

self beneath euphemistic phrases such as "democracy", "government of the people", while in reality the power belonged to a minority of exploiters who employed the state to foster and protect their interests against the vast majority of exploited. With the conquest of power by the proletariat the positions of the combatants are reversed in that the state is now used by the majority to suppress the reactionary minority but the conflict still remains. The transition to communism is not achieved in a single blow nor does the class struggle come to an end. Indeed, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the distinctive feature of the class struggle doctrine of Marx. Without it, according to Lenin, the doctrine of Marx is distorted and reduced to something acceptable even to the bourgeoisie. "A Marxist is one who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat," (1) which is, in fact, "the question of the root content of the proletarian revolution...(and) the most important problem of the entire proletarian class struggle". (2)

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(1) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, p. 30. Cf. Marx, himself, said this, Marx's letter to Weydemeyer which we have quoted above

(2) Lenin, V., The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, p. 15. Lenin also terms it "the very essence of Marx's teaching." p. 16

Consequently, the dictatorship of the proletariat is "a continuation of the class struggle under new conditions." (1)

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a new form of state, the political form which features the period of transition from capitalism to communism, an intermediate period which takes the name of Socialism. (2) Communism will only come with the complete abolition of classes and an economic organization whose supreme rule will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." (3) In the intermediate period, meanwhile, recompense will be made according to the amount of labor performed. Complete equality will not reign; equal right is still - in principle - bourgeois right. (4) This is a defect but such defects "are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society." (5)

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(1) Programme of the Communist International, 1928 in Handbook of Marxism, p. 1003

(2) Marx, K., Critique of the Gotha Program in Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 577

(3) Ibid., p. 566

(4) Ibid., p. 564

(5) Ibid., p. 565

In the period of socialism the means of production belong to society, there is no longer any exploitation of man by man, all are workers and all will contribute to a gigantic, controlled and rational development of productive forces. But reactionary elements remain and threaten the progress of the majority towards its complete triumph - communism. To forestall and prevent any interference with progress, to direct the majority of the people in the work of constructing socialist economy, an organized force is necessary - the dictatorship of the proletariat. Functionally, it is a state like the bourgeois state - a special repressive force for the suppression of class enemies - but unlike the bourgeois state it is the organ, or instrument of the majority against the reactionary minority.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the old bourgeois state but a new state because the proletariat can be victorious and secure in victory only if it smashes and destroys the old state with its organs of tyranny - bureaucracy, police and military. (1) These

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(1) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, pp. 26, 29, 50, 95. This work which contains numerous pertinent citations from Marx and Engels, and Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, sum up very well the Communist theory of the state. Cf. also Chang, S., op.cit., According to Lenin, in State and Revolution, there are two important points to be observed in reference to the state: 1) the bourgeois state must be overthrown, destroyed, shattered, broken up, blown up (p. 89): 2) it is the new

latter are replaced by elected officials "subject to recall at any time" and by the armed people; everyone, no matter what his station, receives a "workingman's wages". (1) With the majority of the people solidly united in the proletarian state, it begins to wither away immediately and its ultimate dissolution is dependent upon the rate of disappearance of its enemies. Therefore, no time should be lost on efforts spared to purge the body of society of the diseased elements which sap its life. This is a necessary phase of the class struggle and all the descriptions or definitions of the dictatorship of the proletariat manifest its coldly scientific, amoral, destructive, pitiless and impersonal nature. We cite a few of the more classical texts.

Dictatorship is power, based directly on force, and unrestricted by laws. The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is power won and maintained by the violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, power that is unrestricted by any laws. (2)

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state, the proletarian state which withers away because "the organ of oppression is now the majority of the population and not a minority...and once the majority of the people itself suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is no longer necessary. In this sense the state begins to wither away." p. 37; cf. also pp. 15-20

(1) Ibid., pp. 36-38, 43

(2) Lenin, V., The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, L.L.L., Vol. 21, p. 19

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. (1)

The following is said by Stalin to be the most general definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of the class struggle but its continuation in new forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat which has achieved victory and has seized political power against the bourgeoisie which has been defeated but not annihilated, which has not disappeared, which has not ceased its resistance, which has increased its resistance. (2)

Lenin summed up very succinctly the role of the dictatorship of the proletariat when he stated that Marx and Engels considered it necessary,

In order to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie.  
In order to inspire reactionaries with fear.  
In order to maintain the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie.  
In order that the proletariat may forcibly suppress its enemies. (3)

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(1) Lenin, V., "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, L.L.L., Vol. 20, p. 29

(2) Lenin, V., Collected Works, Vol. XXIV, p. 311, Russian Ed., cited in Stalin, Problems of Leninism, p. 21. This work of Stalin discusses in some detail the nature and role of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(3) Lenin, V., The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, L.L.L., Vol. 21, p. 34

Finally, we may note a few other characteristics of the transitional period from capitalism to communism; for example, the repeated assertions that all the people are capable of participating in the functions of government due to the fact that these have become so simplified under capitalist production, consisting chiefly of accounting, control, filing, checking, registration, functions within the reach of every literate person, functions which can be filled within twenty-four hours after the overthrow of the capitalists and bureaucrats by the armed workers. In this way, everyone will be a bureaucrat so that paradoxically there will be no bureaucrats in the sense of privileged persons detached from and standing above the masses. Moreover, in time, people will become so enlightened that they will perform all tasks voluntarily and observe all the fundamental rules of social life from habit without compulsion or subordination. To expect this in the beginning is Utopia; it is possible only at the end of the Socialist revolution which must be made with human nature as it is now, human nature that cannot do without subordination and control. When, however, all resistance has been crushed, all classes abolished and fabulous production established then the people - a new

people, the new man, unlike the present man in the street - will be prepared for the complete transition to communism, the class struggle will then be at an end, and the perfect social synthesis achieved.

- Section 3 - Analysis of the Doctrine of the Class Struggle -

One of the proud claims of the communists is that the doctrine of Marx transcends and eclipses the Utopian longings of his predecessors and contemporaries. For this reason it bears the glorious title of "scientific socialism". Consequently, we are free to apply to it some of the recognized tests of a scientific doctrine in order to see whether or not his title is justified. There are a number of such tests but for our purposes we think it will be sufficient to adopt three simple ones. In order to evaluate the scientific qualities of any particular thinker and his doctrines one is permitted to apply at least the following criteria - objectivity, exactness of definition and prediction value. (1) This latter criterion is, of course, applicable only to the theories of men who, like Marx, claim to trace the path of future development. Let us consider each of these in turn.

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(1) Cf. Lunn, A., Revolutionary Socialism, p. 212, ff; Thierry-Maulnier, op. cit., p. 120 ff.

- Objectivity -

Biographies treating a controversial figure such as Marx are bound to include subjective judgments and one must constantly sift the information received from them in order to strike a balance. Therefore, while an impartial judge would admit the brilliancy of some of Marx's intuitions, his devotion to a cause, the broad extent of his knowledge, his penetrating analysis of his epoch, his marital fidelity, his gentleness with children and many other creditable features of his character, still he would not ignore the weight of evidence which reveals Marx to be one who was self-opinionated, contemptuous of the opinion of others when they were not in agreement with his own arrogant, dogmatic, irritable, impatient with those who did not agree with him and jealous of possible rivals for the leadership of the world-movement which he considered to be exclusively his prerogative. (1)

This picture of Marx fits in very well with the character of a man whose most powerful writings were of a polemical nature. Extract the ridicule, hatred, scorn

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(1) Cf., Carr, E., Karl Marx; Cornu, A., Karl Marx, l'homme et l'oeuvre; Ruhle, O., Karl Marx



This picture of Marx fits in very well with the character of a man whose most powerful writings were of a polemical nature. Extract the ridicule, hatred, scorn and sarcasm from his writings and the arguments lose much of their vaunted strength. Although we agree with this general portrayal of Marx, we must nevertheless admit that in itself it is insufficient to establish a lack of objectivity in Marx. We have mentioned it chiefly because it is interesting to note that the same argument might be equally applied to what we may term Marx's spiritual child, the communist party, which is definitely a 'chip off the old block'. Any attempts to criticize party actions or party policy are the immediate occasion of a flow of abuse, scorn and ridicule. There is usually no attempt to argue the point under consideration; instead of a calm, objective, intelligent discussion the critic finds that he has stirred up a tempest and is the object of scathing denunciation for being fascist, reactionary, or bourgeois. (1) Lenin summed up the rules regulating the discussions of communists with their critics very well when he stated that he did not answer attacks by a defense but by counter-attacks. (2)

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(1) Sheed, F., Communism and Man, Preface: Berdiaeff, N., Probleme du Communisme, p. 117

(2) Lenin, V., What is to be Done?, L.L.L. Vol. 4, p. 86

We need not, however, depend upon analyses which run the risk of being labeled subjective in order to expose the weaknesses in the doctrines of Marx and the communists. Their very writings present us with sufficient matter upon which to base our judgments. Therefore, it is the writings of Marx - which, he modestly admits, form an "artistic whole" (1) - as well as the writings of Engels and their followers which will be considered in the pages that follow.

From a non-communist point of view the real worth of Marx lies in the fact that he contributed to arousing, among the people of the world, the awareness of the inhuman results of a strict application of the tenets of liberal capitalism. With incisive thrusts he showed that the impersonal nature of the industrial processes of his era was wreaking havoc among the working classes and that action was necessary to arrest the brutal treatment of laborers at the hands coldly-calculating, selfish moneyed interests. It must be remembered that every attempt of labor to improve its position was bitterly fought by the vested interests and that the vivid descriptions of the existing pitiful conditions

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(1) Marx, K., Letter to Engels, London, July 31, 1865

which Marx emphasized in Capital are not the outpourings of the imaginations of a writer of fiction but are based upon official documents of the epoch. In the conditions which surrounded him Marx thought he saw a fertile field for the concrete application of the abstract, fossilized Hegelian dialectic with which he was filled. On the one hand, a small group of selfish exploiters; on the other, a mass of depersonalized, dehumanized beings - such were the actual facts as Marx viewed them. Was this not the answer to the mystification of Hegel? Real men in their empirical life, one group in direct opposition to the other, where could one find a more perfect illustration of thesis and antithesis? Was this not, in fact, the key which, by analysis, would yield the secrets of all philosophy and history? Marx thought so, and once having had this brilliant intuition, he never relinquished it but devoted himself wholeheartedly to the task of developing it and giving his discovery to what would at times be a most unappreciative world.

Although we are forced to admire the brilliancy of this primary intuition of the class struggle and to acknowledge its marvelous conformity to the triadic

structure of the Hegelian method, we must at the same time take note of one other important feature of it - it does not conform to reality. (1) In other words, the proletariat and bourgeoisie, which form the core of the sociological doctrine of Marx are not two classes existing in reality but two myths. To state that two and only two classes are significant for history, to ascribe to one class all the virtues and to another all the vices, to assume that the class interests are homogeneous, to assert that racial, religious, social and political interests disappear in the face of class interests is either wishful thinking or pure dogmatism. Yet this is just what Marx did.

There is no good reason why all the emphasis should be placed on two particular classes and groups...the two well-unified, opposed classes, ready to do battle with each other are two myths. (2)

With all his boasts of looking to history for the laws that govern history, it was certainly not in history that he found his proletariat, or even the embryo of his proletariat, but in his own mind. (3)

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(1) "Certainly the two great classes correspond to the Hegelian negation of negation, but this negation of negation does not correspond to reality." Masaryk, Th. G., Die philosophischen und sociologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus, p. 172. Cited by Skelton, op.cit., p. 112 n.

(2) Bober, op. cit., pp. 328-30

(3) Sheed, op. cit., p. 103;

It is precisely in the fundamental doctrine of the class struggle that Marx manifested his failure to fully escape from the Hegelian idealism of his youth. In spite of his celebrated assertions that "being determines consciousness" it was ultimately the consciousness of Marx that determined the nature and being of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The logical structure of Marxism is flatly contradictory and philosophically childish so far as the class war is concerned. Marx held to an extreme scholastic realism in his concepts; he took the abstractions of thought for the realities of being. To take into consideration the whole of society and its culture and then to characterize it as capitalist bourgeois is to abstract from and hypostasize concepts, and it is just the same with the notion of the proletariat as a universal class. (1)

There is no such thing as a good class or a bad class. It is men who are good or bad and the proletariat has no more of a monopoly of virtue than the bourgeoisie has of vice. In whatever class they may be found, men are possessed of the same nature, the same passions, the same faults. Those who are oppressed should be the object of special help and consideration but their social condition is no guarantee of their virtue. The con-

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(1) Berdyaev, N., Christianity and Class War, pp. 31: 44

ceptual proletariat of Marx may well be innocent of the crime of exploitation but the innocence of the proletariat in real life is mostly the result of a lack of opportunity. (1) To reverse the positions of rulers and ruled does not always improve the situation as the conditions following upon many revolutions have demonstrated.

The idealism of Marx is not confined to his conceptions of proletariat and bourgeoisie but pervades his entire system. His theory of history is not drawn from facts but is an attempt to bring facts into line with pre-conceived, subjective ideas. (2) In addition, Marx enthusiastically but unjustifiably attempted to extend to all history, past and future, certain features and characteristics which were proper to his own age. Living in an age dominated by a thirst for riches and the enjoyment of material goods, Marx materialized history and asserted unequivocally that economic interests govern and determine all other interests, a statement which certainly flies in the face of all experience and ignores factors which have been no less influential

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(1) Ibid., pp. 43-44; Sheed, op. cit., p. 102-03

(2) Tonneau, J., O.P., Socialisme, article in Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, Paris-VI, Librairie Letouzey et Ané Tome XIV, Fasc. CXXXII-CXXXIII, col., 2312; Bober, op cit., p. 285

in shaping the course of human events - religion and politics among others.

The error of historical materialism is to erect a particular fact into a general principle. It does not start out from a careful study of the facts of the past but limits itself to the present, a narrow and defective procedure... Marx failed to take care lest a too exclusive vision of the present should involve the danger of transposing to the past and future the material preoccupations which dominated his epoch. To us, historical materialism seems to be the abusive generalization of a temporary phase. (1)

The theories of Marx could not be labeled as stubborn subjectivism to the same degree had he not already in his own lifetime been the witness of events which undermined his primary tenets. The activities of labor organizations and the labor legislation of governments were facts that certainly should have had at least a modifying effect upon Marx's ideas which rested on the assumption that the economic processes pursued an independent course according to inviolable natural laws.

Were it not for the circumstance that Marx witnessed the introduction of factory acts and the resumption of social control on the part of the

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(1) Turgeon, C., op. cit., pp. 335-336; Thierry-Maulnier, op. cit., p. 243

state, his theory would have been open to criticism only as defective in its psychology. (1) Considering that he lived to see these changes, his theory is open to sharper criticism: it dealt with a fictitious society, and the result was a fictitious doctrine, based on the facts as they were, and therefore without a claim to reality and truth. (2)

Beer tells us that in order to understand Marx's Capital we must realize that the latter was treating of an economic system "essentially free from external hindrances and disturbances, free from invasions both by the State and proletariat." (3) The same thought is

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(1) That is, his socio-economic theory.

(2) Simkhovitch, V., Marxism versus Socialism, p. 120; "Marxism (is) a class doctrine of the industrial proletariat...His doctrine of the class struggle...is a doctrine exaggerated and intensified by his class bias, by his hatred of the past, by his hope of the future. Here his passions come to a focus; here his raptures are too exultant to bother about conventionalities of objectivity, to care about outward consistency." Ibid., pp. 186-87 "Herein lies, I believe, the Alpha and Omega of all that is fallacious, contradictory, and vague in the treatment of his subject by Marx. His system is not in close touch with the facts. Marx has not deduced from facts the fundamental principles of his system, either by means of a sound empiricism, or a solid economico-psychological analysis, but he founds it on no firmer ground than a formal dialectic. This is the radical fault of the Marxian system at its birth; from it all the rest necessarily springs." Bohm-Bawerk, E., Karl Marx and the Close of His System, p. 190: "...the seeming logic of his attitude is deceptive, for it in part rests upon a failure to test his own assumptions, and in part on an abstract view of human nature with which the totality of facts is in direct contradiction." Laski, H.J., Karl Marx, p. 26

(3) Beer, M., The Life and Teaching of Karl Marx, p. 123



voiced by Boudin who states it is Marx's teaching that because of the inherent contradictions in the capitalist system of production and distribution, "its own development, if the laws of its own existence are permitted to freely assert themselves, will lead to its ultimate and speedy destruction." (1) Such statements from men who are sympathetic towards Marx are tantamount to admitting our contention that Marx may have constructed a brilliant hypothesis but not a theory in conformity with the facts, much less a theory which is an explanation of all history. In other words, Marx is a juggler of ideas, the creator of an abstract world which pursues a smooth, even uninterrupted course according to definite laws. As long as one avoids exposing it to the critical light of reality its flaws and imperfections escape notice. But a critical examination reveals that the theory assumes as a postulate the very thing which it must prove, namely, that men are ultimately moved by economic interests and that all other interests are but derivations of this fundamental, primary and ultimately decisive interest which determines and directs the course of history.

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(1) Boudin, L., The Theoretical System of Karl Marx, p.148

Marx, in his youth, criticized Hegel's interpretation of history in the following terms:

...his fabrication of history exists only in the consciousness, the opinion, the idea of the philosopher - only in the speculative imagination... Within empirical, exoteric history, he therefore assumes that there is in progress a speculative, esoteric history. The history of mankind is transformed into the history of the abstract spirit of mankind, which, because it is abstract, is something beyond real human beings (1)

Far from transcending the ideal constructions of Hegel, Marx merely substituted his own esoteric, speculative history for that of the master of his youth. And in spite of his denunciations of Feuerbach and his "abstract man", the theory of Marx is founded upon two abstractions which have yet to appear on the stage of world history.

- Exactness of Definition -

According to theory, the central pillar supporting the Marxist doctrinal structure is its materialism. Yet, strangely enough we find nowhere any discussion of or treatment of matter itself. Just what matter is, or its nature, are notions which always remain cloudy. Again, we have seen that the nature of a class, its

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(1) Marx, K., La Sainte Famille, in Oeuvres Philosophiques Tome II, pp. 151-52

definition and characteristics are not very clearly expressed by Marx but must be drawn from scattered references and further elaborations by Lenin and other commentators. These two terms are fundamental in Marx's teaching and it would seem only logical that he should begin by giving some detailed explanation of them. To take another example, the notion of value which occupies a central position in the economic doctrines of Marx is far from clear as is evidenced by the fact that both within and without the Marxists schools there have been innumerable controversies in which all shades of opinion have been expressed as to just what sense was given to the term by Marx. The outcome of all their discussions comes down to this - "In particular, there is no one to tell us what Marx thought he meant by 'value'." This opinion, expressed by A. Gray, applies to the friends of Marx and is true a fortiori of those who do not look upon the Master with as much favor. All the attempts of both friends and enemies to explain Marx reveal an extraordinary fact, "Capital is, in one sense, a three-volume treatise, expounding a theory of value and its manifold applications. Yet Marx never condescends to say what he means by 'value', which accordingly is what anyone cares to

make it as he follows the unfolding scroll from 1887 to 1894." (1)

Words are the instruments of thought and it is at least difficult, if not impossible, to attain scientific precision in the expression of thought as long as one is careless and indiscriminate in the choice of words employed to clothe one's ideas. The pretended scientific exactness of the theories of Marx loses something of its luster when it is considered that he "was almost criminally careless in neglecting to define his terms, and the natural result of such carelessness is that words jostle about in the mind, each trailing half-a-dozen potential meanings, with consequent confusion of thought." (2)

Although this defect of Marx has been noted by his followers, still the more devoted among them offer no apologies for what would normally be considered an imperfection. On the contrary, Lenin follows out his program of counter-attack rather than defense when he

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(1) Gray, A., The Socialist Tradition p. 321

(2) Ibid., p. 320

tells us that Marx doesn't bother himself with "artificial, 'elaborate'," scholastic definitions and profitless disquisitions on the meanings of words (what Socialism is, what Communism is), (but) gives an analysis of what may be called stages in the economic ripeness of Communism." (1) The man of action, it would seem, has no time for such trivial bourgeois habits.

- Prediction Value -

The influence of Darwin on Marx is quite evident from statements made by Marx himself. He regarded the theory of Darwin as the basis in natural science of the class struggle in history. (2) Darwin's hypotheses, which Marx and Engels considered as established, fitted very well into the pattern of dialectic. Lenin appeals to Marx's application of the theory of evolution to modern capitalism as evidence of the scientific nature of Marx's writings; Marx's genius would consist, it appears, in the fact that he always has the attitude of the scientist, basing his analyses and predictions on facts. It would seem, moreover, from the following

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(1) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, p. 81

(2) Marx, K., Letter to Lassalle, London, January 16, 1861: Letter to Engels, December 19, 1860

statement of Lenin, that one could qualify Marx as a social biologist. (1)

Marx treats the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the evolution of, say, a new biological species, if he knew that such and such was its origin, and such the direction in which it changed. (2)

Marx's predictions then, according to the communists, have nothing of guesswork about them but are scientific conclusions of verifiable premises. A comparison of actual facts with some of Marx's more famous predictions again serves to bring out the fact that Marx's theories yield their results only in a hypothetical, abstract society.

One of the most famous predictions of Marx was that of increasing misery in the ranks of the industrial workers. According to theory, the lot of the wage laborer could not improve as long as he was enslaved within the framework of the capitalist structure. Marx had no doubts about this and repeated the idea fre-

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(1) Such a term would probably not meet with approval today according to the 'general line' of Soviet philosophy which frowns on naturalistic and mechanistic explanations of social phenomena and stresses a more activist trend in sociology. Cf. Berdiaeff, N., Probleme du Communisme, p. 121

(2) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, p. 70

quently in his works. (1) It was for him an inevitable result of the dialectical nature of the productive process - the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

Needless to say, the scientific conclusion acted in a very unscientific way as the condition of the working classes steadily improved and continues to improve. Had Marx been content to add certain qualifying phrases to his predictions - "unless legislation is changed, heavier taxes are levied on the rich, labor unions organize more efficiently etc." - he might have avoided some of their embarrassing results. But he was the most absolute of men in his affirmations and increasing misery was too closely linked up with the revolution and the inevitable triumph of the proletariat for Marx to abandon it. This latter point is brought out by the fact that the Bolsheviki or revolutionary

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(1) "The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise but to sink the average standard of wages." Marx, K., Value, Price and Profit, in Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 337: "The greater the expansion of labor and application of machinery...the greater the contraction of wages." Wage-Labour and Capital, in Selected Works, Vol. I., p. 280: "incontestable is this ...proposition: In proportion as labor develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and neglect develop among the workers and wealth and culture among the non-workers." Critique of the Gotha Program, in Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 559: "The minimum of wages is constantly sinking", Address on Free Trade, appendix in Poverty of Philosophy, p. 206: Cf. also the Communist Manifesto, p. 21; Capital Vol. I., pp. 707-709.

communists did not give up the theory of increasing misery because of the force which it possessed as an incentive to revolution whereas other schools of Marxism admitted quite frankly that the theory was outmoded, that the conditions foreseen by Marx just did not materialize and in view of the improved conditions of the working class they could foresee a possible program of collaboration with the government and a peaceful transition to socialism by parliamentary methods.(1)

Another prediction of Marx was that it was only a question of time before the middle class would disappear as a result of capitalist production, most of its members being swept into the ranks of the proletariat and a few rising to the level of the bourgeoisie. By the middle class is signified in this context the members of the classes between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Thus it would include petty bourgeois elements such as small traders, independent artisans, small scale manufacturers and farmers. Here again the facts obstinately refuse to conform themselves to the conceptual molds prepared for them by Marx.

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(1) Notably Bernstein, Mehring, Vandervelde.



The United States is undoubtedly the country most advanced along the path of capitalism and should serve as a good testing ground for Marx's oracular utterances as to the disappearance of the middle classes inasmuch as, according to theory, Marx gives us an exposition of the natural laws of capitalist production and their tendencies "working with iron necessity towards inevitable results (and) the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future." (1) That these middle classes display a naive ignorance of their historical destiny is evident from the fact that they insist on maintaining or even increasing their numbers and continue to be blissfully indifferent to the judgment of Marx that they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history." (2)

Gray sums up the testimony of the facts and the common agreement of scholars when he says that "on the disappearance of the middle classes, the prophecies of Marx have been entirely wide of the mark. Society has with admirable stubbornness, refused to segregate itself

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(1) Marx, K., Capital, Vol. I, Preface, p. 13

(2) Marx-Engels, The Communist Manifesto, p. 19

For statistics on the middle classes see Turner op. cit. pp. 25-49; Parkes, H.B., Marxism, An Autopsy, pp. 64 ff.; 270; Simkhovitch, op. cit., pp. 70-97

into two extreme camps." (1)

Finally, the revolution has been imminent, according to theory, almost from the moment of the theory's conception. Prediction of the world revolution started with Marx and Engels and has been echoed by their most devoted followers. The whole history of communism has been a series of predictions and revisions and in every case it was asserted that the forecast was a scientific conclusion. Unfortunately, unscientific human factors frequently intervened to postpone the inevitable.

The conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing considerations is that Marx is the Shakespeare of the economic world. He has written a powerful drama packed with tremendous emotional appeal in which, against the background of a motley, non-descript crowd, he has sketched two main characters whose titanic struggle of tyrant against victim finally results in the triumph of the latter. In saying this one does not necessarily fail to pay tribute to the keenness of Marx's analyses, in some respects very superior and just, of the economic principles and processes, social injustices, faults and

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(1) Gray, op. cit., p. 323

foibles of his epoch. We freely concede that Marx has written much that was and is true. What we cannot concede, however, is that he has drawn correct conclusions from his observations or that he has not twisted and distorted objectively true facts to bring them in line with preconceived and predetermined ideas. His conclusions are exaggerations which are not supported by his premises and, in the final analysis, he has not written the truth but has constructed a delicate web of half-truths, which were they to triumph, would be no less effective in enslaving man than strong iron chains. The pill of error must have at least a thin coating of truth in order to render it palatable to the people at large and the correct observations of Marx supply that thin coating. Shakespeare's historical dramas were based in part upon historical facts but the author never assumed the toga of the historian whereas Marx confidently proclaimed his doctrines to be true history and science though they actually were, like Hegel's, the history of the thoughts of the author. His economic doctrines are the result of a frenzied search for substantiation of philosophic premises, a search of which the object was not information but confirmation.

Marx's historical drama is not so much concerned with the past as with the future, a millenary vision of a somewhat indefinite future state of bliss. Whether or not Marx was aware of it, his very unwillingness to give any details as to the nature and organization of his future society was a stroke of genius. Even the few hints which do appear in his writings only serve to lend greater allure to the future classless society. Had he given a detailed description of what it was to be he would have weakened its appeal insofar as he would have diminished the air of mystery surrounding it. Further, he would have opened the way for the onslaughts of innumerable critics. It is difficult, however, to criticize effectively that which remains an unrevealed mystery. Again, each one attracted by the communist doctrine was left free to draw his own picture to be his own architect in the construction of the future society and, consequently, each one could feel that it would be just as he desired and conceived it. A possibility of this kind naturally has a wide range of appeal. For the members of the lower classes of society it can mean a fabulous abundance of material goods, liberty, ease, in short, all those things which they lack and know only as the possession of the upper classes. For the members of

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the higher brackets of society, not actually members of the ruling class or, if members of the ruling class, dissatisfied with their station and prerogatives, it can mean the possession of that which, Circe-like, since the beginning of time has bewitched men sailing the sea of life - power. (1) How often, indeed, has its possession changed men into beasts.

- Communists and Orthodoxy -

Down through the years there have existed all shades of opinion among those who proclaimed themselves Marxists and, naturally enough, each particular group has accused the other of infidelity to the doctrine. Among all the discussions there is one which perhaps is basic and holds the central place - the theory of "spontaneity" championed by Plekhanov and the Mensheviks among others and the theory of a guiding, directing elite sustained by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. It seems to us that Plekhanov sufficiently posed the problem when he said,

The disputed question consists in this: Does there exist an economic necessity which calls forth in the proletariat a demand for Socialism, makes it instinctively socialistic, and impels it, even if left to its own resources, on the road to the

(1) For a recent interesting study on this subject see De Juvenal, B., Du Pouvoir: Walsh, E., Total Power

socialist revolution... Lenin denies this...  
and in that consists his enormous mistake, his  
theoretical fall into sin (1)

At first thought one would be tempted to bestow the crown of orthodoxy on Plekhanov because his position certainly seems to be the logical conclusion of Marx's premises, a reiteration of Marx's teaching concerning the influence of productive relations on class ideology. It will be remembered that Marx and Engels held that the ideas, interests, and so forth, - ideological superstructure - of the members of a given society are only the mental reflections of their economic position, the result of existing relations of production determined by the existing stage of productive forces. It was on the basis of this doctrine that Marx described his proletariat. According to theory, the contradictions existing in bourgeois society had penetrated the consciousness of the proletariat, had, therefore, made it instinctively socialistic. Otherwise, the phrase that the "proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority", becomes meaningless and absurd. (2)

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(1) Plekhanov, G.V., article in Iskra, August 1, 1904, quoted in Jackson, op.cit., p. 157

(2) Marx-Engels, Communist Manifesto, p. 20 (Italics curs)

We have emphasized the word "self-conscious" because, in theory, the class struggle is something that arises out of the objective conditions of society as a result of the capitalist process of production itself. It is not, consequently, something which is created at will, at the whim of even the proletarians themselves but is something independent of their will. What else can the following words of Marx and Engels mean?

The new forces of production have outgrown the bourgeois forms of using them: and this conflict between productive forces and mode of production is not a conflict which has risen in men's heads, as for example the conflict between original sin and divine justice; but it exists in the facts, objectively, outside of us, independently of the will or purpose even of the men who brought it about. Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex in thought of this actual conflict, its ideal reflection in the minds first of the class which is directly suffering under it - the working class (1) (Italics ours)

The proletariat...finding itself debased...revolts against the debasement and necessarily so, being impelled thereto by the contradiction existing between its human nature and its position which is an overt, clear and absolute negation of that nature...private property produces the proletariat as proletariat, misery conscious of its spiritual and physical misery, dehumanization conscious of itself, etc., for that reason, seeking to annihilate itself...though man has lost himself, at the same time, he has acquired not only a theoretical consciousness of this loss but practically he has been compelled directly...to revolt against

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(1) Engels, F., Anti-Duhring, pp. 293: 23

this inhumanity. It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the proletariat as a whole, momentarily proposes as a goal for itself. It is a question of knowing what the proletariat is and what the proletariat, in conformity with its nature, is historically compelled to do. Its goal and its historical action are tangibly and irrevocably marked out in its own existential condition, and also in the whole organization of contemporary bourgeois society. It seems superfluous to us to show here that a large part of the French and English proletariat is already conscious of its historical mission. (1)

Could language be any clearer? In these passages there is no doubt expressed that the proletariat is conscious and is daily growing more conscious of its historical mission - the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishing of a socialist society as a preliminary step to the establishment of complete communism. There is nothing arbitrary about it. It is clearly marked out in the economic process itself.

On the basis of such premises as these Plekhanov was right in insisting on his point of view. Had Marx and Engels conformed their actions to their theory or had their theory been in conformity with the facts Plekhanov's position would have been unshakable. Unfortunately, Marx and Engels did not confine themselves

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(1) Marx, K., La Sainte Famille, in Oeuvres Philosophiques Tome II, pp. 61-63



to the narrow limits of a formal logic which might have revealed the discrepancy between the theory and actions but resting on dialectics - in the case of the communists, a logic of convenience enabling one to violate theory by practice all the while insisting on their union - they continued to proclaim in words what they could not discover in fact. Logically, in the light of the presumed class consciousness, all that remained for Marx and Engels to do was to prepare for the revolution, to figure out tactics, strategy, plans, and slogans to guide and direct the proletariat in the battle. As it was they were caught on the same pincers they had reserved for the peasants and petty bourgeoisie - hope and fear; hope that the revolution would break out and fear that it wouldn't. In the beginning their hopes were high, Marx seeing inevitable revolution in every new economic development (1) and Engels, no doubt aspiring to be the military genius of all time, devoting himself to military studies in which he came in time to fancy himself an expert. Time and experience, however,

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(1) Liebknecht, W., and Lafargue, P., Karl Marx; on p.32 Liebknecht gives an instance of Marx's hopes being aroused by a new invention. "Marx related to me, full of fire and enthusiasm, that for the last few days there had been exhibited in Regent Street the model of an electrical machine which had pulled a railway train. Now the problem has been solved - the consequences are unpredictable. The economic revolution must be followed by a political one, for the latter is only the expression of the former."

bow to no one in the matter of teaching and they combined to force the apostles of revolution into an as if line of attack. This had to be so because Marx never could concede that the proletariat in real life was not according to the specifications he had drawn. Consequently, although their writings show that they were engaged in drawing up tactics, what is more evident is that they were engaged to an even greater degree in arousing class consciousness among the lethargic workers - a consciousness they assuredly take for granted in their premises. In other words, the great task or the great achievement of Marx and Engels, - depending upon one's point of view - is not that they discovered or furthered an already existing class struggle but that they spent themselves in a futile attempt to create it. (1) The dramatic scene pictured by Marx and Engels in their writings - a great majority of the people, welded together in close union and conscious of its aims, carrying

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(1) "What joins the workers for co-operative action against the bourgeois class is precisely the theory of irreconcilable class conflict. Class consciousness, created by the ideology of the class conflict, is the essence of the struggle and not vice versa. The idea created the class, not the class the idea." Von Mises, L., op. cit. p. 343. In Freedom Versus Organization, Bertrand Russell says that "Marx, by his teaching, created the class struggle he had prophesied." p. 218

on a struggle against the bourgeoisie, who according to the script, is also united and conscious of the issues involved, - is not something that is or was but - and this is where Lenin is right, this is the thought that animated him - it can be if the human factors are manipulated cleverly enough. Even a brief reading of Lenin's writings will reveal that, from the beginning, he was inspired by the idea that he knew exactly how to move the human pawns in the chess game of life.

Thus, in a sense, Plekhanov and Lenin are both right but only because Marx's theories are wrong. If Marx's theories were right Lenin would be wrong and and Plekhanov right, but if Marx's theories are wrong then Plekhanov and Lenin are both right. This bit of equivocation is not altogether our own doing but results from the fact that Marx, in spite of his insistence upon the union of theory and practice, was a living contradiction of his own principles, a veritable coincidentia oppositorum who said and thought one thing and did another right up until the contradiction was dissolved in the decisively final synthesis of death.

If any proof was needed of the contradictions existing in Marxism it has been furnished by the keenest

student of Marx - Lenin. He emphatically states that class consciousness arises from a source extraneous to the workers' movement as a whole and that the workers in the process of their movement cannot develop an independent ideology. This must be brought to them from without, spoon-fed to them as it were.

We said that there could not yet be Social-Democratic (the name of Lenin's party) 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, i.e., it may itself realise the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. (1) (Italics ours)

He then goes on to say that socialism itself is the result of an elaboration of ideas on the part of intellectuals, bourgeois intelligentsia, among whom must be numbered Marx and Engels. A few pages further he quotes with approval the words of Kautsky stating that it is untrue to believe that Marx asserted that consciousness of the necessity for socialist production is created among the workers by economic development and the class struggle.

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(1) Lenin, V., What is to be Done, L.I.L., Vol., 4, p.33

Socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without ...and not something that arose within it spontaneously...the task of Social Democracy is to imbue the proletariat with the consciousness of its position and consciousness of its tasks. There would be no need for this if consciousness arose from the class struggle. (1)

It is following these remarks of Kautsky that Lenin asserts that the issue is reduced to this - either the workers will follow bourgeois ideology or the 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)." (2) From this it would follow that the majority of workers in the world today,- who are certainly not socialist or communist - being unable to develop an independent ideology of their own as Lenin states, are sociological monsters in Marx's doctrine inasmuch as, while occupying the position of proletarians in the process of production, their ideology is bourgeois, a condition which is impossible to reconcile with the statements of Marx and

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(1) Ibid., p. 40

(2) Ibid., p. 41. "...economic science...explains that in a capitalist country one can stand for capitalism or labor but one cannot stand in the middle." Lenin, V., Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power, L.L.L., Vol. 12, p. 37

Angels quoted earlier (pp. 300 - 303). Lenin's doctrine which he carried through to a successful revolution, leads to some very non-Marxist conclusions as Sabine observes.

...if the growth of capitalist production creates in the proletariat only the mentality that makes trade-union tactics possible, the Marxian principle that all ideology is a superstructure built upon the foundation of production-relations apparently ought to imply that trade-unionism is the final answer of the proletariat to capitalism. Nothing could be farther from Marx's meaning. On the other hand, if socialism and a socialist ideology must be produced by a bourgeois intelligentsia and introduced into the proletariat "from the outside", what can it mean to say that material conditions of production and not "ideas" are the effective causes of social revolution? And still more difficult to understand, why should capitalist production, which creates the opposed bourgeois and proletariat classes and their ideologies, bring into existence a middle class intelligentsia devoted to the task of making an ideology for the proletariat? Either the class struggle does not wholly determine the mentality of the class or else it produces in the middle class a perverted form of class-consciousness that devotes itself to the destruction of the class. (1)

Does it not also follow that to designate the proletarian movement as the "self-conscious movement of the immense majority" is the very opposite of the facts since the majority of the workers are dominated by bourgeois ideology and can only be opposed to the workers definitely

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(1) Sabine, G., op. cit., 722-23

enrolled under the communist banner in whom exists a genuine workers' ideology?

In the final analysis, Lenin's practical realism only emphasizes Marx's actual idealism and although, or perhaps because, Lenin does contradict Marx, he is nearer to the truth. Lenin's doctrine retains the dogma of the inevitability of revolution and the transition from capitalism to socialism but he gives a new meaning to the ideas. They are certain and inevitable only if made certain and inevitable by the revolutionary action of the masses under the strict discipline and guidance of an enlightened small group of professional revolutionaries. It is primarily the elite which possesses proletarian or class-consciousness which seems to be something sacred, exclusive, a naturalized charisma. For this reason the masses must learn from the enlightened, particularly the great mystery of class truth.

Proletarian consciousness supposes the previous initiation into a mystery that is unseen and unintelligible from outside; "class truth" is a sectarian truth which is made clear only to those who have made their way into the circle of initiates. There, a universalist line of argument has no meaning; facts themselves have no meaning, for they depend on consciousness, the proletarian consciousness, which with its philosophy and science, its morality and politics calls for a definitive break with the past and its

universalism and turns to the creation of a new world and a new man. Truth was revealed for the first time to this consciousness, revealed absolutely and finally; the Marxist revelation is as unique and complete as the Hegelian system was to its author (1)

This idea of "class truth" is a bond linking together Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin for Marx began the tradition that anyone who differed with him was wrong and Lenin and Stalin continued the same tradition. For example, Marx had established as a general principle that ideology is determined by the material conditions of life as is clear from what has been said. He did not subject his own ideology to that rule, however, but considered that he was pronouncing "if not for all places and times, at least for a longer time and a wider area than those in which his historical observation had been enclosed. This abuse resulted from a well-concealed transition from observation to generalisation, to historical foresight and finally to prophecy pure and simple." (2)

The supreme custodian of "class truth" in Marx's day was Marx. (3) The scepter passed to Lenin and is

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(1) Berdiaeff, N., Probleme du Communisme, pp. 117-118

(2) Perroux, F., Contre les tricheries du marxisme, in La Vie Intellectuelle, May 10, 1937, p. 392

(3) Speaking of Marx as a teacher and educator of revolutionaries, Liebknecht makes an illumination comparison, "I will say nothing of economics. In the Pope's palace one does not speak of the Pope." op. cit., pp. 33-34



wielded in the present day by Stalin. Marx was the only authentic interpreter of reality, Lenin the only authentic interpreter of Marx and today Stalin is only authentic interpreter of Lenin and Marx. This means that what Marx declared to be the truth had to be accepted by all who wished to associate with him. Bakunin, Proudhon and other are witnesses to that fact. The same is true of Lenin, in spite of the fact that he contradicted Marx, and is true today of Stalin who, as we will see in the next section, even discovers errors in Marx and Lenin. Of course they are not admitted as errors which affect the fundamental principles of the doctrine but only as miscalculations based on conditions existing at the time of their formulation, which conditions were not sufficiently mature to offer a completely accurate diagnosis of the diseases affecting the social body.

Lenin made a practical application of class truth in organizing for the revolution. He insisted upon the need of a small, well-knit, compact group of professional revolutionists who, under his direction, drank deeply at the well of proletarian wisdom and, imbued with real proletarian consciousness, proceeded to organize the masses for the overthrow of the government of the Tsar

and of the succeeding provisional government of Kerensky. The only thing Marxist about the revolution was the name and, had Lenin never heard of Marx, under the same conditions he probably would have been able to accomplish the same results because, though one may doubt of his Marxism, there is little doubt of his revolutionary genius. Lenin saw that his country was ripe for a revolution and he was unwilling to trust its possibility to less capable hands than his own and those of his professional revolutionaries.(1) Lenin's successful revolution is a tribute to his foresight and a striking illustration of the important role of personality and imponderables in history. Had his dynamic personal leadership been lacking at the critical moment or had the Kerensky government possessed more capable leaders it is more than probable that the entire history of Russia since the Revolution would have followed a different course. Russia was in a state of ferment, at the crossroads. The direction she would take depended upon human factors not productive forces. A famous train trip, daring

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(1) Stressing the fact that there is a difference between his "organisation of revolutionists" and the "organisation of the workers" Lenin says, "I had in mind an organisation of revolutionists as an essential factor in "making" the political revolution...the organisations of revolutionists must be comprised first and foremost of people whose profession is that of revolutionists...As this is the common

gambling on the part of Lenin, hesitation and uncertainty among the leaders of the provisional government and Russia was delivered into the hands of the communists. Only a few years later Germany was in a similar state of ferment and the dynamic personality of another Leader, assisted by an elite, snatched her from the outstretched hands of the communists.(1) In both cases, as in many

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feature of the members of such an organisation, all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals, and certainly distinctions of trade and profession, must be dropped." Lenin, V. What is to be Done?, L.L.L., Vol., 4 pp. 105-106 ff. Cf. Eastman, M. op cit., p. 218 ff. for a commentary on this idea.

(1) "The rise of Nazi-ism is, indeed, a complete refutation of the Marxist theory that Communism will inevitably develop from the increasing misery of the working classes. The collapse of the mark ruined the middle classes in Germany, and produced among the working classes that "mass misery, slavery and degradation" which Marx regarded as the inevitable preparation for Communism. The Communists controlled about a third of the votes in pre-Hitler Germany. Communism failed to capture Germany not because the communists were weak, but because the Communist leadership was contemptible and because the Communists lacked the ruthless courage of the Nazis. The initiative, fanaticism and violence of the individual triumphed over the hesitations and timidity of the masses...If men were little more than machines, the Marxist predictions would no doubt have been fulfilled in Germany. Never had conditions seemed more favourable for a Communist Revolution." Lunn, A., op. cit., p. 215

others, the economic conditions combined with political, social, religious and a thousand other cross currents to set the stage for what was, in those cases, the ultimately determining factor - human personality.

Lenin's triumph confirmed the truth of his theory of the necessity of an elite and since his day the Communist Party has retained the same basic structure and characteristics - an exclusive, class-conscious, politically cunning, powerful organization exercising absolute control over the lives of millions of people as Russia plays the role of guinea pig for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

- Section 4 - Dictatorship of the Proletariat -  
- Fact and Fiction -

Let us briefly recall some of the main points of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as elaborated by Lenin in State and Revolution which is based on the writings of Engels and Marx, particularly on the latter's description of the famous Paris Commune. According to theory, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is a new form of state, an instrument of organized violence in the hands of the proletariat, a bludgeon which is employed to crush the resistance of its enemies. It is a temporary organization which exists during the period of socialism in

which the gradual disappearance of classes engenders a parallel withering away of the state which will completely disappear with the coming of communism. During the period of socialism there is no exploitation of man by man because the means of production belong to the state; bureaucracy, police and the standing army which featured the bourgeois forms of state are to be replaced by the active participation of all in the administration of the state; all officials are to be fully elective and subject to recall, their salaries being reduced to "workmen's wages," and all things are to be under the leadership and control of the armed proletariat. Thus was to be achieved what Lenin calls Marx's idea of a "Conscious, democratic proletarian centralism" in contrast to "bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism." (1)

This, in outline, is the theory. Now, what are the facts.

According to Lenin, the proletarian state is no sooner constituted than it begins to wither away.(2)

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(1) Lenin, V. State and Revolution, p. 46

(2) "...the proletariat, according to Marx, needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state which is so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away." Ibid., p. 22 (Italics ours)

"...this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory, because in a society without class antagonisms, the state is unnecessary and impossible." Ibid., p. 25 (Italics ours)

This follows logically from the nature of the state which is always an instrument of oppression of one class against another. As the proletarian will immediately begin to "liquidate" its enemies, there will be a parallel decrease in the amount of opposition offered as a result of class antagonisms. Has this taken place in Russia?

The answer is most definitely in the negative. Far from withering away, the state has become the greatest Leviathan known to history. State absolutism has been carried to the greatest possible lengths and is increasing rather than decreasing.(1) Never has the famous aphorism, "L'Etat, c'est moi," been more concretely exemplified than in the person of Stalin who

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(1) The explanation of the phenomenal growth of the state is explained very simply by the Leader and his associates - the state doesn't wither away until the higher stage of communism. This is of course a new theory and it is freely admitted that Marx and Lenin both had erred. Witness the words of Vyshinsky, "Lenin had shared the idea of the withering away of the State. But Stalin introduced a correction and proved that, under Socialism, the State had to be re-enforced. In consequence, laws must also persist and become socialist. Everywhere in the world those in power violate the law and individual rights. There is only one country, where, like pure gold, justice is sparkling, that is the USSR." Timasheff, N., The Great Retreat, pp. 255-256.

has complete and unlimited powers.(1) The participation of the people in the administrations of the state is a mere phrase, the right of suffrage is the right of the rubber stamp - the privilege of manifesting approval of the candidates selected by Stalin and the inner circle. According to Chamberlin, for many years

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(1) According to Nicholas Timasheff, "Since 1929, more and more often this man (Stalin) has been called the Leader. To him all possible perfections are ascribed. He is the Wise, the Good, the Almighty. He is the Father of the Peoples of the Soviet Union, the Head of the World Proletariat, the Generalissimo of Humanity. He is the first specialist in every branch of knowledge...His actual power is limited by nothing. He is the legislator. Nothing could become law which did not conform with his views; on the other hand, his will if expressed, in a generalized form, is the law. No law in force limits his power; without repealing it, he can transgress it or order that it be transgressed by others...All the officers of the State depend upon him. He appoints them or allows them to be appointed by his henchmen, shifts them from one position to another, or dismisses them. In so doing he can disregard the decisions or desires of any corporate body or any specified personality. He has around him a few advisory bodies. But the members of these bodies depend entirely on him; moreover, he is not obliged to ask them for advice; he can take advice from anyone he wants to consult; or from nobody; he is free to act in accordance with the advice received, or to ignore it. It is obvious that the power of the Leader goes much further than that of a Russian Emperor, even before the Constitutional Reform of 1905-06." The Great Retreat, pp. 84-86 "The party core is divided into various gradations. The authority of the leader is undisputed, being far above that once enjoyed by Lenin. The scope of his power is unlimited, being much greater than that wielded by an Russian tsar." Dallin, op. cit., p. 228. Chamberlin speaks of the possession in the hands "of one man of a power superior to that enjoyed by any modern tsar, a power without limits, in no way controlled by any political or economic factor." Op. cit., P. 194 Cf. Gide, A., Return from the U.S.S.R., Trans. from the French by Dorothy Bussy, p. 49

an observer of Russian affairs, the right to vote is inconsequential in regard to the exercise of one's choice of candidates for office but it is important for certain civil rights such as social insurance, and employment. As he puts it, "It is no great loss to be deprived of the right to vote in an election where there is only one list of candidates for whom one may vote but disenfranchisement entails certain disadvantages of the practical order." (1)

This burlesque of the right of suffrage is another practical application of class truth. Only the enlightened elite is qualified to select the candidates worthy of the confidence of the people, or more realistically, candidates absolutely devoted to the party line. All decisions come from above and once the high command has spoken all discussion is at an end. Although the party has grown to almost 5,000,000 within recent years, only "10,000 to 15,000 comprise the heart of the Russian Communist party. These constitute the real party." (2) This heart of the party is in turn subject to the Politbureau, consisting of fourteen members (nine members and five "candidates"), the real brain of the party which

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(1) Chamberlin, W.H., op. Cit., pp 187-881  
(2) Dallin, op. cit., p. 227



has practically been the government of Russia since Lenin's days. (1) In fact, even the power and influence of this select group declined somewhat for we find that "at the outbreak of the war it was the Party Secretariat, consisting of four men, among them Stalin which played the part of the Cabinet." (2)

Since the theoretical election of officials by the people projected by Lenin has in reality become the selection of officials by the party leaders, the proletarian state, in accord with theory, has eliminated one of the detestable features of bourgeois states - deciding "once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and oppress the people." (3) In Russia this is no longer a problem which the people must decide. The problem is decided for them and all they have to do is approve and accept the decree handed down by Stalin and his intimates. This aspect of Russian

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(1) Ibid., p 228

(2) Timasheff, op. cit., p. 87

(3) Lenin, V. State and Revolution, p. 40

life is so patent that even enthusiasts admit it freely, if somewhat regretfully. For example, Gide had to admit the direction of all things from above.

What is wanted now is compliance, conformism. What is desired and demanded is approval of all that is done in the U.S.S.R.; and an attempt is being made to obtain an approval that is not mere resignation, but a sincere, an enthusiastic approval. What is more astounding is that this attempt is successful. On the other hand, the smallest protest, the least criticism, is liable to the severest penalties, and in fact is immediately stifled. And I doubt whether in any other country in the world ...thought be less free, more bowed down, more fearful, (terrorized), more vassalized. (1)

Lenin remarks in one passage that "for a certain time...even the bourgeois state remains under Communism." (2) In this he was certainly right but he forgot to add, "and it becomes increasingly bourgeoisified" because that is just what has happened to the state in Russia. This is clear if we recall that, for Marx and Lenin, three of the outstanding features of the bourgeois state are the police, the standing army and bureaucracy. What is their role and function in Russia?

Russia can justly lay claim to possessing the most

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(1) Gide, op. cit., p. 42

(2) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, p. 82

perfect police system in the world in the sense that the police is an instrument of oppression and terror. The political police organization, NKVD, (formerly Cheka or OGPU), is perhaps the most hated and feared group in the Soviet Union. Operating a vast network of espionage, it is supported by an army - distinct from the military army - which probably exceeds 250,000. The administrative personnel is for the most part made up of tried and true members of the party absolutely loyal and proletarian-conscious. There is no one in Russia, save perhaps Stalin himself, who is exempt from its authority. It exercises the offices of police, judge, jury and executioner and the brutality of its methods form one of the most shameful pages of the communist experiment. Struck by the broad field of its activities, Duranty made this observation.

What strikes me as the gravest defect of the Soviet system is the "confusion," or the duplication of the authority which makes the arrest, does the examining and the judging. People are arrested and held in prison by the GPU without any right to see a lawyer, without any habeas corpus and without any sort of publicity. They are examined by officials of the GPU who demand their confession. Finally, they go on trial before a tribunal, the judge and prosecuting attorney of which are so closely linked with the GPU that it is difficult to distinguish them from it. And then, if they are condemned, they are executed by the GPU. (1)

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(1) Duranty, W., The Kremlin and the People, p. 41, quoted in Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 261. As Dallin significantly remarks, "Bureaucracy and its red tape exist in other spheres of the regime but not in NKVD." op. cit., p. 240

Every member of the party has a grave obligation to inform the NKVD of anything he may see or hear that may be of possible interest. Even suspicion of negligence on this matter is fraught with grave danger. In addition to the party members there are thousands of voluntary and involuntary informers who infiltrate every sphere of life; voluntary informers, seeking party favor, privileges, money or revenge; involuntary informers, those who have run afoul of the NKVD but are allowed to go free on condition that they will perform the office of spies. In this way the threat of NKVD action is like a sword of Damocles suspended over the heads of all the people, party members and otherwise. Universal suspicion and distrust reigns supreme and any counter-revolutionary movements are nipped in the bud. (1)

NKVD organizes and directs all the famous "purges", both in the army and among the civilian population. (2) Even the organization's members indulge in mutual espionage as is evidenced from the fact that the institution

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(1) Cf. Dallin, op. cit., pp. 239-44; Timasheff, op. cit., pp. 92-3

(2) For the purges, see Chamberlin, op. cit., pp. 255-72; Dallin, op. cit., pp. 220-25; see also Koestler, A., Darkness at Noon for an excellent interpretation of them.

has experienced many purges, especially that of 1937-38. No one, however, has more effectively used the purge than Stalin himself. By this means he has successfully removed any possible threats to his absolute authority. We said previously that class-consciousness was some sort of special charisma, an intuition of the elect. Evidently, it is easily lost because almost all of Lenin's intimates in time fell from grace. The secular spirit, it seems, also breathes where he will, and the spirit in this case is the one who happens to be the strongest. (1)

It was Lenin's proud boast and hope that the army

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(1) "Of those who directed the first phase of the Russian Revolution, and who organized the persecution, religious and secular, two still survive. 'The list of those shot,' writes Max Eastman, 'or who shot themselves, or who were named as implicated with the victims, comprises - with a single exception - every one of the eminent Bolsheviks who sat with Stalin around the council-table of Lenin: Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Bukharin, Radek, Sokolnikov, Piatakov (mentioned in Lenin's Testament as among the ablest), Yevdokimov, Smirov (once known as 'The Lenin of Siberia'), Tomskey (head of the Federation of Labour), Serebriakov (Stalin's predecessor as secretary of the party), and several others only a little less eminent.' " Lunn, op. cit., p. 155. The quotation of Eastman is from his article, The End of Socialism in Russia, in Harper's Magazine, February, 1937, p. 313. Lunn's comment on this situation is worth noting, "Ten Judases out of twelve is a rather high proportion for a new religion." p. 156

of the period of the Dictatorship was to be modelled on the "people's militia" of the Paris Commune, an army not distinguished from the people by ranks or privileges. This has never actually come to pass except perhaps for a very short period in the early days of the existence of the Red Army. For a brief space of time there was little distinction between officers and men; decorations, special awards, shoulder bars, etc., were practically non-existent. Officers and men shared the same quarters and in general lived together. This condition couldnot endure, however, in view of the fact that the Party had to have absolute control of the army which always represents a threat to the power of the political leaders. By placing party members in the posts of direction and utilizing the NKVD the army has become the tool of the party but at the same time there has been an increasing return of all the distinctions between officers and men; decorations have been restored and all the ancient military traditions revived so that, in the last analysis, "as many of the other egalitarian ideas of Lenin, this dream of an army where there would be no distinction between officer and soldier, save in knowledge and ability, has had to give way to reality." (1)

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(1) Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 285

In the matter of bureaucracy Russia yields the palm to no bourgeois state in the world. The enormous administrative network of Russian economy has created an ever increasing army of bureaucrats whose growth outdistances that of any other group. (1) Time and again efforts have been made to reduce the number of employees and directors but all shakeups and readjustments have only resulted in a further increase. Lenin said that the capitalist system had reduced everything to such a simplification that anyone who could read and write and knew the first four rules of arithmetic could fulfill the chief functions of the capitalist system - accounting and control. His words must have impressed the people of Russia because no country in the world has "such a large army of bookkeepers and statistician as has Russia...The bookkeepers are divided into ranks like army men; there are chief bookkeepers, senior bookkeepers; just plain bookkeepers and keepers of accounts. The statisticians too comprise several

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(1) Dallin, op. cit., p. 126; Von Mises, Omnipotent Government, p. 56. The term "bureaucrats" is somewhat akin to "white collar workers" and includes government employees not engaged as industrial workers, tradesmen, salesmen, agents, middlemen, members of the liberal professions, engineers, parliamentarians, etc., and thus closely resembles Marx's petty bourgeoisie.

divisions." (1) By 1941 the number included in this modern Gargantua had reached the staggering total of between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000, or 17.5 per cent of the working population. (2) Moreover, it is quite clear that, contrary to Lenin's prediction, these functions were not stripped of "every shadow of privilege, every appearance of "official grandeur", (3) when we note that the government was forced to take steps against the heavy influx of industrial workers into these positions because the process of production itself was beginning to suffer. Finally, while there are a number of former industrial workers in the group, by far the vast majority of the government employees are the old petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia and today this class represents the new intelligentsia of Russia.

It may be said that, according to theory, the effect of the rule of Stalin has been the abolition of classes. True to the dialectic, however, and contrary to theory, has been the emergence of classes. Consequently, the existence of a classless society in

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(1) Dallin, op. cit., p. 133

(2) Ibid., pp. 126-27

(3) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, p. 38



Russia is an illusion and competent observers and sociologists note that, in general, the following is the class structure of present day Russia. At the summit of the social pyramid are the members of the ruling class. Closely linked to them are the members of the new intelligentsia; below this class come the workers, then the peasants and finally the disenfranchised among whom one numbers the untold millions who are members of a special category - forced labor. (1) Between and within the classes, privileges and incomes are widely disparate, a condition which gives a hollow ring to the enthusiastic proclamations of Lenin that there would be a "reduction of the remuneration of all servants of the state to "workingmen's wages" (2) and "all citizens...should work equally...and...should receive equal pay." (3) Lenin returns again and again to the idea that all officials, without exception, must receive only "workingmen's wages", "the usual workers wage", "no higher wages than "workingmen's wages". Conditions have not improved since 1937 and as far back as that Chamberlin observed that

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(1) For the facts on forced labor see Dallin, op. cit., pp. 186-213: Dallin, D. J. and Boris I. Nicholaevsky, Forced Labor in Soviet Russia

(2) Lenin, V., State and Revolution, pp. 38, 43, 44.

(3) Ibid., p. 83

Inequality is growing by leaps and bounds in the Soviet Union. There is already a class of high state officials and industrial executives whose earnings exceed those of the ordinary workers in proportion of ten to one. The spread in wages between the skilled and unskilled workers is increasing. (1)

- Marx Criticizes Stalin -

It is somewhat ironical that Marx's doctrines are the dogmas of a regime which not only equals but surpasses the rigor of the Prussian regime against which Marx directed so many of his sharpest arrows of criticism. Consequently, to end this section, it might be interesting to note some extracts from Marx's criticism of the Prussian censorship.

According to the 125th article of the Constitution

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(1) Chamberlin, W.H., A False Utopia, p. 62; Dallin, op. cit., p. 98, gives a summary of income distribution, and Chamberlin sums up the whole situation very well when he says, "The Soviet bureaucracy is constantly improving its material position by comparison with the "proletariat", the theoretical sovereign of the country...The dictatorship of the proletariat has never been anything but a play with words, an unreal and unrealizable conception; and now it becomes increasingly clear that the true beneficiary of the Russian Revolution is not the manual working class as a whole, but the military, police, political and economic bureaucracy that is firmly entrenched in the seats of power. Some of the members of this bureaucracy are ex-workers and some are not. But none of them will ever work with their hands again so long as the present regime survives. Ibid., p. 246-7

of the U.S.S.R. the people are guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings and freedom of street processions and demonstrations. "These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communications facilities and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights." (1) On the face of it one could hardly hope for a more democratic policy on the part of the government in this matter. In actual fact, however, the words mean nothing except that the party, the vanguard of the working class, has full control over the press, speech and meetings. The only freedom that the people have is the freedom to conform to party dictates, to write, print and demonstrate for those things determined in advance by the party. (2)

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(1) Constitution of the U.S.S.R., Chapter X

(2) Timasheff, op. cit., pp. 76; 96; 99. Speaking of these so-called freedoms Chamberlin says that they can scarcely be taken seriously. "No individual has the authorization to publish a newspaper or review. Any editor who would presume to criticize an act, political gesture or personal trait of Lenin would disappear as quickly as a flash of lightning and would undoubtedly reveal himself as a choice subject for a mental examination. No reunion, no assembly, no street demonstration takes place unless inspired and directed by the dominating party." L'Enigme Russe, p. 192

This is insured by the words which introduce the article which read, "In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law: etc." The only ones who know the real interests of the people, who know what should be done to strengthen the socialist system are Stalin and his associates. They decide what shall be printed and by whom. The words of Von Mises that within a socialist community there is no room left for freedom are certainly applicable to Russia.

There can be no freedom of the press where the government owns every printing office...There can be neither freedom of conscience nor of speech where the government has the power to remove any opponent to a climate which is detrimental to his health, or to assign him duties which surpass his strength and ruin him both physically and intellectually. In a socialist community the individual citizen can have no more freedom than a soldier in the army or an inmate in an orphanage. (1)

Marx passionately denounced the Prussian censorship of his day because it denied the freedom of the spirit, the right to write and say that which one pleases. As such, censorship is so fundamental a vice that no law

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(1) Von Mises, Omnipotent Government, pp. 51-52

can mitigate it, can correct it. (1) With great indignation, he asks if it is necessary to take as a standard of truth that which the government decrees and replies that such seems to be the case when censorship exists. Such a position, he declares, is absolutely absurd. (2) Many people today would be of the same opinion as Marx in regard to the no less absurd idea of "class truth". The suppression of freedom of thought engenders, according to the attacking Marx, the most dreadful terrorism - the jurisdiction of suspicion, (3) which immediately brings to mind the NKVD and the purges, people living in mortal terror of being suspected of any deviation from the 'party line'. The activities of NKVD are forecast when Marx says that the regulation of freedom of thought must employ a means more revolting than the law of censorship itself - spies. (4) With a note of derision, Marx accuses the state of a lack of confidence in its organization because it fears the isolated opinion of the press whom it treats as a particular. (5)

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(1) Marx, K., Remarques sur la Reglementation de la Censure Prussienne in Oeuvres Philosophiques, Tome I, p. 123

(2) Ibid., p. 129

(3) Ibid., p. 140

(4) Ibid., p. 142

(5) Ibid., p. 145

Here Marx touches upon a fundamental fact of government. It is only a government which rests upon liberty and just laws which can permit genuine freedom of the press, speech and criticism. A government which is founded upon force and arbitrary decree will always curtail these fundamental rights, and necessarily so, in order to guard its very existence. Finally, Marx ends his tirade with words which undoubtedly have been echoed silently many times over within more than one human breast in Russia during the last two or three decades. In a final outburst of emotion, Marx yearns for "the rare happiness of the times where it is permissible to feel what you wish and to say what you feel." (1)

There are few who would not subscribe to most of these judgments of Marx and they are a fitting indictment of the present Soviet regime. Moreover, it is quite true that some of the criticisms offered by the communists in countries such as the United States and Great Britain may be just and reasonable. What is contemptible and condemnable, however, is the approbation of the same vices when they exist in Russia. By a

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(1) Ibid., p. 161

strange dialectic, vice becomes virtue when one is looking through red-colored glasses. When the communists, therefore, defend the rights of man, their passion and zeal is not inspired by a desire to secure these rights in the name of man but by the hope of revolution, by the lust for power to be acquired and despotically employed in the name of "collective man". Though Marx and his followers undoubtedly employ a double standard of values (if one considers the problem from an objective point of view) it nevertheless remains true that, from the point of view of the Marxists, their value judgments are rigidly unitary, based on a single criterion - all things that further the class struggle and the ultimate triumph of the proletariat are justifiable, good and moral. Thus, lying, fraud, deception are evil when employed by anyone against the communists but good when employed by the latter to attain their ends. In the Soviet union, the individual who would try to start a strike would be denounced as a criminal - and, incidentally shot or condemned to forced labor - but the same action in bourgeois society is praiseworthy and heroic.

It is impossible to comprehend the insufferable

arrogance and arbitrary assumption of infallibility on the part of the communist leaders as long as one does not constantly keep in mind the basic paradox or contradiction underlying the entire communist doctrine. We have already referred to it in speaking of "class truth" because this notion implies that whereas the communists have relativized all ideologies in accord with Marx-Engels' doctrine of ideology, they have absolutized their own ideology and universalized their teachings. Whether or not Marx was conscious of it, a fact which need not concern us here, the ultimate source of this epistemological prestidigitation may be traced back to the writings of Hegel. According to the latter, at any particular stage of world history, only one nation is bearer of the world spirit, only one nation is the dynamic force of world history. In the face of this dominant nation, all other nations are without rights, retrogressive, declining, or immature.(1) Marx transferred this idea to the proletariat, the class which holds the future in its hands, the progressive force in history against which no other class or

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(1) Hegel, G., Philosophy of Right, #347, p. 217



group can have rights. Its objectives, its principles, its judgments - formulated of course by Marx and the Marxists of Russia - are supreme, infallibly correct, absolute. This pseudo-mystical and crypto-logical conception of Marx's proletariat is combined with a secularized messianism whereby the proletariat is destined to draw paradise from heaven to earth as eternity erupts into time and a new historical epoch gloriously dawns. Consequently, no class, no laws, no moral standards, in short, absolutely nothing can possibly be permitted to impede the forward march of the progressive class which, winning its way by force and destruction, finds the justification of its morals and the confirmation of its truth in success, and will be so judged in the highest tribunal of all - the court of world history.

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