views for the old.<sup>17</sup>

Since the "Vanguard Party" is supposed to embody the most advanced "scientific" knowledge of history, it is clear that it cannot tolerate any competing views either within or without its ranks. Intolerance here is clearly a matter of principle. It is based not merely on the notion that the party possesses the most "advanced" science, but furthermore on the notion that there are only two ideologies, and any deviation from one is in fact a support for the other:

... *the only choice is:* either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle socialist ideology *in any way*, to *deviate from it in the slightest degree* means strengthening bourgeois ideology.<sup>18</sup>

Again, Stalin repeats the same theme many years later:

... the parties of the Communist International, whose activities are conditioned by the task of achieving and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot afford to be "liberal" or to permit freedom of factions.

The Party represents unity of will, which precludes all factionalism and division of authority in the Party.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, the party as an organization is not set up mainly to accommodate workers or represent their interests. It is set up solely for the sake of the revolution, the "persistent struggle," the revolutionary regime "based on force and unlimited by law." It is guided and held together by "revolutionary theory." It is, in sum, a disciplined and militant group committed to act in history along the lines of a certain well-defined idea of history. No ideal of justice, no humanitarian purpose, no sense of obligation to others enter into this concept of the party. Its conscience is its own theory. Revolution is its profession. It defines

<sup>16</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, pp. 46, 47.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 107.

itself as the only really revolutionary force and the most advanced of all human groups. Morally, theoretically, politically, it is a group wholly and irremediably centered in itself.

### *The party and the masses*

What is the relation of the party to the masses, particularly the "proletarians"? The task of the party was once defined by Lenin as one of imbuing the masses with the "ideas of socialism." Soon, however, he spoke of the party as a cadre army which, in order to develop striking power, had to attract to itself the fighting support of "the masses"—*all* the masses.

. . . the immediate task of our Party is . . . to call for the establishment of a revolutionary organisation capable of combining all the forces . . . an organisation that will be ready at any moment to support every protest and every outbreak, and to utilise these for the purpose of increasing and strengthening the military forces fit for the decisive battle.<sup>20</sup>

. . . This network of agents will form the skeleton of the organisation we need, namely, one that is . . . sufficiently wide and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently tried and tempered unswervingly to carry out its own work under all circumstances, at all "turns" and in unexpected contingencies; sufficiently flexible to be able to avoid open battle against the overwhelming and concentrated forces of the enemy, and yet able to take advantage of the clumsiness of the enemy and attack him at a time and place where he least expects attack. . . . This degree of military preparedness can be created only by the constant activity of a regular army.<sup>21</sup>

This "combat party" is not a mere part, among others, of the proletarian class, as it should have been according to Marx's ideas. Rather, it is alone the agent of "World History" and its task is to attract to itself whatever support it can get, from whatever social class or group.

. . . We must take upon ourselves the task of organising a universal political struggle under the leadership of *our Party* in such a manner as to obtain all the support possible of all opposition strata for the struggle and for our Party. We must train our Social-Democratic practical workers to become political leaders, able to guide all the manifestations of this universal struggle, able at the right time to 'dictate a positive programme of action' for the discontented students . . . for the discontented religious sects, for the offended elementary school teachers, etc., etc.<sup>22</sup>

The party, in other words, turns to the masses not with words of its own convictions, but with words designed to recruit the masses into an

<sup>20</sup> Lenin, "Where To Begin?" (May 1901), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 103.

army of discontent that can be exploited by the party. For the causes of "religious sects," of "school teachers," etc., are not causes that Communists themselves believe in.

### "Propaganda" and "agitation"

The party, Lenin explained, can present itself to the masses in two ways: by "propaganda" or "agitation."

. . . a propagandist . . . must explain the capitalist nature of crises, the reasons why crises are inevitable. . . . In a word, he must present "many ideas," so many indeed that they will be understood as a whole only by a (comparatively) few persons.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, propaganda is good for recruiting party members. For enlisting mass support, however, "agitation" is the right method:

. . . An agitator . . . will take . . . a fact that is most widely known and outstanding among his audience . . . and utilising this fact, which is known to all and sundry, will direct all his efforts to presenting a *single idea* to the "masses," . . . he will strive to *rouse* discontent and indignation among the masses. . . .<sup>24</sup>

These "discontents" may have nothing to do with the Communist idea of society and its class evils, but they nevertheless can all be channeled into the Communist cause.

. . . our task is to utilise every manifestation of discontent, and to collect and utilise every grain of even rudimentary protest.<sup>25</sup>

. . . Fulfill this duty with greater zeal, and *talk less about "increasing the activity of the masses of the workers"!* We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting, demands that do not promise any "palpable results" whatever!<sup>26</sup>

For the party: The revolutionary theory. For the masses: The emotional appeal of "agitation." This basic idea is reflected in the concept of the "transmission belts" which was originated by Lenin and later elaborated by Stalin. Lenin demanded that the small core of the tightly organized party be surrounded by a great number of other organizations.

. . . The centralisation of the more secret functions in an organisation of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and the quality of the activity of a large number of other organisations intended for wide membership and which, therefore, can be as loose and as public as possible, for example, trade unions, workers' circles for self-education and the reading of illegal literature, and socialist and also democratic circles for *all other sections of the population*. . . . We must have *as large a*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

number as possible of such organisations having the widest possible variety of functions, but it is absurd and dangerous to *confuse these with organisations of revolutionaries*. . . .<sup>27</sup>

While this was written in 1902, Stalin confirmed the principle in 1924 and 1926.

. . . The Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, it exercises it not directly, but with the help of the trade unions, and through the Soviets and their ramifications. Without these "transmission belts," a dictatorship to any extent durable would be impossible.

"It is impossible to exercise the dictatorship," says Lenin, "without having a number of 'transmission belts' from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class, and from the latter to the mass of working people."

"The Party, so to speak, absorbs into itself the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without a foundation like the trade unions the dictatorship cannot be exercised, state functions cannot be fulfilled. These functions, in their turn, have to be exercised *through* the medium of special institutions also of a new type, namely *through* the Soviet apparatus."<sup>28</sup>

In other words, the will of the party is "transmitted" to large masses of people by means of organizations which are not Communist organizations or even political organizations. People from "all sections of the population" belong to various groups, associations, clubs, etc. These organizations exist for special purposes and needs of various people, for instance, the trade unions in order to get higher wages, educational associations in order to promote knowledge among the members, etc. As far as the Communists are concerned, all these organizations, however, are mere "transmission belts" enabling a small party of revolutionary theorists to enlist the support of unsuspecting large masses. The masses, then, are manipulated by means of their own needs and aspirations and the institutions created to satisfy those needs. The party, rather than trying to guide the masses by direct ideological appeal, steers them by means of organizations to which people belong and adhere for purpose other than those the party has in mind. It is nevertheless through these "other" and "normal" purposes that the party handles the masses as it wills. Note that the Soviets, i.e., the governmental organizations, are expressly mentioned among the other "transmission belts." This means that government, too, is considered by the Communists as an organization which people generally support because of a recognized need and which Communists therefore regard as a suitable tool for "transmitting" their direction to the unwitting masses.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> Stalin, "On the Problems of Leninism" (Jan. 25, 1926), *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 168.

*"Democratic centralism"*

It follows from the entire concept of the party, its purpose as a combat organization, its foundation of "true" theory, its position as the vanguard of history's movement, that there can be no question of democracy within the party. Lenin, as has already been shown, conceived the party as built "from above" rather than "from below." He coined the term "democratic centralism" to denote the combination of two features already foreshadowed in the relation between the party and the masses; strict guidance from a small center and broad "participation" of large numbers of people in the activities flowing from this guidance.

. . . in order to unite all these tiny fractions into one whole . . . in order to imbue those who carry out these minute functions with the conviction that their work is necessary and important . . . it is necessary to have a strong organisation of tried revolutionaries. . . . In a word, specialisation necessarily presupposes centralisation. . . .<sup>29</sup>

. . . a powerful and strictly secret organisation, which concentrates in its hands all the threads of secret activities, an organisation which of necessity must be a centralised organisation. . . .<sup>30</sup>

The only serious organisational principle the active workers of our movement can accept is strict secrecy, strict selection of members and the training of professional revolutionaries.<sup>31</sup>

The principle of party democracy is condemned by Lenin as an expression of "opportunism" and thus opposed to "revolutionary principle."

. . . the same struggle between the opportunist wing and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organisation, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy," . . . between intellectual individualism and proletarian cohesion.<sup>32</sup>

Centralized discipline of a bureaucratically organized party is thus described not merely as a desirable expedient, but as the expression of correct ideological attitudes.

. . . Bureaucracy *versus* democracy is the same thing as centralism *versus* autonomism; it is the organisational principle of revolutionary political democracy as opposed to the organisational principle of the opportunists of Social Democracy.<sup>33</sup>

. . . the class conscious worker must learn to distinguish the mentality of the soldier of the proletarian army from the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who flaunts anarchist phrases. . . .<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, pp. 143, 144.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>32</sup> Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (1904), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 453.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 447.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.



Later, the principle of "democratic centralism" was made a world-wide requirement for any party that wanted to call itself Communist:

13. The parties affiliated to the Communist International must be built up on the principle of democratic *centralism*. In the present epoch of acute civil war the Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organised in the most centralised manner, only if iron discipline bordering on military discipline prevails in it, and if its party centre is a powerful organ of authority, enjoining wide powers and the general confidence of the members of the party.<sup>85</sup>

Again, Stalin states the same principle in its most concise and systematic form:

. . . The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and iron discipline. . . .

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. . . It need hardly be proved that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centres, and the existence of a number of centres connotes the absence of one common centre in the Party, the breaking up of the unity of will, the weakening and disintegration of discipline, the weakening and disintegration of the dictatorship. . . . the parties of the Communist International, whose activities are conditioned by the task of achieving and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot afford to be "liberal" or to permit freedom of factions.

The Party represents unity of will, which precludes all factionalism and division of authority in the Party.<sup>86</sup>

### *The party as the priesthood of "truth"*

The logic of all these ideas points to one final conclusion about the party, a conclusion which has not so much been explicitly stated as a theory, but has been implied as a principle in action: *The party alone is the possessor of truth*. We must recall that truth, for a Communist, is the unfolding movement of social forces, according to the "laws" of history. "Scientific" socialism is based not on a vision of the best possible world, but on the supposed knowledge of "the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations" (Lenin). It follows that for a Communist, as Lenin puts it—

. . . there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete.<sup>87</sup>

In other words, in every given situation, there is one "correct" way of "revolutionary struggle" which is the "truth" of history. Since the

<sup>85</sup> Lenin, "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International" (July 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 204.

<sup>86</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 106, 107.

<sup>87</sup> Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" (1904), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 463.

party is the "vanguard" of the "most advanced" class, and since the party is squarely based on "socialist consciousness" and "revolutionary theory," it follows that the party's action or "line" must be the most advanced formulation of the truth. No one can be more "correct" than the party.

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. . . . the proletariat can become, and will inevitably become, an invincible force only when its ideological unity round the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organisation, which unites millions of toilers in the army of the working class.<sup>38</sup>

The party represents "truth" and "science" because there is no such thing as objective science, and the party consists of the most advanced elements of the most advanced class.

. . . there can be no "impartial" social science in a society based on class struggle.<sup>39</sup>

. . . classes are led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are directed by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members. . . .<sup>40</sup>

. . . Bolshevism arose in 1903 on the very firm foundation of the theory of Marxism. And the correctness of this—and only this—revolutionary theory has been proved. . . .<sup>41</sup>

The Communist Party, in other words, possesses, in Marxism-Leninism, that "science" which reflects historical mission of the proletarian class. And this "science" is believed to be powerful.

The Marxian doctrine is omnipotent because it is true.<sup>42</sup>

And its sole alternative is "reaction":

. . . *the only choice is:* either bourgeois or socialist ideology.<sup>43</sup>

Putting two and two together, we arrive now at the logical conclusion:

Repudiation of the Party principle and of Party discipline . . . is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat *for the benefit of the bourgeoisie.*<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

<sup>39</sup> Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" (March 1913), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (May 12, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 81.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>42</sup> Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" (March 1913), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Lenin, "What Is To Be Done" (1901-1902), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (May 12, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 83.

No matter how much and how often the party changes its "line," it must be obeyed:

. . . The strictest loyalty to the ideas of Communism must be combined with the ability to make all the necessary practical compromises, to "tack," to make agreements, zigzags, retreats and so on. . . .<sup>45</sup>

That this is not a matter of majority decision, but actually of "truth" claimed by the party as its sole possessor, comes out in the following passage:

. . . but must we always agree with the majority? Not at all . . . it has not yet understood which tactics are right.<sup>46</sup>

Hence, people who disagree with the party leadership are not Communists who happen to have different ideas about party tactics, but "opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists," of whom the party must "purge itself." On the other hand:

. . . the confidence of the working class is gained not by force . . . but by the Party's correct theory. . . .<sup>47</sup>

The party, in the eyes of Communists, is thus not a mere political expedient but a kind of priesthood administering the truth of history. It is, for Communists, not just an organization but also a spiritual home. At any rate, there can be no other spiritual home for someone committed to the doctrines of the class struggle, the socialist revolution, and the laws of history, as Lenin teaches them.

## 2. Principles of the Communist Minority Strategy

Since Lenin, strategy has become part and parcel of Communist ideology and certain of its principles have been fixed as dogmas. The most important of these is the basic assumption (which Lenin developed in 1917) that the revolutionists will not, as Marx believed, be the "overwhelming majority" of the population, but rather a perpetual minority.

. . . in the epoch of capitalism . . . the most characteristic feature of working class political parties is that they can embrace only a minority of their class. Political parties can organise only a minority of the class in the same way as the really class-conscious workers in capitalist society can constitute only a minority of all the workers. That is why we must admit that only this class-conscious minority can lead the broad masses of the workers.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>46</sup> Lenin, "The Role of the Communist Party" (July 23, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 217.

<sup>47</sup> Stalin, "On the Problems of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 173.

<sup>48</sup> Lenin, "The Role of the Communist Party" (July 23, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 214.

When Marx spoke of the forces of the revolution as the “overwhelming majority,” he implied not only numbers but also the power that comes with numbers. Lenin, in assuming that the forces of the revolution would constitute a minority, also had to assume that they were weak, at any rate considerably weaker than their “enemy.” What is remarkable is that Lenin expected this basic power inferiority of the forces of the revolution to continue even after the seizure of power by the Communists. Even in the period of the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” the “enemy” is supposed to be “more powerful.”

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy. . . .<sup>49</sup>

After the government and the factories have been taken over by the Communists, who precisely is this more powerful enemy? It is the “force of habit,” the way of thinking and feeling of all kinds of people who think and feel differently from Communists. Lenin singles out two groups (the intellectuals and the peasants) but indicates that the proletarians themselves still entertain “petty-bourgeois prejudices”:

Under the Soviet power, your and our proletarian party will be invaded by a still larger number of bourgeois intellectuals. . . . It is impossible to expel and to destroy the bourgeois intelligentsia, it is necessary to vanquish this intelligentsia, to remould, to assimilate and to re-educate it, just as it is necessary to re-educate—in a protracted struggle, on the soil of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke. . . .<sup>50</sup>

The peasants are the “small commodity producers” whose influence Lenin feared more than that of the big capitalists.

. . . For, unfortunately, very, very much of small production still remains in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.<sup>51</sup>

. . . They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disintegration, individualism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. . . . The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a very terrible force. . . . It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to “vanquish” millions and millions of small proprietors, who by their everyday, imperceptible, elusive, demoralising activity achieve the *very* results desired by the bourgeoisie and which *restore* the bourgeoisie.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Lenin, “‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder” (April 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 60.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

In other words, the Communists conceive of themselves as a small minority of people with attitudes and ideas radically different from those prevailing in the present society, who regard as their enemies all those whose attitudes and ideas still show the influence of the present society. They know that their enemies outnumber them and are superior in strength.

### *"Neutralization"*

In view of this basic assumption, the first strategic requirement is the "iron discipline" and "strict centralization" of the party itself.

The second principle divides the masses to be conquered into those that must be destroyed, those can be won over, and those that will have to be "neutralized."

. . . First—overthrow the exploiters, primarily the bourgeoisie . . . utterly rout them; suppress their resistance. . . . Second—win over and bring under the leadership of the . . . Communist Party, not only the whole of the proletariat, or the overwhelming . . . majority of the latter, but also the whole mass of toilers . . . tear this overwhelming majority of the population . . . from its dependence on the bourgeoisie. . . . Third—neutralise. . . . the inevitable vacillation between . . . bourgeois democracy and Soviet power, of the class of small proprietors in agriculture, industry and commerce . . . as well as the stratum of intellectuals, office employees, etc., which corresponds to this class.<sup>53</sup>

"Neutralization" is a recipe by which a large part of a potentially hostile population is induced to maintain neutrality while the Communists deal with another part whom they consider an implacably hostile force. The "neutral" part, if added to to the Communists' opponents, would increase the latter's power to the point where they cannot be conquered. The Communists assume that the peculiar consciousness, or attitude, of this "neutral" part bars them from siding wholeheartedly with the Communists. Hence to "neutralize" them is to induce them to stay on the sidelines while the Communists vanquish that part whom they have selected as their most immediate victim.

The principle of "neutralization" is here stated as a recipe for dealing with hostile classes, but it has entered Communist ideology as a general principle that applies every time when Communists aim at "vanquishing" enormous masses of human beings among whom the Communists are a small minority. For instance:

. . . The working class cannot consolidate its victory unless it has behind it at least a section of the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants, and

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<sup>53</sup> Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" (1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, pp. 163, 164.

unless it has by its policy neutralised a section of the rest of the rural population.<sup>54</sup>

Or, in another context:

The revolutionary proletariat cannot set itself the task . . . of winning this stratum to its side, but must confine itself to the task of neutralising it, *i.e.*, to make it neutral in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.<sup>55</sup>

### *Alliances*

From the premise that the Communists are a minority flows the conclusion that in their struggle they must have allies. The idea of strategic alliances of the proletariat was already mentioned by Marx, but it was given a new and significant turn by Lenin. Marx said in the Communist Manifesto:

The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement. In France, the Communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats, against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie. . . .

In Switzerland they support the Radicals. . . .

In Poland they support the party that insists on an agrarian revolution. . . .

In Germany they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way. . . .

But they never cease, for a single instant, to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straight-way use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie may immediately begin.<sup>56</sup>

The strategic principle laid down by Marx was restated by Lenin as follows:

A Social-Democrat must never, even for an instant, forget that the proletarian class struggle for socialism against the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie is inevitable. This is beyond doubt. From this logically follows the absolute necessity of a separate, independent and strictly class party of Social-Democracy. From this logically follows the provisional character of our tactics to "strike together"

<sup>54</sup> Lenin, "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International" (1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 202.

<sup>55</sup> Lenin, "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the Agrarian Question" (1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 222.

<sup>56</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, pp. 64, 65.

with the bourgeoisie and the duty to carefully watch "our ally, as if he were an enemy," etc.<sup>57</sup>

### *The "two revolutions"*

The new turn which Lenin gave to this strategy is embodied in his slogan of the "two revolutions." According to the table of successive class societies and revolutions set up by Historical Materialism, the proletarian (or socialist) revolution is supposedly preceded by a bourgeois society which in turn is preceded by a feudal society. The "fetters" of the feudal society are broken by the "bourgeois-democratic revolution," as those of the bourgeois society are burst subsequently by the "socialist revolution." According to this pattern of successive revolutions, the bourgeois-democratic revolution would, of course, be made by the bourgeoisie as the driving revolutionary force. What Marx had pointed out was that the proletariat, in its desire to hasten the progress of history, should support the bourgeoisie in this phase. Lenin went further than this. He laid down, as has already been explained above, that the proletariat (i.e., the Communists) should not merely support the bourgeoisie in its revolution against feudalism, but that they should actually lead parts of the bourgeoisie in this revolution. The principle applies also to the peasantry. The Communists, in other words, would seek to be the leading element in a revolutionary movement which, by their own definition, is not socialist but pre-capitalist and therefore cannot usher in a socialist but rather only a bourgeois-democratic society. By being the leaders of a nonsocialist revolution, the Communists would thus seize power with the help of nonsocialist forces:

. . . we Marxists must know that there is not, nor can there be, any other . . . means of bringing socialism nearer than by . . . a democratic republic, a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry . . . we must present to the whole of the people the tasks of a democratic revolution as widely and as boldly as possible. . . . The degradation of these tasks . . . is tantamount to delivering the cause of the revolution into the hands of the bourgeoisie. . . .<sup>58</sup>

. . . We have a new slogan: the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . There is nothing more naive and futile than attempts to set forth conditions and points, which, if satisfied, would enable us to regard bourgeois democracy as a sincere friend of the people. Only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for democracy. It may become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join it in its revolutionary

<sup>57</sup> Lenin, "The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" (1905), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. III, p. 100.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

struggle. If the proletariat is not strong enough for this, the bourgeoisie will put itself at the head of the democratic revolution. . . . Nothing but the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry can prevent this from happening.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, not only in the period of coming to power but also in the exercise of power after a victorious battle are the Communists to be allied to class forces other than the proletariat. But these allies are to be treated "as if they were enemies," and, when their usefulness has passed, to be liquidated in turn.

. . . In the struggle against this past, in the struggle against counter-revolution, a "united will" of the proletariat and the peasantry is possible, for there is unity of interests.

Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage worker against his master, the struggle for socialism. In this case, unity of will is impossible.<sup>60</sup>

Lenin sums up the combination of the principles of alliance and neutralization in the following formula:

*The proletariat must carry out to the end the democratic revolution, and in this unite to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution and in this unite to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie.*<sup>61</sup>

It is Stalin who again formulates the entire principle in its most succinct and dogmatic form:

This does not mean, however, that the power of one class, the class of the proletarians, which does not and cannot share power with any other class, does not need the support of an alliance with the labouring and exploited masses of other classes for the achievement of its aims. On the contrary. This power, the power of one class, can be firmly established and exercised to the full only by means of a special form of alliance between the class of proletarians and the labouring masses of the petty-bourgeois classes, primarily the labouring masses of the peasantry.

\* \* \* \* \*

This special form of alliance consists in that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat. This special form of alliance consists in that the leader in the state, the leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is *one* party, the party of the proletariat, the party of the Communists, which *does not and cannot share* that leadership with other parties.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 111.

<sup>62</sup> Stalin, "On the Problems of Leninism" (Jan. 25, 1926), *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 160.



Communist strategy, in other words, relies on the power and force engendered by the movements of classes other than the proletariat, and uses the hopes and aspirations of these other people to come to power and to pursue its own ends.

### *Legal and illegal activities*

Another aspect of Communist minority strategy is the deceptive use of legal activities. The Communists from the very beginning operated illegally and by conspiratorial methods. Terror, concealment, clandestine printing, covert propaganda and similar activities had from the outset been so much the Communist stock in trade, that illegality would be the first thing to come to a Communist's mind. What would not go without saying is that legal methods are as much part of the Communist strategic arsenal as illegal ones. The reason is the same as in the case of alliances: The party is too weak to be able to win its struggle by its own force and must draw on forces and influences created by others. In its illegal activities, the party operates essentially with its own strength. Its legal activities, however, consist in making use of institutions that have not been established by party ideology and for open party purposes, so that the party here operates by using for its own purposes the quite different aims and needs of other people. Obvious cases in point are parliaments and trade unions, but the principle applies whenever the Communists exploit for their own power ends such institutions as people have been maintaining for normal, everyday needs, as, e.g., theaters, sport clubs, museums, etc. (though, obviously, the possibilities of exploiting such "neutral" institutions for Communist ends are different ones in the Soviet Union and in countries where Communists do not rule).

. . . it is also necessary, in all cases without exception, not to restrict oneself to illegal work, but also to carry on legal work, overcoming all obstacles that stand in the way of this, forming legal organs of the press and legal organisations under the most varied titles, which may often be changed in the event of necessity. . . .

The absolute necessity in principle of combining illegal with legal work is determined . . . also by the necessity of proving to the bourgeoisie that there is not, nor can there be, a sphere or field of work that cannot be won by the Communists. . . .<sup>63</sup>

In its work the Party relies directly on the *trade unions* which . . . formally, are *non-Party*. Actually, all the controlling bodies of the overwhelming majority of the unions . . . consist of Communists and carry out all the instructions of the Party.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" (1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 173.

<sup>64</sup> Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 88.

. . . As long as you are unable to disperse the bourgeois parliament and every other type of reactionary institution, you *must* work inside them. . . .<sup>65</sup>

The strategic premise of this work is the continuing weakness of the proletariat:

. . . after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in one country, the proletariat of that country *for a long time* remains *weaker* than the bourgeoisie. . . . It is possible to conquer the more powerful enemy only by exerting the utmost effort, and by *necessarily*, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skillfully taking advantage of every, even the smallest "fissure" among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries . . . by taking advantage of every, even the smallest opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional.<sup>66</sup>

### *Duration of the minority situation of the party*

This condition of weakness of the proletariat will continue wherever, and as long as, there is a peasantry.<sup>67</sup> For the existence of people who work in order to sell for profit means the continued existence of classes, even though these people work by their own hands:

. . . Classes have remained, and everywhere they will remain *for years* after the conquest of power by the proletariat. Perhaps in England, where there is no peasantry . . . the period will be shorter. The abolition of

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>67</sup> "Peasantry" is a term used by Marxists to connote the mass of farmers whose production is based on private property but not on the large-scale employment of wage labor. Marx described this class in the following terms:

"The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. . . . Their field of production, the small holding, admits of no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. . . . In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class" (Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (December 1851–March 1852), *Marx and Engels Selected Works*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, pp. 334, 335).

Lenin assumes that as long as agricultural production continues in forms that essentially differ from those of factory production, it will perpetuate the existence of a peasant class apart from the proletariat, and that from the "mode of life" of the peasantry a "bourgeois consciousness" as well as tendencies toward the renewal of capitalism will continue to emerge.

classes not only means driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease—it means also abolishing *the small commodity producers*. . . .<sup>68</sup>

By “small commodity producers,” Lenin had reference to the peasants. At this point it is interesting to see that Lenin confesses that the peasants of Russia are too strong to be driven out, from this concludes that the Communists have to live in peace with them, and then defines this “peace” in terms of a silent and concealed battle against a deadly enemy. He continues the above quoted passage:

. . . and they *cannot be driven out*, or crushed; we must live *in harmony* with them. . . . They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere. . . . The strictest centralisation and discipline are required in the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this. . . . It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to “vanquish” millions and millions of small proprietors. . . .<sup>69</sup>

The net effect of this minority strategy of the Communist Party is to eliminate from Communist thinking every trace of what we call public faith, which the different parts of a nation keep with one another. The Communists have allies only in order to obtain with the allies’ help the power that is needed to destroy these same allies, they use public institutions and normal activities for purposes that have nothing to do with these institutions or activities, they espouse the revolutionary aims of suffering people not to end these people’s sufferings but to obtain these people’s support for their own (the Communists) ends, they conceive of “living in harmony” in terms of “vanquishing a terrible enemy whom one cannot crush right away,” they seek to destroy established institutions by corrupting them from the inside. This deviousness in Communist behavior is, as the above-quoted passages show, by no means a subjective criminal disposition. Rather, it is a mode of behavior that is rooted in Communist ideology, as the ideology defines the longterm relations between a totally revolutionary minority party and the environment of social groups, classes, peoples, institutions, and activities that is unresponsive to the party’s direct persuasion. This environment is so strong that, if directly attacked, it will break the Communist Party. Hence it must be conquered on the sly, by attacks in disguise, by false professions of friendship and community, and by a false façade of peace.

### 3. The Communist Teaching About the State

What the Communists say and think about the state is the most confused, inherently contradictory, and hypocritical part of their doctrine.

<sup>68</sup> Lenin, “‘Left-Wing’ Communism, An Infantile Disorder” (1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 83.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.

In spite of this, it is one of the most significant parts, for it is all the Communists have developed by way of political doctrine. One should clearly distinguish between three aspects of the Communist teachings about the state: first, the dogma defining the nature of the state and its relation to human history; second, the doctrine guiding Communist attitudes toward the state in non-Communist societies; and third, the doctrine underlying the Communist state. The logical connection between these three parts is but loose, because these parts of the doctrine have to some extent developed independently and thus got out of touch with each other. What is remarkable is that, in spite of this, one does not encounter in this field the usual break between the teachings of Marx on the one hand, and those of Lenin on the other: All of these ideas about the state are found, at least in some measure, in Communist scriptures from Marx on down to Stalin.

### *Communist dogma about the nature of the state*

The dogmatic definition of the state stems from the basic distinction between "state" and "society." "Society" is seen as the naturally developing system of human activities, determined by the methods of economic production. These activities are supposed to have their own inherent order.

*Thus the social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, change . . . with the . . . material means of production, the productive forces. The relations of production in their totality constitute what are called the social relations, society. . . .*<sup>70</sup>

What is society, whatever its form may be? The product of men's reciprocal action. Are men free to choose this or that form of society? By no means. . . . Assume particular degrees of development of production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding form of social constitution, a corresponding organization of the family, of orders or of classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society.<sup>71</sup>

### *The "natural order"*

Society, in other words, is the "natural" order of human life. It is to be noted that this concept of a natural order is by no means the only possible one. Western, and particularly Christian, political doctrine has for many hundred years maintained that the natural order of human social life is a moral one, an order comprised in the "natural law." Marx, by assuming that economic relationships alone constitute the natural social order, is driven to assign to the moral order the function

<sup>70</sup> Marx, "Wage, Labour and Capital" (1847), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 90.

<sup>71</sup> Marx, "Letter to P. V. Annenkov" (Dec. 28, 1846), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 442.

of an artificial "superstructure." Along with morality, the state is seen as something not only artificially superimposed, but as something that has become separated and alien from the underlying "natural order."

At a certain, very primitive stage of the development of society, the need arises to bring under a common rule the daily recurring acts of production. . . . This rule, which at first is custom, soon becomes *law*. With law, organs necessarily arise which are entrusted with its maintenance—public authority, the state. . . . The more intricate this legal system becomes, the more is its mode of expression removed from that in which the usual economic conditions of the life of society are expressed. It appears as an independent element. . . .<sup>72</sup>

On the basis of a long dissertation of questionable accuracy about the development of social institutions, Engels traced the state back to the rise of class divisions:

. . . Only one thing was missing: an institution that would not only safeguard the newly acquired property of private individuals . . . but would also stamp the gradually developing new forms of acquiring property . . . with the seal of general public recognition; an institution that would perpetuate . . . the right of the possessing class to exploit the non-possessing classes and the rule of the former over the latter.

And this institution arrived. The *state* was invented.<sup>73</sup>

On the basis of this myth about the origin of the state, Engels then proceeds to define the dogma of the state:

The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it "the reality of the ethical idea," . . . as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself. . . . But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle a power seemingly standing above society became necessary . . . and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.<sup>74</sup>

. . . The state presupposes a special public authority separated from the totality of those concerned in each case. . . .<sup>75</sup>

### *The state as a symptom of humanity's basic ills*

The state, in Communist thought, is thus a symptom of what is supposed to be wrong with human society. What is more, this symptom in

<sup>72</sup> Engels, "The Housing Question" (1873), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, pp. 622, 623.

<sup>73</sup> Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1884), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 262.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 317, 318.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

itself has become a power that is "alienated" from men and their normal purposes of life, so that the state itself is seen as an evil to be removed. This much the Communists share with the anarchists. The anarchists, at this point, draw the conclusion that the state must be abolished. The Communists, however, insisting on their "scientific" analysis of state and society, claim that one cannot abolish the state except by abolishing the conditions of class division and class rule that gave rise to the state. Hence they count on the state as an institution that will exist during the revolutionary period, until the task of the revolution is fully accomplished and all traces of class division have been eliminated.

From this root develop now three branches; first, the ultimate vision of the "realm of freedom" which is described as a society ruled only by its own natural order and without a state; second, the complete and utter rejection of any obligation to the state in any non-Communist country and the determination to destroy this kind of state root and branch; third, the concept of the state as an instrument of the Communist struggle against the class enemy.

The ultimate vision of freedom is the formula of hope on which communism depends. It is based mainly on three or four texts in the classical scriptures.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.<sup>70</sup>

The opening words of this passage indicate that Marx and Engels here speak of something that will come to pass of its own accord, rather than as the result of political action. What precisely do Communists expect to take place? They are not too clear on this point, but it seems that in some way the old tension between "society" and "state" will disappear, as a result of which the state will become "unnecessary."

*. . . The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property.*

<sup>70</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (December 1847-January 1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 54.

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. . . . The state was the official representative of society as a whole. . . . But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole. . . . When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. . . . The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—that is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. . . . The state is not “abolished.” *It dies out.*<sup>77</sup>

. . . The society that will organize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe.<sup>78</sup>

Lenin differed from Engels on one important point. He did not expect classes and class antagonisms to disappear as a result of the nationalization of the means of production. Even after the bourgeoisie had been overthrown and the “proletariat” established itself as the “ruling class,” classes would continue to exist for a long time, he believed, and the class struggle would, if anything, become more violent. Hence it is all the more remarkable that he, nevertheless, took over Engels’ vision of an ultimate condition in which society would live by its own inherent order and would not have need of a state.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely broken . . . when there are no classes . . . *only then* does “the state . . . cease to exist,” and it “*becomes possible to speak of freedom,*” . . . *only then* . . . people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries . . . they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without compulsion, without subordination, without the *special apparatus* for compulsion which is called the state.

. . . Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect. . . .<sup>79</sup>

Thus, Communist theory culminates in an ultimate vision of freedom, and freedom is not considered compatible with the state.

. . . While the state exists there is no freedom. When freedom exists, there will be no state.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific” (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 150, 151. The usual translation of the last sentence says: *It withers away.*

<sup>78</sup> Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” (1884), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 321.

<sup>79</sup> Lenin, “The State and Revolution” (1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, pp. 81, 82.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

*Communist concept of any non-Communist state*

The "withering away"<sup>81</sup> of the state is a matter that will occur "in the course of development" of social conditions, particularly the conditions supposed to give rise to social classes. Pending the disappearance of these conditions, the state will exist. But Communist ideology makes a fundamental difference between a state that is ruled by Communists and one that is not. Even though both are considered necessary, in view of the conditions of society, and even though both are considered to be instruments of class rule, one is accorded value and the other is not. A non-Communist state is considered so utterly devoid of value that its machinery is not even good to be conquered and used by the Communists. It must under all circumstances be radically destroyed. Marx said the "preliminary condition for every real people's revolution" is no longer to "transfer the bureaucratic machinery from one hand to another, but to *smash* it."<sup>82</sup> Engels agreed that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the readymade State machinery and wield it for its own purposes."<sup>83</sup> Lenin emphasized the same point:

. . . the current vulgar "interpretation" of . . . Marx . . . emphasises the idea of gradual development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, *exactly the opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the "ready-made state machinery," . . .<sup>84</sup>

The state that is not ruled by Communists does not represent any kind of obligation for the Communist. "The working men have no country" (Communist Manifesto). Public institutions, including the state, are for Communists but opportunities to advance the class struggle under the guise of apparent cooperation but void of "public faith" with the rest of the citizenry.

To a revolutionary . . . the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are by-products of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are naturally transformed into instruments for disintegrating this regime, into instruments for strengthening the revolution, into a base for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work. . . .

<sup>81</sup> See p. 99, footnote 77.

<sup>82</sup> Marx, "Letter to L. Kugelmann" (London, Apr. 12, 1871), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 463.

<sup>83</sup> Engels, Preface to the English Edition of 1888, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1847-1848) *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 29. [Here Engels quotes Marx to the same effect].

<sup>84</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 36.



That is what making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism means.<sup>85</sup>

### *The Soviet state*

The most confused and unrealistic teaching of communism concerns the state in Communist-ruled countries. The confusion is deeply rooted in the Communist classics, insofar as they deal with the problem of how to produce a "realm of freedom" from a violent revolution. Marx himself mentioned two contradictory aspects of the political rule to be set up after the seizure of power by the proletariat: a necessity for violent, lawless measures aimed at subverting all existing social order, and a necessity for administering society according to rules of law.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.<sup>86</sup>

Obviously, law is to be disregarded in the accomplishment of revolutionary tasks. The same idea is expressed more bluntly in the following:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.<sup>87</sup>

In the same pamphlet, however, Marx speaks of this revolutionary regime as one based on the recognition of certain rights. Obviously a state is required as long as rights must be administered and enforced:

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society. . . . Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society . . . exactly what he gives to it. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle—*bourgeois right*. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right*.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 94.

<sup>86</sup> Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1847-1848), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 53.

<sup>87</sup> Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (1875), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

Only in a hoped-for "higher" phase of development can society rely completely on the inner discipline of people and do without formal rights. In this phase, then, there is no more need for a state machinery to enforce rights.

In a higher phase of communist society . . . can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs! <sup>89</sup>

What Marx laid down in these passages was, needless to say, not a description of any existing socialist regime but his vision of what one would be like. It is all the more significant that even in this vision, he tries to bring together elements which exclude each other. He wants his future state to be both "dictatorial" and a respecter and dispenser of "rights." He grants to this state the power to make "despotic inroads" on rights, admits that these inroads "outstrip themselves" and produce the need for "further inroads"—and at the same time expects it to maintain and secure the rights of all citizens to a fair share in the total product of society. In other words, on the one hand the future state is supposed to have it all *its* way, the way of dynamic revolutionary power, and on the other hand, the future citizen in that state is assured that he, too, will have it all *his* way, the way of individual rights to a fair share of wealth.

A similar contradiction exists between Lenin's insistence on the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and "democracy." Following the example of the so-called Paris Commune, a temporarily successful workers' rebellion in 1871, both Marx and Engels began to point to the example of this regime as a model for the future Communist state. They insisted particularly on certain democratic features of the Paris Commune, for instance, the right of the people to recall its elected representatives, etc. Following these leads, Lenin laid down the core of the present Communist doctrine about the Soviet state in 1917. Like Marx, he insisted on the paradox that the proletarian state was both a regime of dictatorial force unlimited by law, and a regime of greatly increased democratic freedom.

. . . *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich, the dictatorship of the proletariat impose a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, *i.e.*, exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Only in communist society . . . when there are no classes . . . *only then* does "the state . . . cease to exist," and it "*becomes possible to speak of freedom.*"<sup>90</sup>

He specified the "expansion of democracy" in terms of the example set by the Paris Commune:

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall *at any time*, their salaries reduced to the level of "workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures. . . .<sup>91</sup>

Nevertheless, the state is an instrument of class struggle:

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the Socialists demand the *strictest* control, by society *and by the state*, of the amount of labour and the amount of consumption. . . .<sup>92</sup>

"Democracy," in other words, is a regime that strictly tells its citizens where and when to work and how much and what to consume.

The necessity of planning itself leads to the imposition of the "strictest controls." Apart from that, the regime is supposed to use force systematically and ruthlessly "not . . . in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries," as Engels put it in a letter to Bebel. But since all this is done in the name of "democracy for the majority" it is supposed to be an advance over "bourgeois democracy" which Communists define as "democracy for the rich." It is clear that here two strands of thought have become hopelessly tied into knots: On the one hand the idea of all people's participation in public power (democracy—rule of the people), and on the other hand, a regime fit to make "despotic inroads" on the social order and to "hold down its adversaries." The stark requirements of a total revolution are ruthlessly upheld, while on the other hand the prospect of a harmony between individual freedom and freedom for all is used as justification. As a result, Communist teaching about its own political regime is the most hypocritical, word-splitting, unreal part of the entire ideology. Keeping the various strands of this teaching apart, one may, however, distinguish between the function of the state, state power, and official definitions.

### *Functions of the state*

The Communist-ruled state has three functions: repression, economic-organizational rule, and cultural-educational rule.<sup>93</sup> The repressive function of the state is expressed in the concept "dictatorship of the proletariat."

<sup>90</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 81.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>93</sup> G. Glezerman, *Soviet Socialist State* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955). These functions can be found summarized in any Soviet textbook. We have chosen here a pamphlet by Glezerman, for purposes of illustration.

The state is a machine in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies. *In this respect* the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie.<sup>94</sup>

The repressive function calls for a state that is uninhibited by the notion of law:

. . . *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses.*<sup>95</sup>

In the light of other statements by Lenin, etc., we must, however, remember that the dictatorship is an element of struggle against a "class enemy" who is defined not merely in terms of having property of factories and land, but also in terms of "bourgeois ideology," in terms, that is, of any kind of opposition to the "correct" ideology as contained in the official party line as formulated by the narrow circle of party leaders.

The economic-organizational or managerial function follows from the prescription in the Communist Manifesto that the task of "proletarian" rule is "to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State," and "to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." To this function was added the cultural-educational or thought-controlling one, stemming from Lenin's decision that:

. . . In the Soviets workers' and peasants' republic, the whole system of education, in the political-educational sphere in general as well as in the special sphere of art, must be imbued with the spirit of the class struggle of the proletariat for the successful achievement of the aims of its dictatorship. . . .<sup>96</sup>

This means that, contrary to the function of the state in a normal society, the Soviet state directly organizes *all* activities of human life. It is this aspect which makes it totalitarian, while the basis of "force, unlimited by law" makes it dictatorial. Glezerman speaks of:

. . . a new function of the socialist state, a function which no previous state fulfilled: that of economic-organizational and cultural-educational work. This function had for its purpose the laying of the foundation of the new, socialist economy and re-educating of the people in the spirit of socialism. In the very first months of Soviet rule V. I. Lenin pointed out that this function would acquire increasing significance with the growth and consolidation of socialism. ". . . The conversion of the entire state economic mechanism into one big machine, into an economic organism functioning in a way that hundreds of millions of people will be guided by a

<sup>94</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 51.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Lenin, "Proletarian Culture" (October 8, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. IX, p. 434.

single plan—this is the titanic organizational task which has been placed on our shoulders!”<sup>97</sup>

### *State power*

The tendency of development of the socialist state is a double one: as long as the Soviet state is supposed to be threatened by enemies, its power will be strengthened rather than weakened. Nevertheless, the ultimate vision of a society unencumbered by any state power is still maintained as the predicted result of the victorious struggle against the enemies of the Soviet power.

. . . In his *Anti-Dühring*, Engels wrote that the state must wither away after the victory of the socialist revolution. On this basis, the textualists and Talmudists in our party began to demand, after the victory of the socialist revolution in our country, that the Communist Party should take steps to bring about the speedy withering away of our state, to dissolve state institutions, to give up a permanent army.

But the Soviet Marxists, on the basis of the study of the world situation in our time, came to the conclusion that, under conditions of capitalist encirclement, when the victory of the socialist revolution has taken place in only one country, while capitalism rules in all the other countries, the country of the victorious revolution must not weaken, but in every way strengthen its state. . . .<sup>98</sup>

The tendency to strengthen the state would continue even into the so-called second phase of socialist development, when the final social conditions for communism have been realized:

. . . We are moving ahead, towards communism. Will our state remain in the period of communism also?

Yes, it will, if the capitalist encirclement is not liquidated. . . .

No, it will not remain and will wither away<sup>99</sup> if the capitalist encirclement is liquidated and is replaced by a socialist encirclement.<sup>100</sup>

The concept of the Soviet state that emerges from the official writings is thus one in which the state power relies on force unlimited by law and embraces, besides the public-order aspects of life, all other aspects of life as well, with particular emphasis on economic, educational, cultural activities, and this dictatorial-totalitarian structure is expected to be continuously strengthened as long as there are any countries that are not yet subject to Communist rule.

<sup>97</sup> Glezerman, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>98</sup> Stalin, "Reply to A. Kholopov" (July 28, 1950), *Marxism and Linguistics* (New York: International Publishers, 1951), p. 43.

<sup>99</sup> See above, p. 99, footnote 77.

<sup>100</sup> Stalin, "Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.) on the Work of the Central Committee" (Mar. 10, 1939), *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 797.

### *Official definitions*

The official definition given to this regime is something else again. The Communists cannot escape the promise of eventual stateless freedom, of the "withering away" that has been made by the founders of their movement. Hence they officially define their totalitarian, dictatorial, and ever increasing state power as something that is more free, more democratic, and closer to the people than other regimes.

. . . The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will, for the first time, create democracy for the people, for the majority. . . . Communism alone is capable of giving really complete democracy. . . .<sup>101</sup>

. . . Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat are real liberties for the exploited and real participation of the proletarians and peasants in the administration of the country possible.<sup>102</sup>

The Soviet form of state alone, by drawing the mass organizations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted participation in state administration, is capable of preparing the ground for the withering away of the state, which is one of the basic elements of the future stateless communist society.<sup>103</sup>

The use of the term "democratic" here is based on dogmatic definitions of the character of a state in a given society, rather than on any test as to what extent a regime actually reflects the preferences and values of the people. By definition of historical materialism, a capitalist state *cannot* be democratic, whereas a Soviet state *must* be democratic.

Whereas development of the capitalist states proceeds along the lines of curtailing an already truncated democracy . . . the development of the Soviet state proceeds along the lines of extending socialist democracy. . . .<sup>104</sup>

Thus, "democratic" means, in Communist terminology, a regime in the phase of history that succeeds bourgeois society by revolution.

Right at its very inception, the Soviet state was far more democratic than any of the most "democratic" bourgeois states.<sup>105</sup>

In trying to find out whether a state is democratic, a Communist thus will not ask the people who live in it in order to find out whether their will is respected by the authorities. Instead he will consult his Marxist history book.

The vast superiority of the genuinely popular socialist democracy over bourgeois democracy, restricted by the narrow confines of capitalist relations, springs from the specific features of the economic system. . . .

<sup>101</sup> Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 82.

<sup>102</sup> Stalin, "Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 52.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>104</sup> Glezerman, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

True democracy is possible only in a society where the means of production are the property of the people.<sup>106</sup>

A number of other official definitions (or rather, fictions) are maintained to characterize state power in terms of acceptable dogma. It may suffice to mention one of these, the fiction that it is "the proletariat" rather than the party (or even the Party Presidium) which rules in a Soviet state.

. . . The Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. "The Party is the direct governing vanguard of the proletariat; it is the leader." (Lenin.) In this sense the Party *takes* power, the Party *governs the country*. But this must not be understood in the sense that the Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat separately from the state power. . . . The Party is the core of this power, but it is not and cannot be identified with the state power.

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . Therefore, whoever identifies "dictatorship of the Party" with the dictatorship of the proletariat tacitly proceeds from the assumption that the prestige of the Party can be built up on force employed against the working class. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be contrasted to the leadership (the "dictatorship") of the Party. This is inadmissible because the leadership of the Party is the principal thing in the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . .<sup>107</sup>

Thus, the Soviet state is defined in terms of fictitious and dogmatic concepts, by means of which it is praised as "most democratic," "representing the vast majority," "most internationalist," "most advanced," "most progressive," etc., all of which leads to the conclusion that, for the people of the U.S.S.R.—

. . . strengthening the Soviet state is their patriotic duty and also a sacred international obligation.<sup>108</sup>

#### 4. The Role of the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union is one of the "great powers" in the world. This particular "great power" plays a role in Communist ideology. It figures in that ideology as an instrument of the Communist revolution. It assumed that role when the Communists, having seized control in Russia, decided to consolidate their regime in that country rather than move on toward a chain reaction of revolutions in other countries. Had they chosen to do the latter, the revolution would have been propelled

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Stalin, "On the Problems of Leninism" (Jan. 25, 1926), *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 171-173, 177.

<sup>108</sup> Glezerman, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

by the combination of Communist parties in all the industrial countries in the world, and Soviet Russia would not have occupied a specially prominent position as the foremost instrument of the revolution. The decision of the Communist leaders first to develop the Russian base rather than to fan out came to be embodied in the doctrine called "socialism in one country," which is now part and parcel of the Communist ideology. By virtue of this doctrine, the "first socialist country" now has a unique ideological significance. Its national existence, national interests, and national strength have been assigned an integral role in the historical process of the Communist revolution.

Political strategic objectives pertaining to Communist ideology and objectives pertaining to Russian expansion have thus become intertwined. Once Russia as a basis of power was given a place of prominence in the achievement of Communist ideological ends, "nationalistic" and "ideological" motivations have in practice become indistinguishable.

### *Socialism in one country*

"Socialism in one country" is a formula characterizing a new situation and a new doctrine of the revolution. Marx and Engels, who thought in terms of "society" asserting itself against the distorting and oppressive action of the state, could not see how a socialist society could replace bourgeois society except on a worldwide scale. They did envisage national revolutionary action but felt that socialism would be possible only insofar as national revolutions overthrew bourgeois regimes everywhere. Lenin, too, for most of his political life had looked for revolutions in the industrial countries of the West and had often expressed his conviction that the Bolsheviks could not succeed in their revolution unless helped by successful revolutions elsewhere. Nevertheless, he gave in fact top priority to the problem of consolidating the Bolsheviks' power in Russia. Hence the new thesis which commits Communist ideology to the model of the Russian revolution and to Russia as the model country.

. . . Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletarians of all or at least of a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. . . . Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory, for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development, within imperialism, of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world—all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*



. . . After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry in its wake the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build up a socialist society. But does this mean that it will thereby achieve the complete and final victory of socialism, i.e., does it mean that with the forces of only one country it can finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention and, consequently, also against restoration? No, it does not. For this the victory of the revolution in at least several countries is needed. Therefore, the development and support of revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution.<sup>109</sup>

This passage contains the main elements of the doctrine concerning the significance and international relations of the Soviet Union. Socialism can be achieved there, but it is still insecure until other countries have also come under the rule of the Communists. Thus the Soviet Union is (a) the most advanced country from the point of view of Communist ideology, (b) a country that is endangered by external enemies, and (c) a country which is interested not only in protecting itself in the conventional way but also in providing diplomatic cover for the cause of the Communist revolution in other countries. The national foreign policy of Russia and the revolutionary strategy of communism thus enter into an indissoluble union. Here is how Stalin described that complex of motives and interests:

. . . Objective: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the defeat of imperialism in all countries. The revolution is spreading beyond the confines of one country; the epoch of world revolution has commenced. The main forces of the revolution: the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in all countries. Main reserves: the semiproletarian and small-peasant masses in the developed countries, the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats, isolation of the parties of the Second International, which constitute the main support of the policy of *compromise* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletarian revolution with the liberation movement in the colonies and the dependent countries.<sup>110</sup>

Note that Stalin now identifies the "main force of the revolution" with the "dictatorship of the proletariat in one country," i.e. with Soviet Russia. Marx said that the "main force of the revolution" is the proletariat, Lenin emphasized above all the party, Stalin adds to this Soviet Russia. That means that to the relations between Soviet Russia and other countries are now applied the same general principles of revolutionary strategy which Lenin developed with respect to the party. Those principles, as we have seen, begin with the axiom that the party for a

<sup>109</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 44, 45.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

long time will be in a minority position and weaker than its opponents, that it must maintain alliances, must enter into a certain amount of strategic cooperation with its enemies, and must be prepared to fight inconclusive battles over a long period of "protracted struggle."

*"Peaceful coexistence"*

Applied to the foreign relations of the Soviet Union, this adds up to a strategy of "peaceful coexistence" in a period in which the Soviet Union is still in a "minority position," or, better, "peaceful coexistence" in foreign relations coupled with the exploitation and active promotion of "inherent contradictions" and "fissures" in the non-Communist world.

The principle of "peaceful coexistence" was implied in Lenin's policies, recognized and mentioned by Stalin, and explicitly formulated by Khrushchev.

. . . Dictatorship is a state of acute war. We are precisely in such a state. . . . Until the final issue is decided, the state of awful war will continue. . . . Our point of view is: for the time being—important concessions and the greatest caution, precisely because a certain equilibrium has set in, precisely because we are weaker than our combined enemies. . . .<sup>111</sup>

In the midst of an "awful war," which is bound to continue "until the final issue is decided," the party is here advised to take advantage of a "certain equilibrium." This it is to do by way of "important concessions," because it is "weaker" than its combined enemies. In other words, a period of coexistence in a continuing struggle for a "final decision" is welcome to the party in its condition of relative weakness. Coexistence is a strategy, a needed respite, an aspect of the "awful war."

Before the victory of the proletariat, reforms<sup>112</sup> are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle. After the victory (while remaining a "by-product" on an international scale) they are, in addition, for the country in which victory was achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it is obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition. Victory creates such a "reserve of strength" that it is possible to sustain oneself even in a forced retreat, sustain oneself materially and morally. Sustaining oneself materially means preserving a sufficient supe-

<sup>111</sup> Lenin, "The Tactics of the R.C.P. (B)" (July 5, 1921), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. IX, pp. 242, 243.

<sup>112</sup> The term "reforms" in Communist jargon means a policy of improving the relations between the revolutionary masses and the regime they are eventually to destroy. As an alternative to revolution, "reforms" is of course a policy wholly unacceptable to Communists. As a byplay of genuine revolutionary strategies, Communists have always deliberately used—and misused—the policy of "reforms" without, however, being seriously interested in any real and long-range "improvement" of their relations with the "class enemy." The entire issue of reforms has, of course, an important if indirect bearing on the notion of "coexistence." See also above, pp. 100, 101.

riority of forces to prevent the enemy from inflicting utter defeat. Sustaining oneself morally means not allowing oneself to become demoralised and disorganised, preserving a sober estimation of the situation, preserving vigour and firmness of spirit, even making a long retreat, but within limits, stopping the retreat in time, and returning again to the offensive.<sup>113</sup>

Lenin insisted on a policy of "compromise" that stemmed from a spirit of irreconcilable struggle together with an appreciation of temporary weakness. He contrasted this with "false compromise" in which the principle of struggle itself was sacrificed. His principle of compromise is the real root of what is now called, in Soviet foreign policy, "peaceful coexistence."

. . . all this makes it necessary—absolutely necessary—for the vanguard of the proletariat, for its class-conscious section, the Communist Party, to resort to manoeuvres and compromises with various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small proprietors. The whole point lies in *knowing how* to apply these tactics in such a way as to *raise* and not lower the *general* level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and to conquer. . . . The proper tactics for the Communist to adopt is to *utilise* these vacillations [of non-Communists] and not to ignore them; and utilising them calls for concessions to those elements which are turning towards the proletariat in accordance with the time and the extent they turn towards the proletariat—while simultaneously fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie.<sup>114</sup>

All this is seen against the prospect of the "final battle" which will "decide the issue."

. . . To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy and not to us is a crime; and those political leaders of the revolutionary class who are unable "to tack, to manoeuvre, to compromise," in order to avoid an obviously disadvantageous battle, are good for nothing.<sup>115</sup>

Stalin defined the issue similarly, but not with explicit reference to the foreign relations of the Soviet Union. The general background is, just as in the case of Lenin, the concept of a long drawn-out period of conflict in which a decisive battle cannot be expected soon:

. . . the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "superrevolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Lenin, "The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism" (Nov. 5, 1921), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. IX, p. 302.

<sup>114</sup> Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (Apr. 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 116.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>116</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 49.

As early as 1927, Stalin insisted that this notion of a protracted struggle implied, as far as the Soviet Union was concerned, the concept of "peaceful coexistence."

We must not forget Lenin's statement that as regards our work of construction very much depends upon whether we succeed in postponing war with the capitalist world, which is inevitable, but which can be postponed either until the moment when the proletarian revolution in Europe matures, or until the moment when the colonial revolutions have fully matured, or, lastly, until the moment when the capitalists come to blows over the division of the colonies.

Therefore, the maintenance of peaceful relations with the capitalist countries is an obligatory task for us.

Our relations with the capitalist countries are based on the assumption that the coexistence of two opposite systems is possible.<sup>117</sup>

"Coexistence" thus is not a relationship of live-and-let-live, but rather a relationship of hostility coupled with cautious restraint, comparable to the "coexistence" of two boxers who feel each other out while looking for a chance to land their most damaging blows. "Coexistence" is a Communist term for a relationship short of overt war in which a final showdown is being prepared. Stalin said in 1927:

Thus, in the further course of development of the international revolution and of international reaction, two world centres will be formed: the socialist centre, attracting to itself the countries gravitating towards socialism, and the capitalist centre, attracting to itself the countries gravitating towards capitalism. The struggle between these two camps will decide the fate of capitalism and socialism throughout the world.<sup>118</sup>

Khrushchev thus was right when he said at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

. . . The Leninist principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems has always been and remains the general line of our country's foreign policy.

It has been alleged that the Soviet Union advances the principle of peaceful coexistence merely out of tactical considerations, considerations of expediency. Yet it is common knowledge that we have always, from the very first years of Soviet power, stood with equal firmness for peaceful coexistence. Hence it is not a tactical move, but a fundamental principle of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Stalin, "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.)" (Dec. 3, 1927), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), vol. 10, p. 296.

<sup>118</sup> Stalin, "Interview With the First American Labour Delegation" (Sept. 9, 1927), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), vol. 10, pp. 140, 141.

<sup>119</sup> Leo Gruliov, ed., *Current Soviet Policies II* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1957), p. 36.

"Coexistence," in other words, is an aspect of "protracted struggle." It is a part of the minority strategy of communism based on the assumption that the forces of the Communist revolution will be weaker than their opponents for a long time to come. As a part of that minority strategy, it is undoubtedly traceable to Lenin who conceived and elaborated the entire strategy of the protracted conflict. For that reason, it must never be separated from the Leninist principle of the "irreconcilable struggle," expressed, for instance, in the words:

. . . As long as capitalism and socialism exist, we cannot live in peace: in the end, one or the other will triumph—a funeral dirge will be sung either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism.<sup>120</sup>

Our country's enemies are now guessing about whether a Communist society will be built in our country. We do not wish to frighten them, but it should be said that the victory of Communism is historically inevitable, whether they like it or not. We are confidently going along our direct road, which was pointed out by Marx, Engels and Lenin. . . .<sup>121</sup>

### *"Inevitability" of war*

The attitude of Communists with respect to war must be seen in this context of "irreconcilable struggle" and "protracted conflict." Moreover, one must here distinguish between the doctrine regarding war among "imperialist countries" and war between the Soviet Union and its enemies. It is the latter which is the corollary of the doctrine of force in the struggle of the Communist Party to power and to victory over its enemies. Basically, the doctrine of the "irreconcilable struggle" implies the doctrine of force, either in fighting between citizens, or in wars between the Soviet Union and other countries.

. . . We have always said that there are wars and wars. We condemned the imperialist war, but we did not reject *war in general*. . . . As though history has ever known a big revolution that was not involved in war! Of course not. We are living not merely in a state, but in a *system of states*, and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Nuclei Secretaries of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P. (Bolsheviks)" (Nov. 26, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VIII, p. 297.

<sup>121</sup> Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Speech at the June 2, 1956 meeting in Moscow of Young Communist League members," as quoted by *Soviet Affairs, Notes*, (October 14, 1957), No. 215, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> Lenin, "Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. (Bolsheviks) at the Eighth Party Congress" (Mar. 18, 1919), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VIII, p. 33.

The inevitability of war was stressed repeatedly by Stalin, who justified not only Soviet foreign policy but also Soviet domestic organization in terms of the inevitability of war. At the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev appeared to have abandoned this idea. He said:

As we know, there is a Marxist-Leninist precept that wars are inevitable as long as imperialism exists. This thesis was evolved at a time when (1) imperialism was an all-embracing world system and (2) the social and political forces which did not want war were weak, insufficiently organized, and hence unable to compel the imperialists to renounce war.

\* \* \* \* \*

For that period, the above-mentioned thesis was absolutely correct. At the present time, however, the situation has changed radically. Now there is a world camp of socialism which has become a mighty force. . . . The movement of peace supporters has sprung up and developed into a powerful factor.

In these circumstances, of course, the Leninist thesis remains valid: As long as imperialism exists, the economic base giving rise to wars will also remain. . . . But war is not a fatalistic inevitability. Today there are mighty social and political forces possessing formidable means to prevent the imperialists from unleashing war and, if they try to start it, to give a smashing rebuff to the aggressors and frustrate their adventurist plans. . . .<sup>123</sup>

The probability of war is estimated now in terms of the possibilities for a "peaceful victory of socialism," in which estimate the likelihood of civil wars and that of international wars are closely linked with each other. This appears from the following passages:

It will be recalled that in the conditions that arose in April 1917 Lenin granted the possibility that the Russian Revolution might develop peacefully, and that in the spring of 1918, after the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin drew up his famous plan for peaceful socialist construction. It is not our fault that the Russian and international bourgeoisie organized counterrevolution, intervention, and civil war against the young Soviet state and forced the workers and peasants to take to arms. It did not come to civil war in the European People's Democracies, where the historical situation was different.

Leninism teaches us that the ruling classes will not surrender their power voluntarily. And the greater or lesser degree of intensity which the struggle may assume, the use or the non-use of violence in the transition to socialism, depends on the resistance of the exploiters. . . .

In this connection the question arises of whether it is possible to go over to socialism by using parliamentary means. No such course was open to the Russian Bolsheviks. . . .

Since then, however, the historical situation has undergone radical changes which make possible a new approach to the question. The forces of

<sup>123</sup> Gruliov, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

socialism and democracy have grown immeasurably throughout the world, and capitalism has become much weaker. . . .

. . . In these circumstances the working class, by rallying around itself the toiling peasantry, the intelligentsia, all patriotic forces . . . is in a position to defeat the reactionary forces opposed to the popular interest, to capture a stable majority in parliament, and transform the latter from an organ of bourgeois democracy into a genuine instrument of the people's will. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

In the countries where capitalism is still strong and has a huge military and police apparatus at its disposal, the reactionary forces will of course inevitably offer serious resistance. There the transition to socialism will be attended by a sharp class, revolutionary struggle.<sup>124</sup>

There is some change in doctrine here, although not in the sense in which wishful thinking about Soviet peacefulness would have it. War is considered no longer "inevitable" because the relative power of the Soviet camp is considered strong enough to bring about revolutionary changes "peacefully" or to discourage resistance to Communist revolutionary advances. This change does not, however, affect the basic assumption that there is a conflict which can end only in complete triumph of one or the other side, and that, moreover, there is a continuing tendency toward war inherent in the system of "imperialism." In other words, what has changed is not the Communist concept of the basic conflict between the "Soviet camp" and the "camp of Imperialism," but rather the estimate of the probability of an open battle between the two. This estimate is nothing but a calculation of the chances of effective resistance. Even Stalin found it possible to combine his thesis of the "inevitability of war" with an estimate that the goals of the Communist revolution could be attained by "a peaceful path of development" in "certain capitalist countries"—

. . . whose capitalists, in view of the "unfavourable" international situation, will consider it expedient "voluntarily" to make substantial concessions to the proletariat.<sup>125</sup>

In the same vein the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, meeting in 1928 under Stalin's leadership, maintained that "there is no contradiction between the Soviet government's preparations for defense and for revolutionary war and a consistent peace policy," for—

. . . Revolutionary war of the proletarian dictatorship is but a continuation of revolutionary peace policy, "by other means."<sup>126</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Khrushchev, "Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the Twentieth Party Congress," *New Times* (February 16, 1956), No. 8, p. 23.

<sup>125</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 54.

<sup>126</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, vol. 8, No. 84 (Nov. 28, 1928), p. 1590.

Thus the Communist doctrine of the "inevitability of war" admitted even in Stalin's time of certain possibilities of "peaceful" victory, and it has presented, both before and after the Twentieth Congress, "peace" in terms of military threats and military action on the part of the "powerful camp of socialism."

### *"Just" and "unjust" wars*

The Communist doctrine, moreover, has taken great pains to make distinctions between "just" and "unjust" wars, the former by definition being wars fought by the Soviet Union and its allies.

. . . We are not pacifists. We are opposed to imperialist wars for the division of spoils among the capitalists, but we have always declared it to be absurd for the revolutionary proletariat to renounce revolutionary wars that *may prove necessary in the interests of socialism.*<sup>127</sup>

War, as well as all policies, is justified not even in terms of the end result but rather in terms of who conducts it. If the "exploiting class" conducts it, it is bad; if the "proletariat," it is "holy."

. . . Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its class rule, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and extending socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy."<sup>128</sup>

At present this doctrine is taught throughout all Communist lands in the official textbook as follows:

. . . The Bolsheviks held that there are two kinds of war:

(a) *Just* wars, wars that are not wars of conquest but wars of liberation, waged to defend the people from foreign attack and from attempts to enslave them, or to liberate the people from capitalist slavery, or, lastly, to liberate colonies and dependent countries from the yoke of imperialism; and

(b) *Unjust* wars, wars of conquest, waged to conquer and enslave foreign countries and foreign nations.<sup>129</sup>

One must conclude, therefore, that the Communist doctrine both expects and justifies the use of war between the "country of the proletarian dictatorship" and the outside world, even though it hopes for the possi-

<sup>127</sup> Lenin, "Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers" (Apr. 8 (Mar. 26), 1917), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Co-Operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1935), vol. VI, p. 16.

<sup>128</sup> Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" (May 3-5, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 357.

<sup>129</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Bolsheviks), *Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 167, 168.



bility of a "voluntary" admission of defeat by its opponents. It is quite different, though, with respect to wars between "imperialist" countries themselves. These are wars which the Communists not only do not hope to avoid but which they are directed to foment and instigate.

. . . the rule . . . which will, until socialism finally triumphs all over the world, remain a fundamental rule with us, namely, that we must take advantage of the antagonisms and contradictions between two capitalisms, between two systems of capitalist states, inciting one against the other.<sup>130</sup>

. . . If we are unable to defeat them both, we must know how to dispose our forces in such a way that they fall out among themselves. . . . But as soon as we are strong enough to defeat capitalism as a whole, we shall immediately take it by the scruff of the neck.<sup>131</sup>

### *The "socialist fatherland"*

The place of the Soviet Union in the world revolutionary movement is not merely a matter of the degree of prestige and influence which the Soviet leaders manage to establish as a result of their country's military and material strength. In Communist doctrine, the significance of the Soviet Union is also ideologically defined. The Soviet Union is, first, the "fatherland" of all proletarians and toilers all over the world, second, the constitutional leader of the "socialist camp" and leader-ally of all movements directed against imperialism, and, third, the country whose interests are identical with the interests of mankind.

The Communist Manifesto had stated that "the working men have no country." In 1928, the Communist International declared:

Being the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of Socialist construction, the land of great working class achievements, of the union of the workers with the peasants and of a new culture marching under the banner of Marxism—the U.S.S.R. inevitably becomes the base of the world movement of all oppressed classes, the centre of international revolution, the greatest factor in world history. In the U.S.S.R., the world proletariat for the first time acquires a country that is really its own, and for the colonial movements the U.S.S.R. becomes a powerful centre of attraction.<sup>132</sup>

This imposes, of course, on "proletarians" everywhere the duties that normally go with allegiance to country, above all the duty of defense.

. . . In the event of an attack upon the Soviet Union the Communists in oppressed nations, as well as those in imperialist countries, must exert all their efforts to rouse rebellion or wars of national liberation. . . .

<sup>130</sup> Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Nuclei Secretaries of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P. (Bolsheviks)" (Nov. 26, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VIII, p. 279.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>132</sup> *Programme of the Communist International* [adopted at the forty-sixth session of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, Sept. 1, 1928] (New York: Workers Library Publishers, Inc., 1929), p. 63.

. . . In view of the fact that the "enemy" in such a war is the Soviet Union, *i.e.* the fatherland of the international proletariat. . . .

. . . The proletariat in the imperialist countries must not only fight for the defeat of their own governments in this war, but must actively strive to secure victory for the Soviet Union.

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . The Red Army is not an "enemy" army, but the army of the international proletariat. In the event of a war against the Soviet Union, the workers in capitalist countries must not allow themselves to be scared from supporting the Red Army. . . .<sup>133</sup>

Remembering the peculiar quality of the term "revolutionary" as the designation of everything that is progressive, courageous, principled, and praiseworthy, one can appreciate the appeal of the following passage:

A *revolutionary* is one who is ready to protect, to defend the U.S.S.R. without reservation, without qualification, openly and honestly . . . for the U.S.S.R. is the first proletarian, revolutionary state in the world. . . .<sup>134</sup>

The Soviet Union, however, is described by the ideology as more than the "fatherland of the world proletariat." It is the leader not only of proletarians, *i.e.* industrial workers, but of "all toilers," and, beyond that, of "all oppressed people." It is, in the ideology, considered to be in a kind of historically necessary alliance with even bourgeois elements, as, for instance, the bourgeois nationalistic movements of colonial countries. For all of them, the Soviet Union is held to be the inevitable rallying point.

. . . The world political situation has now placed on the order of the day the dictatorship of the proletariat, and all events in world politics are inevitably concentrating around one central point, *viz.*, the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, which is inevitably grouping around itself the Soviet movement of the advanced workers of all countries, as well as all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities which have become convinced by their bitter experience that there is no salvation for them except the victory of the Soviet power over world imperialism.<sup>135</sup>

The Soviet Union as such is proclaimed the hope not only of workers but all kind of people in the world:

. . . The victory of socialism in the Soviet Union . . . strengthens the cause of peace among peoples. . . . It sets in motion throughout the

<sup>133</sup> *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, Resolution of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, July-August 1928 (2d ed.; New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1934), p. 31.

<sup>134</sup> Stalin, "Speech Delivered at Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U. (B.)" (Aug. 1, 1927), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), vol. 10, p. 53.

<sup>135</sup> Lenin, "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions." For the Second Congress of the Communist International (June 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 233.

whole world not only the workers, who are turning more and more to Communism, but also millions of peasants and farmers, of the hard-working petty townfolk, a considerable proportion of the intellectuals, the enslaved peoples of the colonies. It inspires them to struggle, increases their attachment for the great fatherland of all the toilers, strengthens their determination to support and defend the proletarian state against all its enemies.<sup>136</sup>

The Soviet Union and its Communist Party is assigned the role of undoubted authority in this camp:

The further consolidation of the Land of the Soviets, the rallying of the world proletariat around it, and the mighty growth of the international authority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union . . . are all accelerating and will continue to accelerate the development of the world socialist revolution.<sup>137</sup>

### *The Soviet Union and the "interests of mankind"*

The Soviet Union thus is considered "advanced" in the same sense in which the Communist Party is "advanced." It is furthest along on the road which history is thought to prescribe inexorably to all mankind. All human development supposedly is moving forward in the direction marked by the "progress" of the Soviet Union, and all human hope is also alleged to lie in that same direction. On this basis, Communists look upon the interests of the Soviet Union as those of a nation that represents the best hope of all people and cannot have interests opposed to those of all men. This concept can, of course, not be proclaimed by Soviet leaders who are directly responsible for policymaking in Russia, but it has been voiced frequently by others who are in a position to say this without violating the exigencies of tact.

. . . The U.S.S.R. has no interests which are at variance with the interests of the world revolution, and the international proletariat has no interests which are at variance with those of the Soviet Union.<sup>138</sup>

. . . This is a concrete manifestation of the unity between the interests of the Soviet Union and those of the majority of mankind. . .<sup>139</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Georgi Dimitroff, "Speech Delivered at the Close of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International on August 20, 1935," *Resolutions, Seventh Congress of the Communist International, Including the Closing Speech of G. Dimitroff* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1935), pp. 5, 6.

<sup>137</sup> "Resolution on the Report of Georgi Dimitroff, Adopted Aug. 20, 1935," *Resolutions, Seventh Congress of the Communist International, Including the Closing Speech of G. Dimitroff* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1935), p. 38.

<sup>138</sup> V. Knorin, *Fascism, Social-Democracy and the Communists: Speech to the 13th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, December 1933* (Moscow: Co-Operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1934), p. 46.

<sup>139</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "The Unity Between the Interests of the Soviet Union and the Interests of Mankind" (Sept. 28, 1939), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1955), vol. III, p. 50.

Among the various Communist parties in the world, the Soviet Union and its party has consistently been conceded the place of authority, by virtue of having been the "first" socialist country. This was reconfirmed as recently as 1957:

The cause of peace is upheld by powerful forces of our times: the invincible camp of socialist states, headed by the Soviet Union. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . The working class, the democratic forces and the working people of all countries are interested in tirelessly strengthening fraternal contacts in the interests of the common cause, in defending, against all encroachments by the enemies of socialism, the historic political and social gains effected in the Soviet Union, the first and mightiest socialist power. . . .<sup>140</sup>

On the grounds of this ultimate identity of the national interests of Soviet Russia with the hopes of mankind, support of the power of Russia is thus declared something that has universal moral significance and ought to be the bounden duty of every "right-minded" person in the world:

*. . . Assistance to the U.S.S.R., its defense, and cooperation in bringing about its victory over all its enemies must therefore determine the actions of every revolutionary organization of the proletariat of every genuine revolutionary, of every Socialist, Communist, non-party worker, toiling peasant, of every honest intellectual and democrat, of each and every one who desires the overthrow of exploitation, fascism, and imperialist oppression, deliverance from imperialist war, who desires that there should exist brotherhood and peace among nations, that socialism should triumph throughout the world.*<sup>141</sup>

Communist ideology, in other words, so defines the role of the Soviet Union that it demands the detachment of people's loyalties from their own countries and governments and the betrayal of their civil and patriotic duties.

<sup>140</sup> "Declaration of the conference of 12 Communist Parties," Moscow: Nov. 14-16, 1957, in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. IX, No. 47 (Jan. 1, 1958), p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> "Resolution on the Report of D. Z. Manuilsky, Adopted Aug. 20, 1935," *Resolutions, Seventh Congress of the Communist International, Including the Closing Speech of G. Dimitroff* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1935), p. 56.

## Chapter V. Communist Philosophy

There is a widespread misconception that Marxism, elaborate though it is, has grown from the simple root of a sense of injustice and compassion for the sufferings of the poor. In reality, it was the strong impulse of a philosophical idea that drove Marx to develop his doctrine. Marx was powerfully influenced by two philosophers: G. F. W. Hegel, and L. Feuerbach. From them he derived concepts which made him feel that he had found the intellectual key to the future and, indeed, to all that happens in the world of history. Marx was not the first socialist. Other socialists before him (Babeuf, Fourier, Proudhon) had begun with the vision of an ideal world, a world without poverty and injustice. Even a superficial glance at Marx's writings shows that this kind of vision, which flows from a sense of indignation at present injustice, is not what prompted Marx's thoughts. Those who dream of perfection and then set out to correct the world earned but his scorn for their "utopianism." Marx was first and foremost concerned with what and who causes the development of society and the "laws of history." If he espoused the cause of working people, he did so because in working people he saw the force that would bring about the future, rather than a suffering part of humanity. Though he was not insensitive to human misery, he did not allow this sentiment to govern his ideas, which sprang above all from philosophical speculation about what moves history forward and what changes society. His program for social action came only as a second thought. He related that:

Frederick Engels, with whom . . . I maintained a constant exchange of ideas by correspondence, had by another road . . . arrived at the same result as I, and when in the spring of 1845 he also settled in Brussels, we resolved to work out in common the opposition of our view to the ideological view of German philosophy, in fact, to settle accounts with our erstwhile philosophical conscience.<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Manifesto was not written until after this work was done, and *Capital* was merely an attempt to prove through detailed studies the truth of the already stated philosophical principles.

Philosophy is thus the beginning, and, down to this day, the real basis of Communist ideology. In its present form it has, however, gone far beyond the scope of Marx's ideas and has expanded into a comprehen-

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<sup>1</sup>Karl Marx, Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (January 1859), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 364.

sive system which pretends to have answers for all questions and guiding principles for all fields of human action. Within the limits of this brief survey, one cannot do more than barely mention the main component parts of this system, and one cannot even begin to subject it to adequate criticism.

## 1. The Philosophical Basis of Communism

The first philosophical impulse of Marxism derived from Hegel. Hegel was influential above all as a philosopher of history. He lived at a time (1770–1831) when many thinkers tried to find a “scientific analysis” of history as a substitute for a religious approach to life. They were looking in the sequence of historical events for “laws” which, if discovered, could then be used as guides to human action. Hegel succeeded more than others in developing systematically a method of analyzing history, a philosophy of the meaning of history, and a comprehensive philosophical system tying his historical methods and findings to all other problems. History, according to Hegel, is the unfolding of Reason itself. In the sequence of events, he saw the movement of an “Absolute Mind” from less to more and ever more rational forms of existence.

### *Hegel*

One of the results of this concept was the conclusion that philosophy as a mere intellectual activity had come to an end, and that, thanks to Hegel’s discovery, the philosopher, instead of contemplating the world, should now become an active participant in history and discover truth in the process of the actual self-manifestation of Reason in events. In Marxist philosophy, this is called the principle of the “unity of theory and practice.”

. . . As soon as we have once realized—and in the long run no one has helped us to realize it more than Hegel himself—that the task of philosophy thus stated means nothing but the task that a single philosopher should accomplish that which can only be accomplished by the entire human race in its progressive development—as soon as we realize that, there is an end to all philosophy in the hitherto accepted sense of the word. . . . At any rate, with Hegel philosophy comes to an end: on the one hand, because in his system he summed up its whole development in the most splendid fashion; and on the other hand, because, even though unconsciously, he showed us the way out of the labyrinth of systems to real positive knowledge of the world.<sup>2</sup>

What Engels meant is that philosophy as abstract speculation about the absolute meaning of things has come to an end with Hegel. This

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick Engels, “Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy” (1886), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 364.

was the task of philosophy as conceived by the classical philosophers of our civilization. Hegel, he felt, had not only summed up the entire development of philosophy until his day but also, by his philosophy of history, pointed to the "progressive development" of the "entire human race" as the source from which answers to general questions can alone be expected, while men, actively participating in this "progressive development," would seek "real positive knowledge about the world," relative and concrete knowledge, in preference to abstract philosophical truth. Reason in its most general form, in other words, unfolds in the actual events of history rather than in the philosopher's mind. Knowledge is thus linked inseparably with historical action.

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question.<sup>3</sup>

For a follower of Hegel this meant that the philosopher's place was henceforth in the arena of historical action. He would know only as he actually helped reason to unfold, through participating in active change. For Marx this meant revolution as a philosopher's vocation. For him revolution was therefore not primarily an emotional reaction to suffering or injustice, but rather the way of life of a thinking man.

The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.<sup>4</sup>

Hegel thus supplied the philosophical impulse that made Marx turn to revolutionary change as the proper field of a thinking man's activity.

### *Feuerbach*

The impulse did not take its socialistic shape, however, until it received direction from the ideas of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872). In 1841, Feuerbach published a book called *The Essence of Christianity*. It said, in brief, that religion had falsely attributed to a "fictitious" God the noblest qualities of man himself. Thus, he concluded, it is not God who created man, but rather man who in his imagination created God. In reality, there is nothing beyond man and nature. Now that this had been recognized, man should reclaim for himself the attributes of nobleness which so far he had mistakenly bestowed on God and should move forward to realize his destiny in the here and now. Feuerbach, was, in other words, a materialist, *i.e.* a philosopher who claimed that matter (nature) is all the reality there is. He denied the reality of the spirit.

<sup>3</sup> Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 402.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

Feuerbach's rejection of the spiritual was turned by Marx into a fundamental criticism of Hegel. Hegel had said that history is the self-manifestation of an "Absolute Mind," in other words, of an ultimate spiritual reality. Feuerbach, however, asserted that matter is the only reality. Marx combined Feuerbach's and Hegel's ideas and concluded that history had indeed "laws" of rational development, but that these were to be found in the unfolding of material conditions of life rather than in the unfolding of "Absolute Mind."

Then came Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. With one blow it pulverized the contradiction, in that without circumlocution it placed materialism on the throne again. . . . Nothing exists outside nature and man, and the higher beings our religious fantasies have created are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence. . . . One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians.<sup>5</sup>

. . . With irresistible force Feuerbach is finally driven to the realization . . . that our consciousness and thinking, however suprasensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter.<sup>6</sup>

Marx thus derived his ideas from a combination of Hegel's notion of history as a rational process of progressive change with Feuerbach's concept that matter, rather than mind, is the ultimate mover of everything.

. . . To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.<sup>7</sup>

The "liberating effect" of Feuerbach thus came from his thesis that it is not God or an "Absolute Spirit" who moves the world, but matter, something which, after all, man can know and control. He opened the vista of the illusion that man can grasp the ultimate "laws" of what causes history and thus become his own master. Hegel had said: The process of historical change is the gradual unfolding of truth. Feuerbach said: Everything is ultimately nothing but matter. Marx concluded: The process of material change in society is man's truth. From this in turn follows that the thinking man must take an active part in

<sup>5</sup> Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (1886), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 366, 367.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.

<sup>7</sup> Marx, "From the Afterword to the Second German Edition of the First Volume of *Capital*" (Jan. 24, 1873), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. I, p. 456.



the change of the material conditions in life—in other words, that he must seek to revolutionize the entire economic order.

. . . Hegel had freed history from metaphysics—he had made it dialectic; but his conception of history was essentially idealistic. But now idealism was driven from its last refuge, the philosophy of history; now a materialistic treatment of history was propounded, and a method found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "becoming," instead of, as heretofore, his "being" by his "knowing."

From that time forward Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict.<sup>8</sup>

The root of Marxist revolutionary aims is thus neither a sense of injustice nor an ideal of a perfect society. It is rather the conviction that in the change of man's material existence is where man's truth can alone be grasped. The will to change, *i.e.*, to destroy and again rebuild, the entire social order is a result of this philosophical premise. Communist revolution and materialist philosophy are thus inseparable. By its combination of a program of action with a philosophy the Marxist world view became a substitute for religion to many who reject religion and still want a system explaining fully the meaning of life.

## 2. Materialism and Dialectic

(a) Materialism, as we have seen, flows from the deliberate rejection of God. Rejecting God means rejecting the idea that the material world is the creation of a divine Spirit.

. . . Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?

The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other . . . comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism.<sup>9</sup>

One should note that here, again, Communists see two "camps" at struggle with each other: "idealism" and "materialism." "Idealists" here are meant to be all those who do not accept the view that matter is

<sup>8</sup> Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (1877), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (1886), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 369.

the only reality there is; they are also supposed to further, by their philosophical views, the interests of the bourgeoisie and are therefore the Communists' irreconcilable enemies.

. . . Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an "absolute idea," a "universal spirit," "consciousness," Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature *material*, that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena, as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a "universal spirit."<sup>10</sup>

Materialism is, in other words, a kind of metaphysics (although the term "metaphysics" is anathema in the Communist jargon), because it says something about the ultimate origin and nature of all existing things. It says that they are not created, and that everything is, ultimately, matter and matter-in-motion. In the whole of life, nature is the true substance of everything, there is no spiritual world distinct from nature. As applied to history and things human, materialism means that the basis of everything that man does, thinks, feels, etc. is to be found in his material existence. The material existence of society is the social production of material life, or economic production.

. . . Marx became convinced of the necessity of "bringing the science of society . . . into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon." Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, materialism as applies to the social life of mankind had to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being.<sup>11</sup>

Marx's application of materialism to the explanation of history is called "historical materialism." It is claimed that historical materialism has provided social scientists with a tool of unfailing accuracy where formerly they had only subjective opinion to guide them.

. . . Pre-Marxian "sociology" and historiography *at best* provided an accumulation of raw facts, collected at random, and a depiction of certain sides of the historical process. By examining the *ensemble* of all the opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of society, by discarding subjectivism and arbitrariness in the choice of various "leading" ideas or in their

<sup>10</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 111. Chapter IV of this textbook, entitled "Dialectical and Historical Materialism," was written by Stalin and is also published in the anthology of Stalin's works *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953). The above quotation can be found there on pp. 720, 721.

<sup>11</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx" (July–November 1914), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 18.

interpretation, and by disclosing that all ideas and all the various tendencies, without exception, have their *roots* in the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of rise, development, and decline of social-economic formations. People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people; that is: what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings; what is the ensemble of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man; what is the law of development of these conditions—to all this Marx drew attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a uniform and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness.<sup>12</sup>

The actual content of the Communist materialistic philosophy of history has already been described in the first chapter of this study: <sup>13</sup> it is the analysis of history as a series of class struggles, and of the progress of mankind as the alleged succession of five dogmatically asserted types of society, each shaped by its characteristic techniques of economic production. There is no need here to repeat this account. One should note, then, that “materialism” in Communist ideology means not what this term connotes in everyday language: a preference for material possessions over treasures of the soul and the mind. It rather means the explanation of all things and happenings in terms of a supposedly ultimate material reality. In the minds of Communists, it is therefore quite compatible with what *we* might colloquially call “idealism,” *i.e.* dedication to a cause, appeal to feelings and aspirations of men, and the preference of distant goals over immediate advantages.

(b) Dialectic is a part of Communist philosophy that analyzes the laws of change in the world.<sup>14</sup> It is derived from Hegel who analyzed the process of human thought to explain the motion of history. Hegel, as we have seen, sought to understand the laws of history. He believed that history was the unfolding of “Absolute Mind.” He assumed that the motions of this unfolding of “Absolute Mind” and the movements of human thought followed the same laws. Hegel found that human thought moves forward through “opposites,” that is, it rises to higher insights by opposing its own position on a lower level. History, he said, moves forward in the same way. Dialectics thus became, in Hegel’s view, the key to the understanding of history and the sole reliable guide to man’s action in history. Hegel emphasized that everything is essen-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Chapter I, section 3, above.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. also the discussion of dialectic in chapter I, section 4, above. Dialectics, originally a *method* of thought seeking to grasp reality by the successive use of seemingly contradictory insights, became through Hegel an explanation of the very nature of reality. It is, in this sense, a formula for the principle of perennial transformation of everything and thus no longer a mere method but rather a *philosophy*.

tially a process of growth through contradiction, and that everything that grows contains its own opposite within itself. This is the principle of the "unity of opposites." It differs from another philosophical approach which defines the nature of things in such a way that something is defined once and for all and thus can never be considered its own opposite. This other approach is called, in Communist jargon, "metaphysics," and is considered "unscientific," and "reactionary."

. . . The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made *things*, but as a complex of *processes*, in which the things apparently stable . . . go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away . . . this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. . . .

. . . The old metaphysics . . . accepted things as finished objects. . . .<sup>15</sup>

. . . this dialectical philosophy dissolves all conceptions of final, absolute truth and of absolute states of humanity corresponding to it. For it (dialectical philosophy) nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.<sup>16</sup>

. . . Thus dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought. . . .<sup>17</sup>

How, then, does the world move, according to this philosophy? The key to motion is, as has already been said, contradiction. Everything that exists is challenged by its opposite. It is "negated." Eventually, the "negation" (or the opposite) will prevail, only to be challenged in turn. On this new level of "negation," the original position will reappear, but changed, made over, elevated. The changes of "negations" occur first imperceptibly; *i.e.* opposition against something that exists will gradually mount under a seemingly smooth surface. But at one point the sum total of these negative forces will amount to a complete and substantive reversal: at this point then a kind of "leap" occurs and out of a great "quantity" of modifications arises an entire new "quality." Thus we have here a kind of myth about the process of change and growth, a myth that again has a powerful attraction for many who want something to replace the notion of Providence and divine judgment.

<sup>15</sup> Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (1886), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, pp. 386, 387.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

. . . A development that seemingly repeats the stages already passed, but repeats them otherwise, on a higher basis ("negation of negation"), a development, so to speak, in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, revolutions; "breaks in continuity"; the transformation of quantity into quality; the inner impulses to development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict to the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest, indissoluble connection of *all* sides of every phenomenon . . . a connection that provides a uniform, law-governed, universal process of motion—such are some of the features of dialectics. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Dialectics is, as one can see, a most complicated and somewhat nebulous philosophy. As now taught in all Soviet-ruled schools, it comprises the following four propositions:

(a) Contrary to metaphysics,<sup>19</sup> dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things, of phenomena, unconnected with, isolated from, and independent of, each other, but as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena, are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by, each other.

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(b) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing, and something always disintegrating and dying away.

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The dialectical method<sup>20</sup> regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing.

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(c) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open, fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.

<sup>18</sup> Lenin, "Karl Marx" (July–November 1914), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>19</sup> For the meaning of metaphysics in Communist jargon, see p. 128.

<sup>20</sup> Dialectics is here falsely called a "method" when actually the sense in which the term is here used is that of a philosophy. Cf. above, footnote 14, p. 127.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development should be understood not as a movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition . . . but as an onward and upward movement. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

(d) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of development. . . .<sup>21</sup>

In considering everything a *connected and integral whole*, dialectics places the emphasis entirely on society as a whole matter than the individual person. In stressing the *changeability of everything*, dialectics considers as more real that which is expected to come than that which now exists. In insisting on the *rapid and abrupt nature of change*, dialectics points to the inevitability of violent revolutions. And the concept of *contradictions* puts forward the idea of struggle.

### 3. Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical Materialism ("Diamat") is, as the term implies, the combination of the two ideas of materialism and dialectics. In other words, the laws of change, as formulated by dialectics, are considered the laws of material changes, or, reversely, material conditions are conceived as constantly changing according to dialectic laws.

. . . Marx and Engels considered the fundamental limitations of the "old" materialism, including the materialism of Feuerbach . . . to be: (1) that this materialism was "predominantly mechanical," . . . (2) that the old materialism was non-historical, non-dialectical (metaphysical, in the sense of anti-dialectical), and did not adhere consistently and comprehensively to the standpoint of development; (3) that it regarded the "human essence" abstractly and not as the "*ensemble*" of all concretely defined historical "social relations," and therefore only "interpreted" the world, whereas the point is to "change" it; that is to say, it did not understand the importance of "revolutionary, practical-critical, activity."<sup>22</sup>

In this combination of philosophical elements, each component makes its own peculiar contribution. The most significant contribution

<sup>21</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 106, 107, 109. Also Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 714-717.

<sup>22</sup> Lenin, "Karl Marx" (July-November 1914), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, pp. 15, 16.

of the materialistic component is the idea that the laws of change of social conditions can be fully known.

. . . Contrary to idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws, which does not believe in the authenticity of our knowledge, does not recognize objective truth, and holds that the world is full of "things-in-themselves" that can never be known to science, Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are still not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.<sup>23</sup>

It is this claim to the knowability of all things, and to Marxist materialism as the key to such knowledge, which is the basis for the assertion of communism that it is a "science." Actually, since it relies on fixed dogmas which it refuses to subject to scientific tests, communism does not proceed by the methods of science. It does, however, draw much of its confidence from the illusion that the materialistic analysis of society supplies "authentic knowledge."

The discovery of the materialistic conception of history, or rather, the consistent extension of materialism to the domain of social phenomena, removed two of the chief defects of earlier historical theories. In the first place, they at best examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings, without investigating what produced these motives, without grasping the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, and without discerning the roots of these relations in the degree of development of material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not cover the activities of the *masses* of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with the accuracy of the natural sciences the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes in these conditions.<sup>24</sup>

The characteristic contribution of the dialectic component is the emphasis on change, flux, revolution, and struggle.

. . . The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their "*self-movement*," in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the "struggle" of opposites. . . .

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<sup>23</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 113. Also Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), p. 722.

<sup>24</sup> Lenin, "Karl Marx" (July-November 1914), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, p. 19.

The unity . . . of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the typical Communist attitudes flow directly from the characteristic views of dialectical philosophy.

. . . if the world is in a state of constant movement and development . . . then it is clear that there can be no "immutable" social system. . . .

Hence the capitalist system can be replaced by the Socialist system. . . .

Hence we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must look forward, not backward.

Further, if the passing of slow quantitative changes into rapid and abrupt qualitative changes is a law of development, then it is clear that revolutions made by oppressed classes are a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence the transition from capitalism to Socialism and the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism cannot be effected by slow changes, by reforms, but only by a qualitative change of the capitalist system, by revolution.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must be a revolutionary, not a reformist.

Further, if development proceeds by way of the disclosure of internal contradictions, by way of collisions between opposite forces on the basis of these contradictions and so as to overcome these contradictions, then it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence we must not cover up the contradictions of the capitalist system, but disclose and unravel them; we must not try to check the class struggle but carry it to its conclusion.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must pursue an uncompromising proletarian class policy, not a reformist policy of harmony of the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, not a compromisers' policy of "the growing of capitalism into Socialism."<sup>26</sup>

Even though Communist ideology has combined materialism and dialectics into one philosophy, these two elements have turned out to be

<sup>25</sup> Lenin, "On Dialectics" (1915), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, pp. 81, 82.

<sup>26</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 110, 111. Also: Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), pp. 719, 720.



quite incompatible with each other. Materialism, maintaining that everything is matter, emphasizes the evolutionary aspects of things, for the motion of matter is naturally conceived in evolutionary terms. Dialectics, with its insistence on "contradictions" and "abrupt changes," stresses struggle, destruction, revolution. Those followers of Marx and Engels who have given greater emphasis to the materialistic component of their philosophy have by and large tended to expect more from the natural evolution of economic conditions than from revolution. They have sometimes predicted the "growing of capitalism into Socialism." Lenin and his followers, by contrast, have tended to lean more to the dialectic component and have, as the above quotation from Stalin's works shows, chosen to emphasize above all the contradictions and struggles, the violent changes, and the power of the classes of "the future." But the same passage also shows that the tension between the materialistic and the dialectic components of Communist philosophy has a tendency to lead to party splits over policy.

#### 4. Religion and Ethics

As we have seen, the root of the Marxist philosophy is Feuerbach's idea that God is man's own invention and that in reality there is nothing beyond nature (matter). The rejection of religion is thus of the very essence of Communist thinking. The Communist reliance on dialectical materialism as a "science" capable of providing the party with "authentic knowledge" stands and falls with the thesis that there is ultimately nothing but matter-in-motion, and that things spiritual are merely a reflection of things material. The Communists have self-assurance and confidence because of their belief that they can know and eventually control everything because there is no God and no Creation.

. . . The philosophical basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectical materialism, which fully embodies the historical traditions of the materialism of the eighteenth century in France and of Feuerbach . . . in Germany—a materialism which is absolutely atheistic and resolutely hostile to all religion. Let us recall that the whole of Engels' *Anti-Dühring* . . . is an indictment of the materialist and atheist Dühring for not being a consistent materialist and for leaving loopholes for religion and religious philosophy. . . . Religion is the opium of the people—this dictum of Marx's is the cornerstone of the whole Marxist view on religion. Marxism has always regarded all modern religions and churches and all religious organisations as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to drug the working class.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Lenin, "The Attitude of the Worker's Party Towards Religion" (May 1909), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, pp. 663, 664.

Lenin himself went considerably beyond Marx and Engels in his hostility to religion.

. . . Every religious idea, every idea of god, even every flirtation with the idea of god, is unutterable vileness. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . Any person who engages in building a *god*, or who even tolerates the idea of god-building, *disparages himself* in the worst possible fashion. . . .<sup>28</sup>

What goes for ethics in communism follows from the totality of the philosophical positions already explained. Engels, in describing dialectic philosophy, had said:

. . . For it [dialectical philosophy] nothing is final, absolute, sacred.<sup>29</sup>

He had further concluded that in this continuous flux, all morality is relative to class interests:

. . . In reality every class, even every profession, has its own morality. . . .<sup>30</sup>

Lenin had stated that nothing is absolute except the "struggle of mutually exclusive opposites" (see above, p. 132). Stalin had attached value mainly to the "strata which are developing and have a future before them." What does all this amount to? First, since everything including right and wrong "is in flux," it amounts to the rejection not merely of a particular standard, but of any intrinsic standard of right and wrong. Secondly, since the only acknowledged value is that of the eventual Communist future, progression in history becomes the standard of judgment: whatever points "forward" in time is the equivalent of "good," and whatever is considered to point "backward" is the equivalent of "bad." Thus, certain social forces and certain organizations of power are as such endowed with value, regardless of the nature of their actions. Thirdly, since "nothing is absolute except struggle," the requirements of struggle are substituted for requirements of intrinsic excellence in conduct.

As a result, what Communists call their "morality" is actually not a standard of conduct in intrinsic terms but a relativistic demand that conduct conform to the shifting requirements of the party's strategy. The "class struggle" as a substitute for human virtue—that is the meaning of Lenin's formulation of Communist "morality":

. . . The whole object of the training, education and tuition of the youth of today should be to imbue them with Communist ethics.

<sup>28</sup> Lenin, "Letter from Lenin to A. M. Gorky" (Nov. 14, 1913), *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1939), vol. XI, pp. 675, 676.

<sup>29</sup> Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" (1886), *Marx and Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), vol. II, p. 362.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 383.

But is there such a thing as Communist ethics? Is there such a thing as Communist morality? Of course there is. Often it is made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. . . .

In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality?

In the sense that they were preached by the bourgeoisie, who declared that ethics were God's commandments. We, of course, say that we do not believe in God. . . .

We repudiate all morality that is taken outside of human, class concepts. . . .

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is deduced from the class struggle of the proletariat.

\* \* \* \* \*

The class struggle is still proceeding, and our task is to subordinate everything to the interests of this struggle. And we subordinate our Communist morality to this task. We say: Morality is that which serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new Communist society.

Communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle. . . .<sup>81</sup>

The struggle of the proletariat—that is nothing but the ceaseless pursuit of power by the Communist Party. This is the only cause which, in Communist eyes, can justify human action, because in the Communist world view, there is nothing else that could possibly justify anything. Having rejected God, having discarded any notions of good that men as such have in common, having proclaimed the class struggle as the basic reality, and the laws of historical change as absolute, only that which in their scheme appears to “have a future” can be considered as having any kind of value. The “future”, according to Communists, is inevitably Communist. Hence the struggle for Communist victory is for them, as one of them put it, “the law of laws.”

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<sup>81</sup> Lenin, “The Tasks of the Youth League” (Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, Oct. 2, 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. IX, pp. 474, 475, 477.



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