MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

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To these ends it invites the support and participation of all scholars and public-spirited individuals.

MARXISM
and
DEMOCRACY

A SYMPOSIUM

Edited by HERBERT APTHEKER

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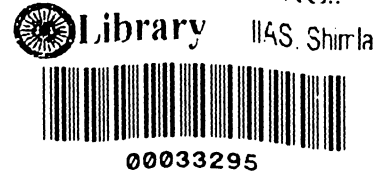

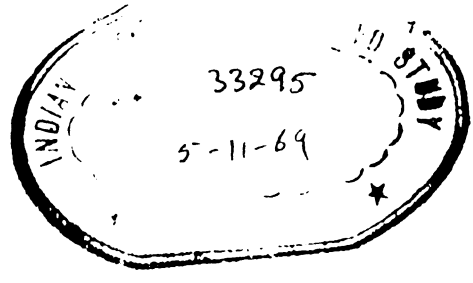

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PREFACE

by The Editor

It was natural that the first symposium sponsored by the American Institute for Marxist Studies should be devoted to a consideration of "Marxism and Democracy." Given the essential purposes of the Institute—to encourage Marxist and radical research and to help produce a meaningful conversation among Marxist and non-Marxist thinkers—nothing could be more basic to it than discussion of the relationship and connection between Marxism and Democracy.

This first symposium, held in New York City, April 23, 1964, was attended by about four hundred people. It was chaired by Rabbi Robert E. Goldburg of Connecticut; the speakers included Herbert Aptheker, Robert S. Cohen, Charles H. George, Gaylord C. LeRoy and Eslanda G. Robeson. From that symposium arose the idea for the present volume. Certain of the original participants found it possible to prepare papers for publication, based upon their remarks made there; in addition, Joseph P. Morray of California, Howard L. Parsons of Iowa and Jean Suret-Canale of France, contribute essays dealing with matters that have absorbed their attention for many years.

Albert Einstein, in explaining his own preference for Socialism in the first number of the *Monthly Review* (May, 1949), commented that the achievement of collective ownership of the means of production and a planned economy based thereon, while fundamental, still did not constitute Socialism. Central to the questions remaining, said Einstein, was this: "How can the rights of the individual be protected . . . ?" It is with this kind of question that the essays which follow, deal. Problems of science, humanism, culture—as well as politics and economics—are germane and they are considered in the following pages. Readers will observe that not only are the subjects dealt with varied but the emphases and

viewpoints also differ; this is natural in any lively conversation and should serve to raise the value as well as the compelling character of the book.

In any case, all contributors hope that this little volume is not an altogether unworthy addition to the extensive bibliography on the crucial topic, Marxism and Democracy, that concludes this work.

February, 1965

MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

I.

MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

Robert S. Cohen

Whose Marxism shall we discuss? And which Democracy? If, in principle, we should consider every alternative interpretation of Marxism, each notion of democracy, nevertheless time, patience, and my ignorance demand a limitation. Even such ignorance may be helpful, if not presumptuous, for to the question, whose Marxism?, I answer the Marxism of Marx and Engels, with a few comments by Lenin and a footnote from Mao. But the other question, which Democracy?, requires more subtlety, for our symposium, is, I believe, mainly an attempt to understand Democracy.

Listen to several ancient views.

Cleon, about 422 B.C.: ". . . that shall be democratic which shall be of the people, by the people, for the people."

Pericles, in his great funeral oration: ". . . our government is called a democracy because its administration is in the hands, not of the few, but of the many; . . . as regards the law, all men are equal; . . . as regards the value set on men, each is preferred for public honors as he is distinguished, and not because he belongs to a particular class but rather because of his personal merits; nor is a man barred from public career on grounds of poverty. And not only in public life are we liberal but also as regards our freedom from suspicion from one another in the pursuits of everyday life . . . while we avoid giving offence in our private intercourse, in our public life we are restrained from lawlessness chiefly through reverent fear, for we render obedience to those in authority and to the laws, and especially to those laws ordained for the aid of the oppressed . . ."

Plato, in the *Republic*: ". . . when the poor win, the result is a democracy. They kill some of the opposite party, banish others, and grant the rest an equal share in civil rights and in offices of government, the officials being usually appointed by lot."

Aristotle, in the *Politics*: ". . . whenever the rulers owe their power to wealth, whether they be a minority or a majority, this is an oligarchy, and when the poor rule, it is a democracy." [and later]: "when all free men (citizens) are sovereign, it is a democracy, and when the rich are, it is an oligarchy; but there are many who are free, and few rich." [and indeed]: "virtue defines an aristocracy, wealth an oligarchy, and freedom defines democracy."

Finally, that great materialist, about the time of Cleon, *Democritus:* "Poverty in a democracy is as much to be preferred to prosperity under a despot, as freedom is to slavery."

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Whatever favors the people, then, is democratic. When the people rule, there is democracy. And freedom, the freedom of citizenship, is linked to democracy. And when divisions exist among the population of a country or a city, then the main principle of division is that between the rich and the poor. The people are the poor. The purpose of democratic rule, then, is to establish social policies which will aid the people, all the people, all the poor; and these social and democratic policies will, in the course of history, overcome the people's poverty. Further, the practice of democratic rule is one of majority self-government for, in a democracy, the people rule. When the people govern, there is democracy. When they decide the circumstances of government, the laws, the administration of the laws, the judgment of controversies and of those accused of violating the people's laws, when people participate in their public affairs and conduct lives of social responsibility, then their government and their society is democratic. They may be right or wrong, moral or immoral, just or unjust, tolerant or intolerant, learned or ignorant. You may like the people, or you may dislike and distrust them. You may be now an optimist about them, now a pessimist; you may think of yourself as a part of the people, or apart from the people. But the *meaning* of democracy should be clear. It is not a term which *describes* an intrinsic value; rather it describes a way of seeking certain values, of seeking to achieve the interests of the people. But do they, themselves, see their interests, truly, accurately? And how uniform are their interests? How unanimous their judgments?

How free their actions and their thoughts?

Indeed, we need to consider what it is that governments, or at any rate democratic governments, may do. Which governmental practices should the people permit, and which forbid? Lincoln offered this advice:

> The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot do so well, in their separate and individual capacities.

With this we see at once how widely and distressingly divergent the democratic efforts may be. Not only the philosophers but also the people will disagree on two essential matters: what truly do we need? and what, from among these needs, can best be achieved by governments?

We all need wealth, not poverty; enlightenment, not superstition; peace, not war; love, not hate. Do we need them equally? Can we achieve them individually? Can we dissuade those who believe in aggression, hatred, and false myths? Surely the record of history says no, some cannot be persuaded, and only some can achieve those goals individually. Indeed the historical record is equally insistent that democracy has been, first, a movement toward power over those who previously have had unequal advantages. Only secondly has democracy involved the notion of a freely-accepted and mutual agreement concerning the procedures for reaching decisions and exercising authorities.

Sometimes this second, or contractual, character is most appealing to Americans. It has seemed to many of us that democracy means simply: one man, one vote. All other social and political issues have been linked to democracy, in this view, by the historical drive for the vote. For if an enlightened people have the vote, they have the means to achieve their goals. We need not quibble over this with those who say voting is merely abstract or even sham democracy; we need not say that by itself universal adult suffrage equals democracy. But we can say that full political democracy exists when all the people determine what the government shall be, and do so on equal terms. Rich or poor, religious or atheist, Negro, Asian or white, artist or scientist, young or old, man or woman, English-speaking or Spanish-speaking, rural or urban,

worker or employer; one man, one vote, is the principle of the machinery for a just society.

Or so we have thought in the American scene. When we doubt this, we usually lament the inadequate application of the principle. So many are sheerly prevented from voting by undemocratic laws or by illegal coercion. So many voters have been bought, so many seduced and manipulated, so many blinded, so many un-enlightened; and there have been so few choices. Unhappily, even when voting exists in fact, it has not been a guarantee of achieving those classic goals of democracy. On the contrary, whether by regular vote or by special plebiscite, the vote has often been the voice and the assurance of a special interest, of a mob-supported tyranny; indeed we must reluctantly say that the institution of voting can be a frustration of democracy. In broader statement, achieving political democracy has not in itself been sufficient for the attainment of a genuine common-wealth.

Extending the right to vote is extending a formal procedure, open to being used with social content but not demanding such content. And it has been open to anti-social, anti-democratic content, too. In contrast to such equivocal formal democracy, the historical democratic movements carried an economic punch. In England, in the United States, in France and Germany and Russia, indeed everywhere, democracy originated in a clash of the rulers with those ruled. The right of the people to rule, which is to say, the right of the majority of the population, was clearly, in each such movement, seen to carry with it the rights of the majority to dominate social and economic processes in accord with their interests. Likewise, the *struggle* for democracy was also, slowly, clarified: it could not, itself, be a democratic process, peacefully to be limited in scope, not even by regulations upon voting. For Jefferson and Robespierre alike, democracy was a struggle against the aristocrats and for the people, with support of the laws, or without.

For both of these men, there was, however, a noteworthy restriction of the "people," Jefferson, for example, being convinced of the independent merit of the politically active farmers and the unstable untrustworthiness of the city workers. What, in his view, was the chief merit of these farmers? Mainly it was their presumed ability to think through the affairs of common concern, to debate man-to-man, and to reach a state of active participation in the practical

governing of their society. Again and again, this fine criterion of individual rights combined with responsibility to the community has echoed in American history; as James Fenimore Cooper put it, "all that democracy means is as equal a participation in rights as is practicable."

* * *

The glaring inequalities within the ranks of the people were evident from the start of the great revolts against aristocratic rule. But who, since we cannot accept Jefferson's restriction, are the people? It did not require Karl Marx to see that the revolt against the aristocracy was itself open to further revolts. Since all governments are techniques for ruling, it is simple then to ask, with respect to democratic government: democracy for whom to rule? And if democracy be interpreted as a system of human liberties, we may just as simply demand: liberty for whom? Indeed, if the honest replies have never been, democracy for each and for all, liberty for all in practice as in theory, then the split between democracy and socialism, perceived as historical movements, was to be expected. Democracy was middle-class and, in fact, limited; socialism was working-class and it was expected to be unlimited.

The former middle class had won, in the 1780's and 1790's; the poor had lost then, and again in 1848. With all the progressive characteristics of the west European and American revolutions, they were yet limited mainly to two achievements: enormous multiplication of human power through the industrial transformations; and the restricted but noble adoption of the liberal ideals of free thought, legal equality, popular and general education, individual rights. But these new societies did not liberate their own poor.

A spirit of disenchantment with the successful revolt against the aristocrats was evident throughout European politics in the 19th century. A clear voice was that of the Democratic Society of Poland whose Manifesto, twelve years before the Communist Manifesto, stated: "Everything for the people, by the people; this is the most general principle of democracy, comprising *both* its purpose and its form." Another is Lincoln's classic formulation at Gettysburg in 1863, echoing Cleon: "government of the people, by the people, for the people"; especially to be joined with his earlier statement of 1858: "As I would not be a slave, so I would

not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy." Marx and Engels took their position in their Manifesto of 1848: ". . . the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to establish democracy"; and then they continue: "The proletariat will use its political power to wrest all capital gradually from the bourgeoisie." So for Marx in 1848, the struggle for democracy is the struggle for political rule by the working class. Democracy is the preliminary to further use of that working-class power; and Engels had already written that the political rule by the proletariat is the first condition for all communistic measures.

Now, democracy is not socialism, but a socialist might say that democracy, if understood as the people's rule, is the preparatory stage for socialism. Conversely, lack of democracy, now to be understood as a lack of individual rights and individual responsibilities, is a deadening weight upon that common sharing of social resources which is socialism. We, a century later, look back upon democracy which did not lead to socialism, and, on socialism which arose directly from feudal and capitalist tyrannies. In the historical interplay of democracy and socialism, as political movements, there has been a saddening separation of the humane ideals of communal sharing and individual speaking. But hindsight was not needed. Already for Marx, the interplay of democracy and socialism was grim. Political democracy was consistent with the capitalist economic order, indeed democracy provided the most adequate government for capitalists. Capitalism itself, Marx and Engels characterized by its inequalities of living, of opportunity, of privilege. In the Marxist view, capitalist democracy is a sham democracy, a society of exploitation: exploitation of workers and consumers alike, exploitation at home and through foreign colonies, exploitation of religious and cultural instincts by the artificialities of manipulated consciousness. Those of the people, who are exploited as commodities in their everyday lives, of necessity would find it difficult to act with dignity and responsibility and independence in their political lives. Hence the theoretical claim, that political freedom is prior to all other freedoms, is not false so much as inadequate and self-denying: inadequate, even in theory, because unresponsive to the sources and problems of ruling powers. And the practice of political democracy has so frequently been inhumane, not because this kind of democracy is inherently in-

human but precisely because it has been both incompletely democratic and predominantly capitalist.

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Marxism grew out of the struggles of the German middle class and workers for political democracy. But, as Marx went on to show, when political democracy is identical with capitalist democracy, then the democratic ideology turns hypocritical, for the people do not rule. The demand for socialism, then, is a demand for the democratization of economic power. And if Marx is correct in his general analysis of society, full human dignity can be established only through abolition of private property. In the first place, this means abolition of private ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods, and substitution of social ownership. But secondly this also carries Marx's anticipation that socialism will only be reached through the struggle of classes for governing power. The struggle may be peaceful, a non-violent struggle, but fought with the savagery of ideology and the clash of prejudicial interests; in countries with established traditions of political democracy and techniques of accommodation by contending parties, Marx himself thought the transition to socialism might occur through elections and legislative acts, perhaps in England and the United States and Holland, and, we may add, perhaps in the Scandinavian democracies. But elsewhere, in France, Germany, Russia, Poland, the lands of Asia and Africa, the struggle for social and economic democracy was thought to be at best a revolutionary struggle, within parliaments and without, and at worst a civil war and a series of colonial wars.

So the divergence between the economic levelling of socialist democracy and the liberal freedoms of political democracy has been profound. Socialist movements have two general programs: to attain power, and to order society in a new way. But the attainment of power means precisely taking over or establishing a state. If we ask for the status of human freedom in such a new democratic-socialist state, we can receive only the bluntest and the most honest of answers. Engels wrote: "So long as the proletariat still needs the state, it needs it not in the interest of freedom, but in the interests of the repression of its opponents, and when it becomes possible to speak of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist."

And Lenin wrote, in 1917: "So long as the state exists, there is no freedom; when freedom exists, there will be no state."

For Marxists, *political* freedom is anarchism, a very long-run goal. The movement toward socialism, and the construction of a socialist society, are not, in themselves, to be characterized by intrinsic freedom, not for all the people and not explicitly full freedom for any class. Socialist construction is, however, to be described as the establishment of the necessary ground for freedom. And what is that necessary ground? At least for Marx, it comprises the absence of economic classes and of the class-content of governmental powers. Will capitalist owners and supporters accede to such socialization? Is there a democratic path toward that wider democracy which Marx, and others as well, have sketched? If we are to be clear about the enormous scope of what Walt Whitman called these "democratic vistas," then we must also see how beset with violence the path may yet be.

Indeed, how many choices and decisions there will be! The Marxist philosophy offered to make ideals into facts, Reason into Reality; the great injunction of Marxist ethics might succinctly be phrased, in Herbert Marcuse's words, as "the materialization of values." This means not that the actual world, our reality, has reason embodied in it, not a metaphysical thesis at all, but rather that reason defines a task and the world is to be made reasonable. Have we democrats agreed that "all men are created equal"? Then this poses a task, to make all men equal. And what are the many varieties of inequality to be overcome? We need ethnic democracy, cultural democracy, economic democracy, political democracy: each challenges men in power to undertake self-criticism, challenges groups with superiority of wealth, challenges entire nations living off other people, challenges every form of exploitation. And yet, beyond any responses to the challenge, the effort to overcome exploitation must be made by the people; and the people themselves are seething with conflicting motivations, with selfishness and yet also with the solidarity of human sympathy, with hospitality and yet with hostility for the stranger and the foreigner. The central effort of Marxists, the class-struggle itself, has been filled with these contradictory tendencies. The working-class organizations must have leadership, their struggles may have to be armed, and their establishment in power has come together with titanic violence of world-wide wars. Killing, even for the

people's sake, is an undemocratic process, an unsuccessful means of treating human opponents, a degradation, however it might be necessary.

The Marxist state means freedom for some, as does any state. For all the workers? It is surely so in Marxist theory, surely not in the practice of those who have called themselves Marxist. And no greater sadness can be found than that in the conscience of the socialist who grieves for unnecessary violence done in the name of socialism, who grieves for himself who would not, or could not, or simply did not stand against it. Can a humanist conscience work successfully amid the harsh efforts to construct socialism while also overcoming those feudal and capitalist forces which the Marxist sees about him? We simply do not know. We know socialist individuals whose nobility is evident; we can scarcely say that any socialist revolutionary movement has had such a character. Rosa Luxemburg once wrote:

> Determined revolutionary activity coupled with a deep feeling for humanity, that alone is the real essence of Socialism. A world must be overturned, but every tear that flows and might have been staunched is an accusation; and a man hurrying to a great deed who knocks down a child out of unfeeling carelessness commits a crime.

Where would we find the society that might nurture citizens with such humane feelings? It seems almost that Marx would despairingly have to have expected that a primitive political economy will be transformed by a regime and party and people ruled by a Stalin rather than led and educated by a Luxemburg. Shall we agree then with the analyst who described the Stalin period as one of terror and progress? Anti-democratic but yet democratic, diseased with orthodoxy and autocracy but surviving both?

What is important for students of Marxism is the further theoretical question: in these new versions of the classic democracy, of the Aristotelian condition that the poor rule, can we find any place for the individual liberties of the American Bill of Rights? Every government may in fact be a dictatorship, indeed the proletarians-and-peasants government may be, as they hope, a democratic dictatorship. But in what respect is it democratic *as* government? How is such a society democratic *against* the government

and *for* the individual? Does it make sense to ask how it may be democratic *against* the people and *for* the individual?

Clearly, democratic hopes are part of the Marxist conception of a good society. Can governing be democratic? Lenin wrote, in 1917:

> Comrade Workers! Remember that you yourselves now administer the State. Nobody will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take all the affairs of the state into your own hands. Your Soviets are henceforth the organs of state power, organs with full powers, organs of decision.

But how obstinate reality is. He wrote, four years later: "Can every worker know how to administer the state? Practical people know that this is a fairy tale."

The glow, and the ideal, of Marxist fairy tales reappear, and they should. At an earlier time, Engels had said about the expected disappearance of the state and of state power: "The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things (by conduct of the processes of production). The state is not abolished. *It dies out.*"

But it is precisely in this "administration of things" that we find the continuation of the manipulation of men. Throughout socialist thought runs this open problem, this unsolved problem, bureaucracy.

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Can every citizen administer his factory, plan the production, choose goals of output and growth, discipline his fellows, legislate, govern, judge, and execute? What is the role of engineer and scientist, of lawyer, economist, military general, and sociologist? How can democracies without private ownership of the means of production control professional experts? More specifically, how can such a society generate citizens with expert knowledge and employ their specialized ability without yielding power over the laymen to them? Isn't there an economic basis for bureaucratic domination within a system of socialist productive relations? Regretfully, there is. There is no capitalist profit but there is managerial profit; there is no capitalist exploitation but there is socialist accumulation, and there is a socialist calculation of wages

as commodity costs. So, unless the deliberate and conscious participation of worker and farmer and intellectual is such that they can freely criticize their administrators, the state function will not so easily die out.

Here is the recurrent and positive aspect of syndicalist and guild-socialist tendencies: that the workers shall have the right and the responsibility to manage their factories and their shops, and have, indeed, the *democratic* right to manage them badly if that is the alternative to being themselves managed, along with the other raw materials. This is why the many experiments in small socialist communities deserve attentive and sympathetic study: Soviet kholkoz, Israeli kibbutz, Chinese peasant and city communes, American and Scandinavian co-ops, Yugoslav workers' council, the new Hungarian collective farm, the old Viennese socialist municipality, each are attempts, in the midst of unfavorable and even poverty-stricken situations, to train for, and meanwhile to live for, democratic responsibilities at the basic economic foundation of society. And each anticipates, optimistically, federation and representation as a way toward national democratic responsibility, toward a genuinely democratic and also genuinely socialist parliamentary government.

But there are several inadequacies in such prospects for national governing bodies, each recognized by Marxism. First of all, the necessities of economic life will continue to require that administration of things will make drastic differences in the lives of people. Administration of things is still a way of governing people, and hence it is potentially, if not always actually, a socialist exploitation. Without full economic abundance, the socialist morality of sharing what we have seems elusive, easier when the relevant population is small in number and unified in problems, correspondingly difficult to achieve when the population is great, as difficult as it is to have a New England town meeting in today's cities. But with economic abundance, would these special problems die out? When the science of economic planning has been further developed, when technology will have been dominated by automatic controls and robot labor, when human labor will have been reduced or nearly eliminated, then, one supposes, bureaucracy will be no human problem. It seems that the central aim of Marxist social progress must always be, and simply be, the utter reduction of the work-week. Engels might *then* say that even the human administration

of things will be replaced by an automatic administration of things.

But who knows how far off such a society, such a non-state, may be, or what will be the structure of its political economy? We wish to know now, can a socialist morality be taught and lived in present under-developed or industrializing societies which are governed by socialist leaders? I think that no-one knows with any degree of certainty whether a democratic socialist consciousness can become a central and effective force, aside from the model communities mentioned or the special elites which have occasionally led the way. The doubt and ambiguity of this matter is typified in Lenin's urgent and conscientious wrestling with the question of the status, power, and purpose of the trade unions in early Soviet society. And this question of socialist consciousness in everyday life is complicated by a second concern, the needs of socialist education. *Can* each worker administer the state? Lenin's fairy tale is false only in actuality; it is true in potentiality. For the tasks of a general education are to prepare all students for the fullest development of their talents, with every metaphor brought into that banal description: develop all their potentialities for arts and sciences, deeply and widely and fully. Marx was fond of saying that even the presumed narrowness of a vocational school should be changed, and he called it polytechnical education. In this respect, Marxism has been in the democratic tradition of education, the tradition of one school system for all the children; just as the great Czech Christian socialist, Jan Comenius, planned three centuries ago, and as Alexander Meiklejohn wrote just a few years ago: "There is no better definition of democracy than to say that it is a society which has only one set of schools."

So once again we may say that the Marxist criticism of capitalist democracy charges that class relations in the economy are mainly matched by inadequate, incomplete, or unequal relations in social life, in this case in the schools. What can the Marxist principle of democratic education be? It would seem that it must be an attempt to carry out the wish of Jefferson and the principles of Rousseau. Jefferson's well-known words were: "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty."

And this can only mean that the heart of democracy is *not* socialist sharing *nor* equal voting but that prior and fundamental commitment: *a faith in the people*. It is no magical faith. And

John Dewey was right: when the people are given the opportunity to think for themselves, they will govern themselves. Democracy depends on individuals who are free, rational, informed, responsible, loyal, and capable of brotherly love. To develop such qualities would be the goals of schools for democracy. It is, and always will be, true that freedom arises from an unfree world, from the larger world of poverty and inequality, and from the tiny world of the helpless child and dependent youth. And to every generation anew, freedom must be taught.

We do not know whether freedom can be taught by a governing party, by a state apparatus of forceful domination. It *can* often be taught by the true teacher whose singular achievement is to convert education from its beginnings in compulsion to its culmination in free learning. Rousseau perceived that the teacher and parent will compel the child to be free. And the greatest of Marxist educators, Anton Makarenko, once phrased it this way: ". . . the fundamental principle (is) the utmost possible demands on a person, but at the same time the utmost possible respect for him."

The utmost respect for the individual! Not in some future but in the present, even in that grimmest of the post-Revolutionary years, there was Makarenko's renewal of the insight: from discipline and respect, emerge freedom and self-respect, Rousseau and Marx in practice.

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Participation means sharing of tasks and responsibilities, of work and also of thought. Where in the Marxist tradition is the freedom to think, and to share the task of thinking, to express one's thoughts? Where, along with the Marxist charge that capitalist culture is largely debased and distorted, is the recognition of the healthy aspects of capitalist democracy, of the democratic aspects? What, that is, are the Marxist principles of democratic freedoms? Can socialism make these principles live renewed lives?

All thought, including science and scholarship, is tied to social circumstances; but so are the positive aids of mutual criticism and self-criticism, and the negative influence of censorship, distortion, and self-delusion. In the many violent ways by which socialism is being realized in this century, authoritarian currents of political and economic power provide just those circumstances

which tend to inhibit freedom of individual thought and to restrict the ranges of open inquiry. The class struggles of industrial workers have been joined, and even led, by the anti-colonial struggles of peasants and workers, not always socialist struggles, and even less often struggles for a democracy of liberal freedoms. But everywhere there is a respect for science. Now one of the characteristics of science which may turn out to be most encouraging in this respect is that remarkable series of theories and errors which constitute its history. Newton today would be an Einsteinian, not a Newtonian; and we scientists honor our masters and teachers best by showing them wrong, by overthrowing them. Like political democracy, science advances tentative governing rules, establishes its experts and its governors, but always there is the next election, the next year of experiences, the chance to correct past mistakes and to replace the present regime. Furthermore the technique which brings in the new is the same which brought the old. Science is self-correcting; to poor science, and erroneous science, the cure will be: more science. And so, at least in principle, with political democracy. The cure is always a trust in the people: more democracy.

And so also with Marxism at its best. Marx, in the *18th Brumaire,* claimed, almost in this same spirit, that proletarian movements always correct themselves. This was an essential part of his materialism, of his wish to create a science of society rather than an absolute metaphysical system, an anti-science. Indeed, the dialectic of the proletarian dictatorship has always contained this promise of democratization through scientific education and scientific research: scientists will think for themselves or there will be no science, and then there will be no reasonableness in the direction of society. Whatever the complexities of circumstance, the Lysenko story was the story of an experiment in anti-scientific method, an attempt at a short-cut to truth about Nature; but it was an unscientific experiment in the sociology of science as much as in genetics; and it was also anti-Marxist.

Just recently, a Chinese philosopher, writing of such questions, cited Marx's youthful remarks on the Prussian censorship: ". . . since one does not require roses to smell the same as violets, how can one demand that the mind, the richest of all forms of matter, should have only one form of existence?"

And, on practical grounds too, freedom of thought and creation

are demanded, the grounds so well expounded by John Stuart Mill, and by Justice Holmes in the great and enduring capitalist metaphor of the free marketplace of ideas. This basic requirement for advance in every sphere, the free competition and criticism of human creation, is as needed as is the technology of production and distribution which the capitalist society also produced. There is no monopoly of truth; true individualism demands that this be recognized, along with the demand for freedom from economic cares through non-exploitative social relations.

That noble Italian, the Marxist Antonio Gramsci, writing in solitary splendor in a Fascist prison cell, put the matter this way:

> We must not conceive of a scientific discussion as if it were a courtroom proceeding in which there are a defendant and a prosecutor who, by duty of his office, must show the defendant guilty. . . . The most advanced thinker is he who understands that his adversary may express a truth which should be incorporated in his own ideas, even if in a minor way. To understand and evaluate realistically the position and reasons of one's adversary (and sometimes the adversary is the entire thought of the past) means to have freed oneself from the prison of ideologies, in the sense of blind fanaticism.

This is not too far from Mill, from whom I give a fragment: ". . . Nor is it enough to hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. . . . He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive forms; he must feel the full force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter."

And all who speak and think as Marxists should remember that Marx too was a sceptic; his favorite maxims were "nothing human is alien to me" and "one must doubt of everything."

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Marxism is one attempt to make democracy genuine, to make it fruitful of human goods, to take the inequalities from human existence. Thus far, practical Marxism has been beset by undemocratic forces and tendencies, by racism and prejudice among

those who speak in its name, by arrogance and brutality among its own practitioners, by ignorance and narrowness in their vision, by poverty in their economic inheritance, and by savagery among their enemies. And yet the Marxist, who is also a humanist, can add to his critique of capitalist democracy a *Marxist* critique of the socialist democracies. To one who is not a Marxist, the open questions for Marxists today comprise also the central questions of political ethics for all democrats: to analyze the dimensions of inequality wherever they may lead. Practical life depends upon theory as well as upon material circumstances, and these open questions of Marxism are practical indeed. They may be posed by mentioning a set of dialectical alternatives: individuality and community; personal conscience and the discipline of partisan organization; popular participation and technical specialists; bureaucracy and commune.

The Marxist difficulties are not peculiar; they are the difficulties of every honest humanist. We inherit the great French goals, and we ought to desire the three of them: liberty, equality, and fraternity. We ought to want them for all human beings, to make this planet a place where all children will be brought to learn these goals in universal terms, for Everyman. So it seems to me that for Marx the French goals translate directly: liberty means democracy; equality means socialism; and fraternity means humanism. And of these, the last is the greatest. The ultimate aim of socialism is socialist man: to invent forms of production and relations among men so that man will no longer be estranged from his work, his fellows, his own self, and from Nature too. To achieve such a socialist democracy will mean to eliminate force from human relations. For force is the deepest anti-democratic fact of human history. Force, as Marx so sharply saw, is destructive, never creative. At best, force is temporary; it can be, as he said, the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. But when force is substituted for confidence in people, it is a social poison, poisonous to democracy and also poisonous to socialism.

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Modern societies can be looked upon as experiments which may, however much without deliberation, answer our questions. Is liberal democracy a necessary prerequisite for socialism? Is

socialism a prerequisite for genuine democracy? Will history permit either experiment to be tried? It would be the blessing of the twentieth century if we could so arrange our remaining decades that both of these experiments might fully be carried to maturity. Perhaps it is too much to hope for that further good fortune of discovering that there are many roads to a democratic commonwealth.

II.

MARXISM, DEMOCRACY AND SCIENCE

Herbert Aptheker

There is an apparent ambiguity in Marxism towards "democracy." On the one hand, there is the idea, expressed for example by Lenin, that democracy is but a form of class rule and that socialism's victory represents democracy's elimination. On the other hand, there is the idea, expressed also by Lenin, that the struggle for democracy is the struggle for socialism and the struggle for socialism is the struggle for democracy.

The ambiguity is more apparent than real. Insofar as democracy may be a form of *state* rule—and especially insofar as it is bourgeois-democracy*—socialism transforms it, and with its own development into communism ultimately eliminates it, as it eliminates the State itself.

In, however, the more common conception of "democracy" as meaning the effective exercise of power by the mass of the people in the interest of that mass, Marxism's unequivocal commitment is towards that achievement. Towards this conception of democracy all hitherto existing exploitative societies have been antagonistic, if not in letter, then in spirit and in action. The antagonism is fundamental: it rests on an insistence that the vast majority of mankind is incapable of self-government, that government's main function is to protect "the able, the well-born and the rich"—to quote the words of the Second President of the United States—and that only these should govern, since only these are capable of it. Those who have power, have it because only they are capable of exercising it; hence for them not to have it would be an unmitigated castastrophe—would be, indeed, the end of civilization and the advent of chaos and anarchy. That this view

* Towards bourgeois-democracy itself, Marxism has presented changing emphases, especially with historic changes, and particularly with the appearance and spread of fascism. The present writer has offered his ideas on this in "On the Concept 'Bourgeois-Democracy'" in *Political Affairs*, August, 1956, pp. 53ff.

is flattering has not made it any the less attractive to ruling classes which hitherto have clung to it fervently.

Flowing from this is the insistence upon the brutishness of most of Mankind. Voltaire himself—the very symbol of the classical bourgeois revolution—wrote in 1768: "As regards the people, they will always be stupid and barbarous. They are oxen which require a yoke, a goad, and some hay."

This is at the heart of eliteist thinking, and it is that kind of thinking which has characterized dominant political science. It has pervaded the recent vogue of the "New Conservatism" in capitalist society—for example, in the books of Walter Lippmann.* In its filthiest and most depraved form it is racism.

The materialist root of this thinking is commitment to the private ownership of the means of production for purposes of individual aggrandizement; with such a system of production and distribution no threat is greater than actual democracy. Hence, the great names associated with the development of bourgeois-democracy—Jefferson, Madison, James Mill and John Stuart Mill,—all feared the logic of its development. Madison suggested that by 1930 the contradiction between the private ownership of the means of production and the possession of political power by the non-propertied would reach a critical stage; he confessed he saw no solution. James Mill, while grudgingly favoring an extension of the suffrage, warned that "the business of government is properly the business of the rich"; John Stuart Mill, confessing to the logic of socialism in terms of the postulates of democracy, tended to reject it as impossible since it was contrary to human nature!

This conception of the utter inadequacy of the generality of Man is at the foundation of so seminal a critique of Marxism—and of democracy—as Robert Michels' *Political Parties,* first published in 1915, recently reprinted here and exerting great influence in the United States. Michels' theme is that democracy is inconceivable without oligarchy—and that therefore in fact democracy is not realizable. Not sufficiently noticed in this work, is a key proposition in it that, significantly, is held to require no more than assertion: "The incompetence of the masses is almost universal throughout the domain of political life, and this constitutes the most solid foundation of the power of the leaders."

* See the chapter, "Walter Lippmann and Democracy," in my *History & Reality,* (N. Y., 1955), pp. 49-72.

Emphasis upon the irrational, so notable in bourgeois thinking during the past three generations, also has served to attack democratic theory. Two facets of this attack now dominate such thinking. H. Stuart Hughes, in his work sub-titled, "The Re-Orientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930," declares that, in his opinion, the eliteist kernel of Pareto's thought "has stood firm." "Again and again," Professor Hughes continues, "contemporary political scientists and sociologists have returned to his major principle that political movements could never be more than the work of active minorities, and that the mass of mankind would remain passive instruments in the power struggle, however 'popular' the form of government under which they lived."*

Increasingly, as the assault upon democratic theory has conquered dominant Western circles, this fact has been camouflaged in words while admitted in substance. Professor Rush Welter, for example, in surveying *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (N.Y., 1962) observes that, "modern theories of democracy seem to deprecate not only the rationality and the educability of the electorate but also the value of intelligence as a technique for reaching political decisions on public issues."

He concludes:

> Having grown skeptical of individual reason in the political process, most contemporary political theorists take little or no interest in the possibility of rationalizing the political pressures generated by a group-based electorate (p. 331).

Denying rationality and educability naturally leads to denigrating intelligence; such postulates leave precious little of value to the concept of democracy. This thinking leads Professor Lane Davis to distinguish between what he calls "contemporary democracy" and "classical democracy." Classical democracy, Davis points out, assumed the possibility of reasonable change and insisted upon its propriety; it would seek changes—including changes of a radical nature—not only in politics but also in social, cultural and economic areas. On the other hand:

> The institutional ideal of contemporary democracy necessarily lacks the radical bite of classical theory. It is bound in

* H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (N. Y., 1958), p. 254

> time and space by its realistic description of political reality. In a world inundated by change and rebellion against the past, this is scarcely an advantage. Contemporary democracy is less a guide to future action than a codification of past accomplishments. By translating the descriptive principles of present democratic reality into prescriptive terms, it vindicates the main features of the status quo and provides a model for tidying up the loose ends. Democracy becomes a system to be preserved not an end to be sought. Those who wish a guide to the future must look elsewhere.*

Marxism denies all anti-democratic theories. There is not mass incompetence; there is mass deprivation, oppression and exploitation. The deprivation brings with it degrees of incompetency in necessary skills, but the lack is never so decisive as upper-class ideologists think. And this is not a vicious circle, with neither end nor beginning, for the exploitation comes first and reared upon this comes whatever incompetence there may be. Eliminating the exploitation *makes possible* the removal of the last remnants of such incompetence. Where, in the past, release has occurred to whatever degree, of the vast potential and creative energy of the multi-million masses, the advances have been colossal.

The late Dr. Du Bois, in his masterpiece, *Black Reconstruction*, several times noticed this foundation rock of anti-democratic consensus, this absence of belief in man, but he observed "the basis of fact in this disbelief is incredibly narrow." "We know perfectly well," he continued, "that most human beings have never had a decent human chance to be full men."

History permits this to be put very positively, and Arnold Kettle, the distinguished British Marxist, has done so: "In class-divided society," he wrote, "the great majority of people are actually trained and conditioned to under-reach themselves."** In *Heartbreak House,* Bernard Shaw has Captain Shotover express this sharply. Shotover, speaking of Boss Mangrum and the money-makers, says: "We kill the better half of ourselves every day to propitiate them. The knowledge that these people are there to render all our aspirations barren prevents us having the aspira-

* Lane Davis, "The Cost of Realism: Contemporary Restatements of Democracy," *The Western Political Quarterly,* March, 1964, XVII, p. 46.

** A. Kettle, "Communism and the Intellectuals," in B. Simon, ed., *The Challenge of Marxism* (London, 1963, Lawrence & Wishart), p. 200.

tions." All this, does not yet begin to encompass a central reality of the history of Mankind: throughout that history the majority of human beings have been both hungry and illiterate.

* * *

Marxism's basic commitment is to science; Marxism's fundamental purpose is the ennoblement of Man.

It is sometimes forgotten that the victory of science in the area of nature was achieved only in the past two or three centuries. As Professor A. R. Hall, of Cambridge University, has written,** "Magic and esoteric mystery—the elements of the irrational—were not firmly disassociated from serious science before the seventeenth century . . ." He added: "Rational science, then, by whose methods alone the phenomena of nature may be rightly understood, and by whose application alone they may be controlled, is the creation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."

The insistence here, that *only* through science may natural phenomena be comprehended, and *only* with the same principles may they be controlled, forms a postulate of Marxism. Marxism, however, insists that that which is true for Nature is true also for Man. That is, Marxism holds that science not only can explicate Nature and produce effective controls of Nature, but that science may also explicate Society and produce effective controls for Society, thus enhancing Man's power not only over his natural environment but also over his social environment. As the one infinitely improved Mankind's condition and potential, so the other will improve both; the two together—i.e., mastery over nature and over Society—will bring Man out of the Kingdom of Necessity into the Kingdom of Freedom.

The triumph of the principles of science in the area of Nature was a most difficult process. Its difficulty lay not only in the direct intellectual challenges involved; it lay, too, in the fact that there were enormous vested interests and powerful institutions and deep superstitions which found themselves challenged by those principles and therefore offered stubborn resistance to their victory. All these considerations—the profound intellectual diffi-

** A. R. Hall, *The Scientific Revolution, 1500-1800* (London, 1954, Longmans, Green), p. xii.

culties, and the extraneous hazards and obstacles—are present where the victory of science in the area of Society is concerned. They are, in fact, intensified; the intellectual difficulties, because the problems are more elusive, more subtle, more permeated by subjectivity; the extraneous hazards and obstacles, because the challenge of science in Society is more frontal, more devastating, more total to vested interests, powerful institutions and deep superstitions, than in the case of science's challenge in Nature.

Only when technique had reached the point where the age-old burdens of Society—impoverishment, illiteracy, human inequality, war—could be totally and successfully overcome, and only when the class appeared whose interests were opposed to the maintenance of injustice and oppression so fundamentally that its victory would make possible not only its own liberation but man's liberation—only when these two related phenomena appeared, was it possible to achieve a Science of Society. The working class, having no real interest in injustice, has no real interest in deception; hence, only now in our era, when the demise of capitalism and its replacement by socialism are characteristic, are we witnessing the triumph of Science in Society.

The victory of science in Nature took many centuries and it was accompanied by awful tragedies, errors and crimes, and not all of these came only from the avowed enemies of Science's victory. Nor with its victory has its content been fixed; on the contrary, as the detection of error is a precondition for science's advance, so the incompleteness of its grasp of reality is both a part of its nature and a guarantee of its continual development.

There is, perhaps, some reason to hope—with the accelerated pace of historical development—that the triumph of science in Society may take fewer centuries. There is no reason to believe, however, that the victory here—where, as we have seen, the contest is more difficult—can be achieved without tragedy, error, and crime. On the contrary, alas, the relatively brief history of this contest already affords abundant evidence of all three. But the contest is inexorable and—given only the survival of Man (no light assumption these days!)—Marxism, being wedded to the reality of the Concept of Progress, holds confidently to the belief in the victory of Science, which is to say of Truth, which, in turn, is to say, of Man.

Here, too, Science has the same fluid, process-filled character as when it treats of Nature; here as everywhere and always the enemy

of science is dogma. Marxism is a system of thought, not of memory. To be able to remember is essential, but only as an element in the process of thinking. It may not be out of place—though there is a touch of irony in it—to bring authority to bear on this question of dogma versus science. Engels in *Anti-Duehring*, noting "how young the whole of human history is," went on to observe, therefore, "how ridiculous it would be to attempt to ascribe any absolute validity to our present view." Lenin, in *Our Program* (1899) wrote: "To defend a theory of this kind [that is, Marxism] of the truth of which one is completely convinced, against unfounded attacks and against attempts to debase it, does not mean being an enemy of criticism in general." "We by no means," continued Lenin, "regard the theory of Marxism as perfect and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that this theory has only laid the foundation stones of that science on which the socialists must continue to build in every direction, unless they wish to be left behind by life."

Lenin succeeded in adding a few "foundation stones" of his own to Marxism. This, however, did not create Marxisms; rather, it underscored the scientific nature of Marxism—which means that the one thing it cannot be is "inviolable."

Science now has reached the point where poverty, hunger, illiteracy—where physical, material and cultural inadequacies—are utterly unnecessary and persist only because of unjust and irrational social systems and arrangements. Freedom from want, freedom from anxiety, freedom from ignorance are now possible for all.

It is this development which, in the words of Professor Herbert Marcuse,* "confronts science with the unpleasant task of becoming *political*—of recognizing scientific enterprise as political enterprise . . . a new stage in the conquest of oppressive, unmastered forces in society as well as in nature. It is an act of *liberation*."

In this New Era, science as such is not only fully political, it also is fundamentally ethical. I think Professor Marshall Walker is correct when he writes:** "The procedures of science and ethics not only run parallel, but are basically the same procedure."

I would add that there is what the late H. G. Wells called, "certain resemblances in spirit between scientific research and modern

* H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964, Beacon), p. 233.

** M. Walker, *The Nature of Scientific Thought* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 165.

socialism." He went on to quote what he well termed "a compact statement" of those resemblances: *

> Amid all the sneers at the impracticality and visionary character of communist schemes, let it not be forgotten that science is a communism, neither theoretical nor on paper, but actual and in practice. The results of those who labour in the fields of knowledge for its own sake are published freely and pooled in the general stock for the benefit of all. Common ownership of all its acquisitions is the breath of its life. Secrecy or individualism of any kind would destroy its fertility.

Annihilation being now possible, man must learn to resolve his problems through discussion; discussion is science's form. Hence Marxism in its ultimate commitment to science adheres to both its form and its content. This is another way of saying not only what Lenin affirmed, namely that the struggle for socialism was the struggle for democracy, but also in our generation that the struggle for socialism is the struggle for peace.

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It is amusing to note that while our decaying political apparatus finds it exceedingly difficult to pass laws protecting elementary human rights, it is able instantaneously to pass laws—as New York City did when threatened by "stall-ins"—making it a crime to run out of gas!

The Freedom Train, however, is not fueled with gas—though it might help were the United States Senate ever to run out of that source of energy! Freedom's fuel is human need; the meeting of that need is irresistible and the drive towards it makes up history.

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I close with the words of Bertolt Brecht:

* H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (N. Y., 1924, Macmillan), II, p. 410. Wells is quoting from Frederick Soddy, *Science and Life* (London 1920, Murray), pp. 2-3.

Therefore,
We now ask you, the actors
Of our time—a time of changes and boundless mastery
Of all nature, even man's own—at last
To change yourselves and show us mankind's world
As it really is: made by men and open to their improvements.

III.

SOCIALISM'S MEANING FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY TODAY

Howard L. Parsons

I.

We begin where we are, with our immediate, concrete problems. Our immediate problem is not whether to adopt this ideology or that. There is evidence that what we thought was the No. 1 problem of the country, that of maintaining the Cold War, is no longer what it was. As Senator Fulbright has again reminded us, "There is little in history to justify the expectation that we can either win the cold war or end it immediately and completely." Certainly all the causes of the Cold War are not now what they once were; and General Charles De Gaulle has seen to it that the Western way of waging it, if it is to be waged, must radically change.

In order to discover what our problems as Americans are, then, let us turn, not to the abstractions of political ideologies nor to Russia or China or Cuba or Panama—but to America herself. To find what our problems are, let us look at ourselves.

In his State of the Union Message on January 8, 1964, President Johnson said: "And this administration today, here and now, declares war on poverty in America, and I urge this Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort." The President specified that those who need help are "one-fifth of all American families with incomes too small to even meet their daily needs." As the *Monthly Review* has pointed out, the truth is that two-fifths of American families live in poverty. For the 1960 Census shows that each of those families had less than $4,812 in yearly income, whereas according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics at the University of California, a family of four in a city in 1959-1960 needed a minimum of $5,500 to maintain a "modest but decent" level of living. This analysis is borne out by the work of the

Conference on Economic Progress, *Poverty and Deprivation in the United States. The Plight of Two-fifths of a Nation* (Washington, D.C., 1962).

Our government (with our money) still spends (upwards of fifty-five percent) most of our national budget on war—fifty billion dollars a year. "Something like twenty-five percent of the GNP [depends] directly or indirectly on military outlays." (Professor Paul A. Baran) Over one-half of our scientists and engineers are involved in the military. The "furtive war" in Vietnam is now costing us 450 million dollars a year.

In 1960 seven million of our children ages 5 to 19 were not attending school at all. Millions now receive inferior educations because of overcrowded classrooms, double sessions, incompetent teachers, lack of textbooks, and the like. We need 700 thousand classrooms. Two-fifths of the students entering high school drop out before finishing. Less than half of those capable of acquiring a college degree enter college, and of those who enter two-fifths do not graduate. During the decade of the 1960's a doubling of the students enrolled in college is expected but little provision has been made for facilities and services to educate such youth and prepare them for useful vocations.

Every year some two million crimes are committed, and more than one million children are picked up as delinquents. One out of twelve American children will need to go to a mental hospital at some point in his life. Only one-fifth of our people can afford all the medical care they need. Every year more than twenty percent of our deaths could be prevented with adequate medical care. The slums of New York City have been described as among the worst in the world. We need nine million housing units and one million hospital beds. Negro life expectancy is seven years less than that of whites. ("Gradualism" means gradual murder.) Our transportation systems are chaotic, our recreational areas neglected, our pollution of air and water deplorable and dangerous, and our care and conservation of nature self-defeating.

We might continue to cite statistics to demonstrate the depth of our deterioration. Some may say that as a people we are better off than most. That is partially true. We are one of the richest nations in the world in natural resources, machinery and other capital goods, technological know-how, and consumer goods. Our manufacturing production amounts to almost half of that of the

entire world. But that is all the more reason why we should be better off than we are. Many nations surpass us in rate of growth (e.g., the Common Market countries), farm productivity (per land unit), health, domestic peace and order, literacy, reading curiosity, and per capita production of books (except textbooks). Aside from such comparisons, two prime economic facts stand out: (1) we are not producing nearly what we might, and (2) our system for distributing what we do produce is exploitive, injurious, and unjust on a scandalous scale.

The late President Kennedy lamented the fact that our economic growth rate was only five percent during his entire tenure in office, that steel mills were producing at less than half their capacity, and that unemployment still persisted. Taking account of involuntary part-time unemployment and what Professor Charles C. Killingsworth has called the "invisible army of unemployed," Huberman and Sweezy in October, 1963, estimated the unemployed at 8.6 percent of seventy-three million workers—six million, or approximately the number of workers in the state of Illinois. John R. Snyder, a leading manufacturer of automation equipment, told a Senate committee in the same month that automation now eliminates more than two million workers a year from jobs. Our farmers fare no better. "More than half of the nation's poverty today is rural poverty," Secretary of Agriculture Freeman said and, "unemployment in the country and its small towns . . . is the equivalent of around four million." In addition, a swelling tide of millions of young people is moving from the high schools and colleges every year into the labor market. How long can the dikes of our economic system hold those waters of the unemployed, who must grow more restive and turbulent as the crisis deepens?

Our production cannot progress as it might because the distribution of economic power in a private-profit system inhibits the bold and massive investment necessary. (The private "risks" of the capitalist are, from the public point of view, timid, mincing, ungenerous pittances, economically insufficient and ethically antiquated.) In turn, our system of distribution worsens because it grows out of a system of production which gives more and more power to a few and less and less power to the many. In spite of the increasing productivity of the average American worker, the increased rate of corporate profits since 1929 has outstripped that of wages and salaries. In the first part of 1963 corporate profits

stood at an all-time high, as increasing numbers of men became unemployed and "poverty" became serious enough for the politicians to begin talking about it.

But behind these two economic facts stands a more grave and fundamental one—the moral corruption of our society. Statistics about the neglect of education; selfish indifference to the poor, sick, handicapped, aged, and young; our shameful exploitation of the Negro people; violence in the forms of delinquency, crime, and war; the "morals of extermination" (Lewis Mumford); the barbarism of the U.S.-financed warfare in Vietnam; neuroses and psychoses; greed, deception, cheating, and largescale appropriation of funds and securing of favors in labor, management, government, and the armed forces; wanton waste of natural resources, material goods, and human energies; private exploitation of public property; extravagance in luxurious food, drink, and entertainment—all these can only begin to suggest the measure of societal degeneracy.

To grasp this, we must examine the attitudes and values that have overtaken us. On reading the news of the assassination of President Kennedy, a European said to me: "Have Americans gone crazy?" A more accurate term would be "sick." We as a people suffer from the complex disease of psychic disintegration: anxiety, hatred, unhappiness, aimlessness, insecurity, and violent impulses. Chief Justice Earl Warren showed some awareness of this when, in his eulogy of President Kennedy, he said that such acts of assassination are "commonly stimulated by forces of hatred and violence such as today are eating their way into the bloodstream of American life." Such violent illness came to a focus in the shots that were fired at the President and his newly developing policies of peaceful coexistence and racial equality and freedom. They came to a focus again when Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church was dynamited on a Sunday morning, killing four Negro girls and injuring thirty-two; when Congressional committees pilloried persons campaigning for peace, civil rights, and a new social order; and when a Teller declared that the deaths of millions of Americans in a thermonuclear war are in effect a small price to pay for victory over communism.

This is sickness indeed—but a dangerously epidemic sickness which inflicts indiscriminate destruction upon all high human values and upon human life itself. Some years ago Professor T. W.

Adorno and other psychologists, studying the structure of a sampling of more than 2000 Americans, concluded that thirty percent of us are actually or potentially fascist-minded, "authoritarian personalities"—conforming, rigid and limited in imagination, herd-minded, strict in morals, dogmatic, black-and-white in judgments, prejudiced, emotionally unstable, religiously orthodox, and status-conscious. The authoritarian personality demands to rule or to be ruled by someone else or by a group; he is anti-democratic.

During the period of the Cold War the authoritarian personality has flourished. The chauvinistic propaganda—which pictured the Russians and their "enslaved satellites" as devils who could do nothing that was right, and pictured the Americans and their "free allies" (including the fascisms of Franco and Salazar) as angels who could do nothing that was wrong—was made to order for such personalities. Here at last seemed to be the final armageddon of the forces of good and evil, arrayed in mortal battle with each other. The authoritarian's neurotic need for any enemy, conceived as absolutely alien to his in-group's values—his need for a scapegoat on whom he might vent all his pent-up frustration and hatred—was perfectly supplied by the specter of "world communism." Thus the Cold War, which had its economic origins in capitalism's fear of depression at home and competition abroad, found its ideological complement in a national authoritarian mentality. Its spokesman in the U.S. Senate was McCarthy, whose arrogant inquisitions and national success spawned thousands of little McCarthys throughout the states and communities—ideological vigilantes who hunted down, ferreted out, and spiritually lynched many a liberal, freethinker, and dissenter. Capitalism is bound to breed authoritarian personalities in large numbers, for it is built on the master-servant principle, and on the war of man against man and group against group. But never before in our national history has war for so long been elevated into an instrument of national policy. Hence, never before has the warring personality—at once aggressive and submissive, individualistic and conformist—been allowed such a wide berth at home and abroad. Never before has he been so free, ridden so high, or wrought such ruin. He is still very much with us, in large number, as the South can now testify. And he is living proof that capitalism, which breeds him and needs him, produces war at home and abroad—

and that both can be lethal for democracy. The capitalistic, warring man is the very antithesis of the democratic, cooperative man. They cannot long live together.

To this pathology of the American character we must add a second and third type. The second type is the oysterian personality. He is the chronic, detached, indifferent drifter, who wants little or nothing to do with the course of things and the actions of people around him, so long as he can secure for himself his creature comforts day by day. Such a person remains deliberately ignorant of his community, his nation, humanity, time and history. He is an oyster, and his world is his oyster because his world is—just himself. He does not need an official policy of the non-recognition of China because he recognizes no nation. Such a man may be simultaneously an "organization man" who passively fits into the complex of activities of a large business or industry, doing what is demanded for the good of the company. How common is this type? In 1951 the Purdue Opinion Panel reported that forty-nine percent of our high school youth believe that people are incapable of deciding what is good or bad for them.

A third type is the omnivorarian personality. He tends to seize, appropriate, use, dominate, and devour everything in sight. Since the most effective way in which to do this is through the ownership or control of property and money, which can command almost anything, he may become an expert at acquiring and multiplying money. He becomes a manipulator of money which can "make" still more money, i.e., a manipulator of capital. In the process of "making" money, such a person corrupts and dehumanizes all whom he touches, since for him money has become the end of life and human beings the means to achieving that. The practice of "making" money and using human beings inverts the original and normative process, which has man as laborer making all wealth and using money as a medium of exchange. When we say that man "makes" money, we really mean that money makes man, for it makes him to obey cravenly every command that money makes of him. Our enslavement to our system of exchange based on private property and exploitation is shown by the fact that in order to live one must "make" money. One does not live productively and happily *as* one works. One first works; the money, which one "makes," intervenes; then, by means of this all-powerful "medium," one lives. The more money one has, the better one

lives. Further, to "make" money one must sell his services or products—in short, *himself*—to whomever will buy. One must manipulate oneself *and* the buyer. To live, in other words, one must die as a man. That is why every sensitive moral conscience throughout history has denounced money. Walt Whitman called money-making America's "all-devouring serpent."

Underlying all these pathological types of personality is the profound feeling of alienation. Alienation is the loss of one's identity as an individual and a human being. It is estrangement from others, from one's own work, from one's society, from nature, and from a sense of significance and purpose in one's life, society, and history.

Nominally, the economy of America is capitalism. But the widespread development of monopolies and oligopolies has so restricted the "free market" of classical capitalism that the term today is a misnomer, or should be elaborately qualified. A. A. Berle, Jr., in his *Economic Power and the Free Society*, has pointed out that 500 corporations control two-thirds of the non-farm economy—"a concentration of power over economics which makes the medieval feudal system look like a Sunday School party." This concentration of economic power appears in income, liquid assets, stocks, banking, utilities, and other spheres. In his work, *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills showed how this economic and business control of the few is now interlocked with the control exercised by political and military groups. The control of this economic oligarchy extends to the mass media—newspapers, magazines, radio, and television—most of which are owned by relatively small groups, and whose policies are dictated by them.

Nominally, the political form of America is democracy. This means government of, by, and for the people. In actual fact only a minute proportion of people participate in the decisions and administration of local, state, and national governments. In national elections millions of eligible voters—sometimes as many as half—do not vote. Eight millions are now deprived of voting in such elections by state residency laws. Millions still face poll taxes in order to vote in state elections, and millions of Negroes are still disenfranchised. The two major political parties enlist the energies of only a very small minority of persons, among whom major decisions are made by a still smaller minority of leaders. The parties are built on the principle of local patronage, and

consequently their policies as a whole are often incoherent or meaningless. For centuries Europeans came to America to escape politics, and today most of their descendants have not gone back to it. This traditional suspicion of politics is reinforced by the evident facts that money—one's own or that of others—is necessary for success in politics, and that the monied interests tend to control political affairs. A Congress, or a legislature, or a city assembly, that contains very few if any women, Negroes, industrial laborers, small farmers, or those "poor" whom we mentioned, is not likely to "represent" them. But such groups together make up the great majority of the adult population.

So we may summarize the causes of the American character today. (Such "causes" are ingredients in a complex nexus of prior and accompanying conditions, producing effects which in turn enter into the nexus. Furthermore, a more complete description of this nexus would take us back into the historical origins of America.) Americans are born into a society that is economically and physically insecure. This insecurity is the consequence of the fact that in spite of the unparalleled wealth of the economy our people, individually and collectively, do not exercise a satisfying, social control over their fortunes. Thus, as individuals and the society amass wealth or economic power in order to relieve this insecurity, their sense of insecurity increases. For in spending their energies in obtaining the external evidences of economic security they neglect the nurture of the sources of true security. These sources lie in the mutual trust of men, in their free and open communication with one another, and in their common action to understand and control the conditions of their material, social, and individual lives. Born into a society of persons who behave in these ways, and who tend to reinforce such behavior in the young and extinguish it in those who do not conform, most people—to get the apparent security that comes with social acceptance and recognition, membership in groups, etc.—adapt themselves to such a competitive and insecure system. Thus, individuals are created who come to want what the system demands. Needing security, they seek it in adopting the values and behavior of those on whose material help and social approval they depend. But in the very process of seeking this security, they necessarily deprive themselves of a deeper human security. And all that they do denies this human need and drives them more distantly from their true human goal.

Such a goal can be attained only as people cooperate instead of compete; seek the general welfare instead of their own individual advantage over others; treat human beings and human development as ends and material value as means—and not the other way around; control their economic life and system instead of being controlled by it; secure freedom through that control instead of submitting as slaves of that system; treat that system as a means to their fulfillment rather than as a force of fate to be followed or endured; and assume as a people initiative and responsibility for their lives rather than suffering the decisions of the few to determine their value and destiny.

Thus we are driven by two antagonistic demands: on the one side we are called on by our society to complete and set ourselves over *against others* or *apart from others*, while on the other we are compelled by our most *human* of natures to live and work productively *with and for others*. Following the first demand, we may gain the whole world but lose our souls; following the second, we may gain our souls but lose our present world. In the first case, we must face the alienation of ourselves from ourselves; in the second case, we must face the alienation of ourselves from our social world. We seem forced to become either Babbitts or Thoreaus. How is it possible to feel at home both with ourselves and our social world, to overcome both alienation from ourselves and alienation from our society? Only by changing ourselves *as* we change our social world, and by changing our social world *as* we change ourselves. Our problem is not whether to accept or reject our present social world with its values of competition, material goods, status, etc. Our problem is not whether to accept or reject society as now constituted but how to reconstruct it so that its values become *our values*, so that our social relations become our *home*, so that our work becomes our *life*, so that the things we do and make are *ours*—because they originate with us, are owned by us as our creations, are managed by us, and are distributed by us in service of our human needs and enjoyments.

II

We have now come to the question of a solution, a plan of action to deal with our problem.

Losing one's present social world, consciously accepting one's

alienation from it, is the first step toward the creation of a new social world. So far as this is alienation from what is pathogenic and destructive of human nature, it is necessary. We must fight off all influences that weaken and deflect our energies from our true moral health and growth. At the same time we must bend every effort toward the reconstruction of a new social world which will nurture and augment our dispositions to live, to develop our capacities for fellow-feeling and communication, to work co-operatively, and to create ourselves, others, and our world within the pattern of fulfillment for all. How can we construct such a social world, our true human home?

Democracy as a way of life—as well as a political form—is indispensable, both as means and end, in this construction of a new social world.

We must first be clear about what "democracy" does *not* mean here. It does not mean the political form of what is currently practiced in the United States today. In such "democracy" a relatively few men determine policies and make decisions at the local, state, and national levels. The forms of democracy at the national level date from a time when men like Madison viewed the problem of government as one of how to balance "factions," how to "enable the government to control the governed," and how to oblige the government to "control itself." Hence the republican principle and the principle of checks and balances were proposed and established. What this has meant in actual practice is the rule of the majority by the small ruling cliques who have for the most part dominated the economic life of the nation. Occasional exceptions have occurred, as when Congressmen, because of the tremendous pressure of the poor and unemployed, adopted the New Deal proposals. Even then, however, these proposals enabled the prevailing system to continue along its basic lines.

Today most of this system is remote and antediluvian. It but feebly and inefficiently serves our far-flung 190 millions, engaged in highly specialized occupations in one of the most advanced of industrial, technological nations. Here it is evident that we need a revolution in our concepts of democracy and in our democratic institutions.

Normatively, "democracy" means the collective, mutual self-determination of the people—the cooperative application of intelligence to the solving of their common problems, the satisfying

of their common needs, and the fulfilling of their common interests. Democracy in this broad concrete sense is "a way of life," and can be practiced in family, voluntary association, industry, and wherever its method is feasible. Where collective decision and action cannot for one reason or another be achieved, it may be necessary to employ "representatives" or "leaders" who reflect the interest and will of the group concerned. Or these two methods, direct and indirect democracy, may be employed together. But in all cases the latter must rest upon the former as its final source and justification: government rests on the consent and will of the governed where this consent and will are not some imaginary generality but are perspectives directly communicated to the governors. A good leader or governor in this sense (1) associates and consults with the people led in order to find out what are their problems, needs, resources, etc.; (2) helps them to discover, express, clarify, and evaluate their needs, interests, and ideas; (3) helps them to achieve their best goals by assisting them in the processes of their problem-solving in both general ways and in the specialized ways which his skills, experiences, and training make possible; and (4) provides conditions in his group by which new leaders are raised up. Only in these ways can a leader or governor be effective in leading, i.e., in eliciting the cooperative efforts and morale of his group; and only in these ways can a leader's work be morally justified. The justification of governors, formal governmental procedures, and their "laws" is that they are able to fulfill the needs of people in ways that the people without such government cannot do directly.

As Jefferson and many others have recognized, education is essential to democracy as a functioning social form. The people cannot retain supreme power—using it for their own free, creative development and resisting those who would usurp it—and cannot rule themselves in their own interests unless they have the knowledge and skills needed for solving their problems that must be solved if they are to live and to live well. Medieval law held that the people have a right to be ruled in their own interest and to receive the benefits of the ruler. And Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham, and Marsiglio of Padua stated that the power of the king originates in the people, who retain the right to restrict or abolish that royal power if abused. But these rights were held only verbally and passively, were asserted as the Church's means of keeping

secular power in check, and could have little concrete meaning so long as the common people lacked the knowledge and power to act as their own judges and rulers.

The democratic process thus includes on the part of the people (1) an emerging awareness and increasing knowledge of a common need that requires to be fulfilled and of the conditions which will obstruct or support the fulfillment of that need (value); (2) the expression, reception, and exchange of meanings pertaining to that need and those conditions; (3) the integration and transformation of these meanings to produce one or more plans of action for securing the supportive conditions and negating the obstructive conditions; (4) the developing of consensus and communal decision concerning which plan of action to use; (5) the elaboration of the chosen plan of action with respect to its specific, practical consequences for action by the group and by individuals in fulfilling the details of the plan; (6) individual and cooperative initiative, action, and responsibility in carrying out the plan of action; (7) collective evaluation of the action taken, the plan used, and the value attained.

As government of, by, and for the people, democracy should be distinguished, on the one side, from the rule of one or a few over the many, (monarchy, aristocracy) and, on the other side, from the isolated rule of each individual (anarchism). As the self-determination of people in groups, democracy should be distinguished from the individualistic form and content of bourgeois democracy, which aimed at liberating and making independent the individual entrepreneur from determination by feudal, monarchical, and ecclesiastical powers, and ended by excluding the great mass of men from self-government. As a collective method for removing obstacles to human values necessary to all human life and fulfillment, democracy should distinguished from those so-called "democracies" which are systems for preserving the *status quo* of some class or nation and for denying these values to the many. As a collective method for fulfilling *common* human needs by a *collective* method, democracy should be distinguished from the *individualistic* method and goal of bourgeois democracy. This latter, in the setting of capitalism, divides individuals, leaves them to their own devices, encourages the pursuit of individual goals at the expense of others, and produces a market that aims

at the satisfaction and manipulation of individual wants rather than the fulfillment of common needs.

The justification for this popular, direct, concrete form of democracy is psychological and hence moral. In psychology it is a well established empirical principle amounting to a law that if a person participates in those decisions affecting his generic interests as a human being, he will accept and implement the decisions more effectively, assume more initiative and responsibility for his actions and choices, and experience more satisfaction and significance from his activity and its results, than if he does not so participate. Where this participation involves more than one person in mutual problem-solving—and where the problem is a common one for all involved—the same principle holds, augmented by the principle that generally two heads are better than one. Properly organized, the many can more effectively and satisfyingly fulfill their common needs than can a few, and collectively they can do so more effectively than they can separately. Group deliberation and action—as contrasted with separated behavior of individuals—brings together in new combinations the diverse experiences and skills of persons, elicits and organizes different talents, stimulates originality and leadership, creates *esprit de corps* and lifts morale, and builds confidence and respect for self and others. Two heads are better than one not only for the logical reason that if one man has value then to add another to him is to increase value, more or less doubling it. More important, man is fundamentally social. He *needs* the presence, stimulation, correction, and reinforcement of others. He functions more effectively when he has that creative relation with others. In addition, he *needs*—as we have seen in the first principle above—to exert his creative powers in the determination of his relations to the external world as he fulfills his needs for food, bodily samety, esthetic enjoyment, etc. Democracy as described is a form of activity which allows full and free outlet for these two needs, the social and the creative.

Man thus needs to develop creative relations with others as he relates himself to his world in an effort to fulfill his other needs. (It has been said that hunger is a more "basic" need—and food a more basic value—than man's social creativity; it is basic in the sense of being necessary to life, but a full stomach creates nothing

while from men's collective creativity food and all other values which they need may be created.) The moral justification of democracy is that it is a primary way in which men can fulfill themselves.

We have already indicated the great extent to which Americans lack this kind of democracy. The conditions of our society cripple us. By and large most of us do not take hold of the conditions and problems facing us as individuals and groups and struggle to solve them. The power, authority, and decisions that determine how we live and what our values are rest in the hands of the few; and many of us are willing slaves to their domination, hesitant to criticize them or the social order or to take action to change things. At the same time we must in the marrow of our being resent this deprivation of our deepest need, which is free social creation and mutual self-determination with others. And the malaise and unproductiveness of American society today—not only in industry and business but also in our arts and our human relations—is in large measure due to this disaffiliation of the broad masses of the people from the sources of power and decision.

III

We now come to the question of what meaning and message socialism has for American democracy today. It may be thought that democracy as we have described it— *i.e.*, as a method of social organization—will in principle solve the problems with which we are faced. That is so. But if democracy is put to work—if we as people put democracy to work by working democratically—we must, to solve these problems, move in the direction of socialism. The conclusions of socialism are implicit in the premises of democracy.

Socialists do not claim that under socialism all problems, tensions, and conflicts within and between persons and between persons and the world will disappear. They do believe, however, that some of the fundamental problems of men can be solved—hunger, the exploitation of man, war, ignorance—if these problems are attacked at their root, namely, in the system of the private and class ownership of the means of production and exchange.

What then is the message of socialism for us in America today?

As we have already said, socialism is here understood as a theory of how society ought to be organized: all people of society ought

to own and control the decisive means of production (not necessarily *all* such means) ; material reward ought to be based on work performed (not always easy to determine; as corollary to this, no man ought to be permitted to profit off the labor of another); and the cooperation of the people of the society ought to be used in drawing up economic plans for the economy as a whole and in carrying out the plans in specific economic units managed by the workers themselves.

Socialism addresses itself to certain key problems in capitalistic society and claims to be able to solve them. We may mention some of these key problems as they appear in the description already given of American society, and briefly show in each case what socialism proposes to do about them.

(1) *The generic needs of human beings are not being fulfilled.* These are the needs of bodily health, safety, and security—security against poverty, violence, injury, premature death, illness, unemployment, the infirmities of old age; education; vocational skill and significant work; rest and recreation; supportive and creative relations with others; and the free, creative determination of man's life. Under our present system, those relatively few who control the means of production are determined, in what they produce and how much of what they produce, by private considerations—what they are interested in producing, what they can produce by reason of experience and training, what will bring them the greatest return on their investment, etc. Their production is ordinarily not determined by what people need—although they may convince themselves by their own salesmanship that people actually do need cigarettes and new cars and shampoos and ballpoint pens and all manner of gadgets. Consequently they must persuade people to buy their products. This necessitates an elaborate apparatus for creating and manipulating wants. Thus the common, human needs of the many (the buyers) are ignored, while the private desires of the few (the sellers) compel them to create markets of demand that will absorb their supplies. What this amounts to is that to survive each producer, instead of creating what men need, must create men. Men are thus manipulated to conform to production; the public remains at the mercy of private interests; the private producer gets what he wants, and the public consumer learns to want what he gets. Instead of catering to the market of needs, the producer must make a market of wants,

which then caters to his products. The market revolves not around public needs but around private wants. To christen this creation of the want-market, and to make it seem natural, holy, and inviolable, economists have invented the fiction that wants, which are insatiable, form a basis of the human economy.

Socialists claim that socialism can fulfill the generic human needs of men in two general ways: (a) by taking the ownership and control of the means of production out of private hands and placing it in the hands of all people; (b) and by planning production democratically and in such a way that it progressively fulfills the needs of the people. In both ways, the assumption is that if the people collectively own the means and plan the activities of production, then in the long run they will do so for their own good. This is a form of the democratic assumption (already discussed) that if people assume participation, initiative, and responsibility in an enterprise, they will tend to succeed in it. A second assumption is involved, also democratic: it is that people in the long run know what they need. To this we must add the auxiliary assumption that men under socialism will have available to them the wisdom of the race, the counsel of anthropologists and psychologists and other students of human nature, and the guidance of educators who will help them to understand who they are and what they really need. Finally, there is the assumption that the most effective way in which to fulfill the needs of the people is by their own planning. This implies the assumption that intelligence is the best method for fulfilling needs. And it recalls the retort of Harold Ickes when someone derided the intellectuals in the New Deal government as "braintrusters." "What part of the human anatomy would you have running the government?" asked Ickes. Socialism holds that the more planning, the better, in regard to the fulfillment of human needs, and that whoever may be the originators of an over-all economic plan of production for society, it is the people who must be consulted as to its value and feasibility, as to subordinate plans that fit into this over-all plan, and as to their respective roles in these subordinate plans; and it is the people who must ultimately carry out the plan.

(2) *The abilities of human beings are not being used.*

Under our present planless system, unknown reservoirs of human capacity and talent are wasted. We have no organized way of training and educating our young people in the optimum

development of their powers. We have an inadequate system of employing and improving our middle-aged workers. Old people, whose funded experience and wisdom might otherwise be invaluable to a society, are shunted aside as dispensable. Those talented minds who have had the good fortune to be educated, or those other talented minds who are yet diamonds in the rough, do not often occupy positions in our society worthy of their talents. For by and large the society demands a surface brilliance, technical proficiency, unimaginative mentality that can work out details, an aggressive, practical, and utilitarian intellect, and an unscrupulous toughness in moral matters. It is generally known in the scientific world that numerous scientists have refused to work for our government because of the atmosphere of hard-nosed, hard-bitten, brass-minded men whose tight and compulsive attitudes are alien to the free, spontaneous, generous, inquisitive, and humane attitudes of the true scientist. Similarly, many a talented man and woman is repelled by the business world, although some suffer it out and others make their peace with it by prostituting their talents to it. In either case, there is great loss, both for the individual and for humanity. In addition, for those who have endowments and interests in the domains of the arts, social service and reform, religion as a redemptive force, social criticism and philosophy, and economics and politics as avenues of human amelioration—our society offers minimal opportunities and grudging rewards. Among those occupations that society pays with respect, and respects with pay, these take a low place. Consequently most of our talented people inclined in these directions live and work at the periphery of things, neither totally alienated from society since they must work to live, nor totally identified with it since as Calvin Coolidge said " the business of America is business."

Socialism holds that this waste of abilities has only one remedy, the planned cultivation of talents, the planned use of human productive work of all kinds, and the planned distribution of the fruits of such activity. Such planning must be done progressively by the creators themselves, *i.e.,* the people. Contrary to those well-paid traducers of socialism, this does not mean a pre-established pigeon-hole for every person. It means, rather, that educational opportunities are so produced and distributed—within the limits of society's needs and resources—that every child has a chance

to go as far as he can until adulthood in developing his abilities. It means further that he can be placed in a job in keeping with his abilities, that he continues to develop these abilities on the job and throughout life through unceasing education, and that he is rewarded according as his abilities produce results that are useful to other human beings. So far as humanly possible, society would provide for all useful and constructive human talents and temperaments a place in the sun, allowing them to flourish and to give joy to others even as they find their own joy in creative labor.

(3) *Most individuals and our society as a whole lack a significant and humanly satisfying purpose.*

Because our society is not organized to pursue as a whole a dominant purpose or set of purposes, but is divided into millions of little pieces which drift aimlessly on the currents of history—our basic needs go unmet and our abilities languish. In turn, because our needs are unmet and our abilities languish, our purposelessness as individuals and as society deepens. What is required is an over-all purpose that will enlist the energies, loyalties, and talents of our people—a purpose that will mobilize the morale and élan of our people and engage them in the creation and determination of their own world and destinies. Only such engagement can fulfill and satisfy them.

For this, not any purpose will suffice. Our nation had a purpose during World War II and our total production increased by more than two-thirds. But the end of the war brought its inevitable let-down in morale and its economic troubles. Our purpose must be continuing and constructive, building on past achievements and in turn providing a base for future development. It must provide a purpose throughout the lifetime and for the life of every individual, and make available to every newborn the opportunity of a lifetime purpose. Such a social purpose must continuously meet the deepest needs of all the people, and at the same time enable them to use their diverse abilities in a maximum way. Socialism, with its ideal of a democratically planned society, proposes that the development of such a purpose is possible.

It is a verbal misunderstanding to think that "socialism" will or can provide this purpose. "Socialism" means a set of abstract characteristics—public ownership of productive means, planning, etc.—which taken together form an abstract concept, idealized as

a value. "Socialism" can also mean any or all operating social systems in which people collectively are endeavoring to bring this ideal into reality. Under either meaning, only concrete, individual people can provide the purpose which is here spoken of. And this creation of purpose cannot be "imposed" by any bureaucrats or politicians or socialists, any more than the nationally shared purpose during World War II was imposed by a few or many. Purpose, individual and collective, develops when the people behave democratically in the solution of their problems, *i.e.*, when they collectively solve problems, and create values in the fulfillment of their needs. Thus socialism as an ideal necessarily includes the democratic process as both a means to a socialistic society and a necessary ingredient in the conduct of that society. Socialism, in short, means the government of the people in owning, managing, producing, and planning the materials and processes, the means and ends, the conditions and values, the causes and purposes, of their own lives.

(4) *Our economic system is inefficient.*

An economic system that does not fulfill basic human needs, utilize individual abilities, or generate purpose in its people cannot, by human standards, be efficient. If economies are made for man and not man for economies, then we must ask ourselves what are the alternatives to our present inefficient economy. Some have offered us (with no great zeal) the alternative of an improved and regulated capitalism. What does this mean? It means freer competition for businesses in the market. This in turn means the break-up of the oligopolies and monopolies which control the economy. But such break-up is impossible under existing conditions, as these same firms dominate government buying and government policy. And the trend is toward still greater consolidation of industrial units. Changes aimed at improving capitalism, such as those enacted during the New Deal, like the dissolution of holding companies, collective bargaining for labor, and social security, represent only superficial changes in the system. They do not touch its foundations and essential inefficiencies.

These inefficiencies, which have already been referred to, have to do with spreading poverty, unemployment, idle machinery and facilities, war spending, decline in purchasing power among the masses, sluggish investment, a low growth rate, the neglect

and misuse of natural resources, lack of training opportunities for workers, and individual determination of production and prices. We do not produce what we can or what we need; and what we do produce is unjustly distributed. The reason for this is that each producer and each distributor "looks out for No. 1"—a mode of production and a philosophy that in the long run brings not "freedom" and "profit" to the great mass of individuals but ruin. Our economy is one of chaos, caused by the freedom of a multitude of individuals and groups making and selling what they individually please without consideration of others or of the welfare of the whole society. Even from the point of view of a system which wished to preserve individual life and free enterprise, this procedure is inefficient and self-defeating. Monopoly and oligopoly become the rule. Efficient within themselves, they exacerbate the over-all inefficiency, because their great power is not coordinated with the other parts of the economy in order to serve a single purpose. When there is a crisis in steel, and a strike ensues or prices rise, the whole economy reverberates unstably.

The cure for this private inefficiency is public planning. Such planning, in the context of public control of basic productive forces, and democratically formulated and carried out, can issue in efficiency in two ways. First, it can put production before distribution, and human values before production, so that what men produce, distribute, and consume comes ultimately from what they need and desire as values, instead of the other way around. Second, it can *ipso facto* bring into action and organize all the unused natural resources, tools, machinery, services, and human abilities that are now idle or only partially used, and put them to work in a way that is productive and satisfying in itself and that has value for others.

Our present-day inefficiency is the consequence of forcing man to follow the demands of an artificially created market. Man as consumer is at the mercy of external and internal forces: the goods and services of the market, defined by a small group of private producers, and his own artificially induced wants, defined once more by those producers to conform to the objects in the market. Man as producer is similarly defined by his wage as determined over and above him by his employer, and by his own attitudes toward himself and his job, attitudes of passive con-

formity or of "antagonistic cooperation" (Riesman) which have been induced in him by the system. The result is a consumer who must be "persuaded" and a producer or worker who must be coerced.

Democratic planning in the interests of the whole frees man from this manipulation and control and puts him at the center instead of at the edge of economic processes. Under the present system of capitalism, prices rise and real wages fall and man seems to have no recourse but to accept stoically the fate dealt him by the powers that be. Taxes rise because the government announces that it must spend more money on new bombers. Under a system of planning of, by, and for the people, all of this would be transformed and superseded. As the people decide that more production relative to consumption is needed, they can through their central mechanism raise prices or decrease expenditures on goods and services, thus setting aside more wealth for investment. And as consumption is deemed important, prices can be lowered or public expenditures can be increased with regard to goods and services. In this way the market is put into the hands of all men and serves their needs and purposes through the application of collective intelligence.

(5) *Our society corrupts and dehumanizes man.*

Those few who own and control most of the wealth of our society, who possess the power of decision and management in economics and politics, and who rule because they exploit the labor of other men, are corrupted because they *use men,* themselves and others, as means to the accumulation of material wealth and material power.

Those many who as manual and mental laborers create the wealth of our society, who own and control only a pittance of what they create, who possess little power of decision and management over what they produce, and who are ruled by the exploitations of other men, are corrupted because they *are used as men* and are treated as means to other men's accumulation of wealth and power.

Both groups of men are *alienated* from their true humanity and fulfilment because their generic needs of cooperation and creativity are thwarted and unfulfilled. This alienation is characterized by feelings of impotence, forlornness, anxiety, abandonment,

despair, meaninglessness, and insignificance. Men experience the loss of their humanity, the annihilation of their freedom, and the enslavement of their productive powers.

For the wealthy, money talks and is no obstacle. Money points to everything and commands everything. But it does not buy affection, the sense of solidarity with others, or the feeling of significance in history. For the deprived, money is always an obstacle. Everything points to money and takes its value from money. Those who get and have the money lack the character to use it in fulfilling their deepest human needs. And those who feel those same needs most keenly lack the money by which to fulfill them.

The claim of socialism is that the dehumanization of man, the corruption of exploiter and exploited alike in their human essence, and the alienation of man the producer from the instruments and products of his production, from himself and his creative activity, from others, from his society, from history, and from his natural world—all have causes and hence all can be corrected by removing those causes. The decisive cause is economic. When men are forced to make their living by either dominating other men or being dominated by them, in the interest of money or power over men and things, all foundations of human morality begin to disintegrate. Socialism takes seriously man's social character. Man is defined in large part by his social relations, and his unique way of behaving toward other persons. Man fulfills himself only in and through such relations. Thus all his moral qualities have a social character. When society begins to practice and sanction on a large scale deception, stealing, violence, killing, neglect of the young, and behavior that is consistently indifferent to the interests and needs of others—that society is decaying and so are its individual members and their morals with it. For that society to survive and save its members, it must transform itself from the foundations upward. The foundation must be a social, moral, human one; that is the essential argument for a socialist society. Because the problems of America today—moral corruption, an inefficient and inhuman economy, war, the exploitation of man by man, the denaturalization of our Negro citizens—come from a faulty foundation in society, socialists hold that the way to correct these problems is to rebuild the foundation.

(6) *Our society is built on the principle of war.*

All of the defects thus far mentioned about our society presuppose the existence of a war economy and war psychology. As long as war is an instrument of foreign policy, human needs, abilities, and purposes suffer, the economy can support at best an inflated prosperity, and man himself is dehumanized. Some think it is possible to pursue a "strong" (they mean "war") policy abroad while strengthening democracy at home. This is either hypocrisy or illusion. The billions of dollars spent on armament and the millions spent in Vietnam do not build anything; on the contrary, they destroy (by robbing) the people who labor to produce such wealth, and they destroy (by killing) the people against whom such warring wealth is used. Some also think that war is an accident of the times; that if the Russians and their friends would go away, if the Chinese would evaporate, and if Cuba would sink into the Caribbean Sea, all would be well with our economic system. Not so! How long has it been since we have had peace-time full employment? War production, to be sure, appears to be a way of putting purchasing power into the hands of millions, and a way of keeping the communist world at bay. But what happens when the Cold War reaches a stalemate? And what happens when war production, concentrated in a few regions of the country, can no longer stem the tide of unemployment and poverty?

Deeper and more insidious than the war economy is the war ecology. As we have already observed, our way of life is a way of war—in the words of Thomas Hobbes, "a war of each against all." If our economy were going well at home, if we were happy and productive and all our people were fed and clothed and housed and educated, if we were secure in our own achievements and our confident grip on the future—could our leaders *drag* us toward war? Whence all this outcry about the "danger" of the other system and the "superiority" of ours? Do we not all feel endangered by our own situation? It is difficult for us as ordinary citizens to see "world communism"—how many Americans ever saw a communist, let alone a "world communist?—or to see "alien ideologies" or the "threats to the free world." What we *can* see is our paychecks, supermarket prices, the man over us in our job, the man under us, the men around us who want our job, the hospital bills, the

cost of education for our children, our income tax. What we can *feel* is the competitiveness, anxiety, tension, uncertainty, and solitariness inherent in the way we make our living, in the mad struggle of men for power and status. And we can see and feel, vividly and painfully enough, that all is not well. It is a slow and silent war, a war of nerves, a war of attrition that wears down the souls of men.

In the midst of this undeclared war—this "furtive war" and "dirty war" of our own at home—socialists dare to say that it need not be; that men are foolishly destroying one another; that their way of life—their way of living death—ought to be changed and *can* be changed. They dare to declare that peace is possible and imperative, at home and abroad, to insist with Micah the Biblical prophet: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Socialists call for cooperation and peace among nations because they call for cooperation and peace as a way of life within each nation. Socialists believe in the fraternity and unity of all men. This does not mean that they have no national loyalties. Far from it. Today, international, thermonuclear war is a grave threat to mankind. It can be prevented only as the peoples within nations command their national leaders to prevent it. Hence for all those in America who believe in the preservation of mankind and therefore peace, the building of a peace sentiment and peace action among the American people is obligatory. But positive peace—which means, beyond the cessation of war and beyond disarmament, friendly relations among governments and peoples, exchange visits and studies for all citizens, reciprocal trade—is another step. For America this cannot really come until our way of life at home is cooperative and pro-human, *i.e.*, socialist. Hence the primary task of the American socialist is to build a socialist America.

IV

As has been said, socialism requires democracy, both as a method and condition for reaching the socialist society and as a goal that is aimed at and is integral to that realized society.

Socialism has been brought about in countries which had little or no tradition of bourgeois democracy; but it could never have been born or have grown in those countries had there not been

widespread dissatisfaction with the prior order of society and widespread confidence in the new order of socialism. Socialism stands or falls on the strength with which individual people are ready, willing, and able to participate in the thought and work required for its success. Because socialism must increasingly involve people in the self-determination of their affairs, in enterprise and voluntary efforts and responsibility in their places of work and in their communities, its method and condition of being must be a democratic one. Marx realized this when in *The Civil War in France* he commanded men to look at the Paris Commune and "the self-government of the producers."

Socialists envisage an ideal society in which the democratic values of freedom, equality, and fraternity become incarnate in the fullest sense. In our present democracy, fettered and mutilated by capitalism, "freedom" for the wealthy few means freedom to do business and make money independently of government interference. For the many, it means the freedom to feel, think, speak, write, or act in ways that do not significantly challenge the existing social and economic order. Freedom is thus a function of economic power. Under socialism, freedom becomes a positive, intrinsic, and human value—as contrasted with capitalism's negative, instrumental, and economic-political freedom. Where productive power is socialized, and each man is free to live and work as his abilities and energies enable him to, freedom becomes "its own end." (Marx)

Likewise, under capitalism the democratic concept of "equality" has remained an empty shibboleth so long as the great masses lacked economic and political equality with those who ruled them. Socialism aims to correct this contradiction by socializing the means of production, planning the economy so as to meet human needs, providing opportunity for each man's development, and regulating distribution according to ability and work. The formula, "From each according to his ability, to each according to work performed," means, according to Marx in *Critique of the Gotha Program*, a common or equal standard applied to all, namely, labor. First, all men must work; none can live off the labor of another. Second, in order to work, all men must be guaranteed the necessaries of life, of human development, and of the cultivation of certain abilities. Third, all men come under the rule that rewards them according to work performed. Thus under socialism

all men are treated as equal as regards their needs to develop as human beings, to cultivate their abilities, and to work and be rewarded for work. And all men are treated as equal as regards their individualized human development, their individualized abilities, and their individualized work with its proportionate reward.

Bourgeois-democratic theory has never even paid much lip-service to fraternity as a value. The reason is that such theory grew out of capitalism's self-sufficient individual pursuing his own self-interest in the market and zealously guarding that self-interest through parliamentary forms. Such an individual could not feel solidarity or fraternity with those workers and customers whom he exploited as far as he could, nor could he even feel close to his fellow capitalists.

For socialism, however, fraternity is a more fundamental value than freedom and equality. Men cannot develop freely and equally —with "the equal right to be different," as Horace Kallen has said—unless they share initiative and power in the determination of their lives. Socialism looks forward to the day when "we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." (Marx and Engels)

As socialism requires democracy as both method and goal, so democracy implies socialism. As a social method, as a way of solving concrete, collective problems, democracy is already socialist in content. It is imbued with that fraternal spirit, that free association of men who share equally the authority and responsibility for their lives, which are also the essence of mature socialism. Magnify and fulfill democracy as a way of life among men and you will see how it merges into the form and image of socialism. Marx described the Paris Commune in democratic terms: "a government of the people by the people." And Lincoln imagined democracy as an association from which all exploitation of man by man has been expunged: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master: that is my idea of democracy."

The truth is that the ideas of democracy and socialism in the modern Western world spring from the common root of Christian millenarianism, that *planta vulgaris* which sprouted so vigorously and wildly throughout Europe from the 14th through the 17th centuries. The reaction of the unpropertied masses to a static and exploitive feudalism, millenarianism had a dream of an apocalyptic

community of equals and simultaneously a community of property. Capitalism succeeded to feudalism and dispersed and divided that dream, taking away the ideas of freedom and equality in property and government and turning them to its own class purposes. But the dream remains a single dream; it cannot be divided if it is really believed and understood. The modern concepts of democracy and socialism flow as it were like two streams around the island of capitalism in Western Europe and America. But in origin they were one—and remained so in those countries that achieved their democratic and socialist revolutions all at once—and for each to be complete they must be joined again leaving the dividing island behind.

But to those who will look, the dynamic power of democracy is still discernible in its bourgeois interpretations and forms. Democracy as a strictly political technique is, when expanded and humanized, a way of life. And as a way of life for all the people, it becomes a search for the fulfilled life for all. And as such a search it must culminate in a collective effort to reach and realize that life—in short, socialism. Similarly, as we have seen, socialism relies on the individual and collective efforts of people, working democratically, to secure its goals. And a democratic community is its ideal goal. Thus democracy is the method that naturally anticipates socialism, is its germ, and conveys men to it; while socialism is the goal and framework within which democracy finds it final justification and fulfillment.

But must democracy as a method lead to the establishment of a socialist society in the United States? Yes. That is the only course that democracy can take now, given the problems, needs, resources, demands, and opportunities that we now face. It is the only course if we and our posterity are to live and live well. Conversely, the only course by which socialism can come to pass in the United States is by the collective will of the great majority of the people, expressing themselves in democratic ways. This means that the democratic procedures and institutions that we already have must be greatly extended, modified, transformed, and supplemented. Our immediate and practical task is to begin in our present situations, with or without democratic institutions, and to mold our relations to others as democratically as we can as we confront the great issues of our people. Only in such relations can the theory and practice of socialism take on concrete meaning.

Thus democracy and socialism in the United States are intimately linked; they will live or die together. And while he who believes in democracy will also, it is likely, believe in socialism (of some kind) to some similar degree—and vice versa—it is even more probable, I think, that he who opposes the one vehemently is also likely to oppose the other with the same vehemence. Democracy in this mature, humanistic, Whitmanesque sense, as I have tried to describe it, makes common cause with the humanistic socialism I have described. It is difficult for me to see how those who consider themselves humanistic in any way could quarrel very far with the values of each. Many, to be sure, would argue that I have painted an idealistic picture of each and that both are impractical given the nature of individual men, the intractability of traditions, and the limitations of history.

The limitations of history—what are they? We are not always allowed to indulge our fastidious differences with our contempory intellectuals. America is moving toward a crisis and an hour of decision. We can move toward socialism, and do so democratically; we can continue to drift, until a fascist *putsch* succeeds, peacefully or by violence; or we can go from bad to worse with our present institutions, stumbling from discontent to confusion to chaos. The question is whether we will choose and fight for the democratic way, with all its precious values, and with its faith in the people and their capacity to create their own fulfillment; or whether we will abandon ourselves to the drift of history or to the wealthy, the armed, and the anti-human.

V

We come now to the final question: What is the task of intellectuals with respect to promoting a more civilized, human society in America? The workaday, professional function of intellectuals is to assemble, clarify, analyze, classify, compare, synthesize, elaborate, judge, and apply ideas—in a word, to think. The stock-in-trade of intellectuals is ideas—the ideas of past generations and of the contemporary world, to which they add their own. An intellectual describes, evaluates, and creates. He tells his society what its character is; he holds up to it the great viable alternatives before it; and he passionately chooses one of those alternatives himself and fights for it in both theory and practice. Some intellec-

tuals specialize in description, others in evaluation, and still others in creation. But every intellectual worthy of the name does all three, and the most mature and the greatest are the creators.

During the years of the Cold War many intellectuals in America retreated to the safety of "description"—though what one *chooses* to describe is always and implicity a matter of evaluation. As Professor Seymour Lipset has said, their course was "to withdraw from active involvement or interest in politics and to concentrate on their work, whether . . . poetry or scholarship." Others adopted the alternative of the ruling groups and had their reward. But the best and most courageous continued to pursue their vocation as scholars, to engage in social criticism, and to explore the great alternatives for American society. Such intellectuals, in matters affecting society, described social change, formulated social ideals and principles, held up to American society those ideals and criticized it, examined and criticized alternative ideals and courses, argued for what they considered the best alternative, and prepared themselves to counsel, guide, or lead social changes when the opportune moment arrived. Intellectuals have always played decisive roles in social change and in the formation of new societies, both as initiators and developers of those societies. The question for American intellectuals to face is what they are doing now and what they will do in the future to prepare and facilitate the formation of a more human, civilized American society. Intellectuals epitomize the *mind* of a people; they mirror the mental trends and emphases of the society as a whole.

At the same time, as specialists they focus and refine those movements, clarify and extend and evaluate them, so that, when they are sent back to the society, the society can understand more clearly what it thinks, feel more vividly what it values, and do more effectively what it really desires. Here the intellectuals must appeal over the heads of what the people have been *conditioned* to want by the powers that be and the prevailing system of education, propaganda, and values. They must speak directly to the *human* needs and aspirations of the people. The tactical problem of how to reach the people and communicate to them is a thorny one, given the context of American society as we have described it. But unless the intellectual solves it he forfeits his true function, which is the discovery, dissemination, and human use of ideas, and the ultimate development and improvement of man.

The argument of this paper has been that the alternative for America that can best solve America's economic, political, and essentially *human* problems is the socialistic-democratic one. To the extent that all men own and manage the means of production, eliminate private property as a means of the exploitation of other men, cooperate and plan to produce and distribute goods and services in accordance with the principle of work contributed to society, and decide and carry out the policies affecting their own behavior in society—to that extent these problems can be solved if solved at all.

"Socialism" and "democracy" solve no problems and produce no paradises and no hells. "Socialism" is either a term referring to abstract propositions about how a society can or ought to be organized in which case it defines ideal possibilities that take on concrete meaning only in the actions of individual persons. Or it is a term referring to operating societies of individuals (as in the U.S.S.R., China, etc.) engaged in the process of trying to fulfill such possibilities in which case it is individual persons themselves who solve their problems more or less well or badly. Comparable things may be said of the term "democracy." So the contention here is that to the extent that individual persons *behave socialistically and democratically,* they will solve the aforementioned problems.

Socialism and democracy may be criticized from the point of view of theory—they may be said to be unclear, imprecise, unsystematic, uncomprehensive, etc. But the final test is whether as ideal possibilities for human action in society and as theories of human nature they are adequate to solve the problems of human existence. Here it is unfair to pick out systems where the ideals and the theory have been *misapplied* in action and to conclude that therefore they are deficient. Most of us have an initial predilection for democracy and so when it is not applied as ideal or method to the Negroes we do not consider this a failure of democracy but a failure of people and institutions; we do not forsake the ideal of democracy and the theory of man on which it rests. But it is too often not so when we encounter hunger or sectarianism in China or political crime and punishment in the U.S.S.R. Here we jump to the conclusion which is foregone in a capitalist press and a mentality enslaved to it: that Socialism is thereby disproved as bad in theory and worse in practice. To those

who say that socialism is good in theory but bad in practice, we can only ask how the definition of a theory as good can exclude its practicability. If it does, its "goodness" can consist only in something purely fantastical.

What are the prospects of socialistic democracy in the United States? We have already referred to the conditions of alienation and discontent prevailing in our country. As these widen and deepen, they will form the seedbed for ideas of social change. (A certain development of a radical demand for social transformation among the oppressed may be seen in the Negro movement for civil rights.) The task of intellectuals generally, and of socialists particularly, is to produce and disseminate ideas that will take hold when the people—the seedbed—are ready to receive them.

The strength of a people lies in their capacity for choosing and creating their own destiny along the lines of their fulfillment. It lies in their capacity for bold thought, for great passion, for courageous action, in their capacity for expressing themselves, for nurturing the individual value of each, for confirming one another in mutual care, for working toward significant and common goals, for sharing the burdens and joys of a common faith in themselves and humanity as a whole.

Every man as man has his destiny to achieve and his strength to discover. But each has a special contribution he can make. The contribution of the intellectual is ideas. People rouse themselves to their full strength under the impact of great suffering, threat, or opportunity. When they are moved to act, resolved to determine their own destinies once and for all, they will turn to whatever ideas they can find waiting as guides. The "mad priests" and peasants of Europe were moved to act, and found the Bible. The French were moved to act, and found Rousseau. The Americans were moved to act, and found Paine and Jefferson. The Russians were moved to act, and found Marx. The English were moved to act, and found the works of the Fabian Socialists. When the Americans are moved to act, what will they find? Where are the ideas from which they might draw inspiration and guidance? Where are their intellectual leaders, their ideas for action, the minds of their movement?

It is time for American intellectuals to come forth as intellectuals, and to address themselves boldly and honestly to the crisis upon America.

It is time to shake from our minds and hearts the chill of the Cold War, and to plunge into the heat of battle to save and extend both the ideal and practice of democracy.

It is time for American intellectuals to examine again that democracy, as it actually is and as it might be, neither flinching from its failures nor fleeing from its promise.

It is time for us, in a world of trouble and profound change, to ask where our democracy is going, can go, and ought to go.

It is time to examine great alternatives.

It is high time for us to ask ourselves with searching seriousness the question: What does socialism mean for American democracy today?

IV.

ROMANTICISM AND MODERNISM: THE MARXIST VIEW

Gaylord C. LeRoy

I want to suggest one or two ways in which Marxist theory serves as a key to the understanding of our time. Let me begin by taking note of the fact that literary scholarship at this moment stands in need of a comprehensive theory that will interpret the most significant changes in sensibility from the French Revolution to the present. The journal *Victorian Studies* has called for contributions to such a theory. A conspicuous lack in existing scholarship (in England and America at any rate) is that along with an abundance of fact, we have a poverty of interpretation. Jerome Buckley's *The Victorian Temper,*[1] Walter Houghton's *The Victorian Frame of Mind,*[2] and the recent Pelican history[3] are instances.*

We are now witnessing, however, some initial efforts to suggest a comprehensive interpretation. William A. Madden,[4] for example, has advanced the thesis that in the early nineteenth century there existed a rapport between man's mind and a sense of spiritual presences in nature (as in Wordsworth) and that in our own time the representative temper is either the far-reaching despair of Bertrand Russell's "A Free Man's Worship" or the Yeatsian view that civilization "is held together . . . by artificially created illusions" and that if man is to have at all the sense of an ordered or meaningful universe, the order and meaning will take the form of illusions we ourselves choose to adopt.[5] For Madden, the significance of the literary expression of the nineteenth century (the work of Tennyson, Arnold, Mill, Pater, etc.) is that it constitutes a transition from the orientation of Wordsworth to that of Yeats.

In *Beyond the Tragic Vision,*[6] Morse Peckham offers a somewhat similar interpretation. He begins with the breakdown at

* Reference notes will be found at the end of this essay.

the time of the French Revolution of the two value systems of the past, that of traditional religion and that of the Enlightenment. A sense of having entered a wasteland, a loss of orientation, a suspicion that external reality is meaningless chaos initiates the modern age. Then Peckham moves through the nineteenth century tracing the struggle to establish a new value system. The culmination of this search, according to Peckham, is a new orientation which he views as having derived especially from the work of Nietzsche. He describes it in these terms: "The world is nothingness; the midnight bell wakes us from that nothingness to struggle with nothingness, and in that struggle we forge, and continuously re-forge our identities. We cannot succeed in that struggle; nor, once the bell has sounded, can we fail. That struggle is a struggle of joy and sorrow, but the joy is deeper than the sorrow; for being, which is the result of that struggle, is, since we are human beings, better than nothingness."[7] . . . "From the human point of view (the world) is without value . . . The world is without order, without meaning, without value. Human identity has no ground. The world is nothing, but in emerging from that nothingness and encountering it, we create being." The human mind is able to create the world so to speak out of nothingness. "From that act of creation emerges the sense of value; and the sense of order, the sense of meaning, and the sense of identity are but our instruments for that act."[8] Peckham has chosen as epigraph for his book a line from Yeats: ". . . rejoice in the midst of tragedy."

So here we get an effort on the part of American scholars to discover the meaning of the nineteenth century. What can we say? We might mention the subjective selection of the evidence. (How much is left out!) We could observe that the interpretation lacks complexity. But primarily, what needs to be said is that the value system is objectionable. Both Madden and Peckham end up by praising a twentieth-century existentialist orientation in which fear of life masquerades as superior awareness, and abandonement of the effort to master social reality becomes a reason for self-satisfaction—for is it not a sign that on has cast off falsifying illusion?

If we are going to get a better understanding of the nineteenth century, we will hardly be able to get along without the comprehensive and dynamic body of theory supplied by historical materialism. And the way to begin will be to acquaint ourselves with

what Marxist scholars are already able to tell us. In the two key areas of romanticism and modernism the work now being done by Marxist scholars brings together historical research, literary sensitivity and the momentum of a creative theory in such a way as to constitute, in my opinion, a new epoch in man's understanding of his past.

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American students of Marxism have often been troubled by the predominantly negative interpretation put upon romanticism by European Marxists who have the continental rather than the English or American experience in mind. Recent Marxist scholarship, however, has done more than justice to the progressive features of English romanticism. The view now being advanced is that English romanticism may be regarded as a sensibility that developed in response to the new perspectives of a revolutionary age, an age that brought sudden and drastic transformations involving even the disappearance of entire social classes and the emergence of new ones. The mechanistic Newtonian reason proved unable to assimilate the experience of an age characterized by the emergence of so much that was entirely unforeseen, an age characterized by an entirely new sense of human possibility. Hence the development in romanticism of new ways to take hold of reality. Imagination, intuition, and symbol become the new instruments of knowledge. Only through symbol—specifically through a symbolism that dealt with titanic, fantastic, supramundane forces—could the romantic poet grasp the dimensions of the epoch in which he lived. At the same time the shift from the mechanical to the organic metaphor helped make it possible to assimilate the phenomena of stupendous transformations.

To be sure this romantic sensibility, when it confronted an emerging capitalist society, expressed itself not merely in the revolutionary poetry of Shelley and Byron but also in the withdrawal into the self of a Wordsworth and in the escape into beauty or into the medieval past of a Keats (though there is a dialectic here, since escape may also imply an effort to salvage one's humanity). Nevertheless, in England the progressive features of the romantic sensibility are especially apparent.

If we look at romanticism in this way, we see that it represents

a tendency in the superstructure that appeared near the peak of the arc that reflects the career of bourgeois society. The exaltation of the reason in the Enlightenment and the break-through in the romantic sensibility would appear to be in a sense the two crowning achievements of this historic period.

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When it comes to the dominant trends of the twentieth century, Marxism offers the indispensable body of theory concerning the nature of "modernism." According to this theory, the trends that make up modernism assert themselves for the first time in the last three decades of the nineteenth century and become dominant in the twentieth.

First, a retreat from the reason. This is the subject of the important book *Consciousness and Society* by the non-Marxist historian H. Stuart Hughes.[10] But others have described the way comprehensive rational systems have been jettisoned in our century. In the current of logical positivism, for example, what is most striking is the determination not to be drawn into speculations concerning questions not susceptible to empirical proof. In existentialism, probably the central philosophical trend for the West, the untrustworthiness of systematic rational thought is a basic assumption. Again, one of the most striking features of philosophical study in our time is the abandonment of the effort to give a comprehensive account of experience, the effort heretofore regarded as the chief mission of philosophy. Again, it is significant that in our time Freud and Marx, both mighty inheritors of the Enlightenment, are generally interpreted primarily as having contributed to the revolt against the reason. One side of their work (the destruction of traditional forms of rationalism) is highlighted at the expense of the other side (their contribution to a *reconstituted* rationalism). Again, some would regard the New Criticism in literary study as a further illustration of the diminished role of the reason, for (lip-service apart) the New Critics' preoccupation with matters of form has accompanied a profound unconcern with the more comprehensive systems of reference in literature. It has been suggested again that in the failure of certain academic disciplines (philosophy and religion especially) to examine their subject matter in terms of

function within a given historical period, we have a further example of the retreat from the reason.[11]

The second feature of modernism is that the effort to relate private to social experience gives way to the tendency to preoccupy oneself exclusively with the private, characteristically with experience on a fairly primitive psychological or even biological level. This is best illustrated, perhaps, by the work of the later Joyce. The evolution of Joyce from *Dubliners* to *Ulysses* is an evolution in the direction of modernism. What is distinctive in the stream of consciousness of Joyce, according to *Teorija Literatury,* is that it does not touch upon any important social event.[12] The details of this stream of consciousness are clouded by intimate associations: the objective world is largely annihilated.[13]

The vogue of psychoanalysis provides an excellent illustration of the retreat to private experience, for in practice psychoanalysis as now practiced generally encourages the patient to try to solve his problems entirely within a sphere of intimate personal relationships.

A third characteristic of modernism may be described as the surrender to *Angst.* In *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism,*[14] Georg Lukacs gives an account of the literature of the twentieth century in terms of a struggle between "modernist" trends and the effort to retain or reconstitute humanist values. The central trait in modernism, in Lukacs' formulation, is surrender to *Angst,* and conversely the central trait in twentieth-century humanism is the struggle against *Angst.* The protagonists of these two trends, for Lukacs, are Kafka (the surrender) and Thomas Mann (the struggle against *Angst*).

In our literature Eliot's "The Waste Land" would be the classic example of surrender to *Angst.* In Yeats, we certainly do not have that phenomenon. On the contrary, what is magnificent in Yeats is the struggle against despair. Still, the pessimism concerning the fate of Western civilization in Yeats is in an important sense a parallel phenomenon, and in this respect Yeats also embodies this trend.

A fourth trend is the separation of the arts from the rest of life. Some of the chief moderns whom I have been using for illustration do not exemplify this feature of modernism. Yeats does not. Eliot does not. But if we think of Joyce as moving in the direction of modernism in his evolution from *Dubliners* to

Finnegan's Wake, then we can see that in the later Joyce we do have an example of this modernist trend. But I think one of the best illustrations of this feature of modernism is provided again by the New Criticism. For the effect of the concentration on matters of form in the New Criticism has been to divert attention from the traditional effort to explore the connections between literature and the rest of life, and the failure in consequence to use literature as an instrument for clarifying and strengthening humanist attitudes.

A final trait in modernism is a certain kind of revulsion against the modern world, a revulsion that requires careful definition, and in response to this an effort to escape from the revulsion (and this also requires definition). The revulsion has something to do with a sense of the trivialization of existence, the dehumanization of modern life, automatonization, "alienation." The escape from this would appear to express itself most characteristically in benumbing distractions, in spectator sports, in the hypertrophy of the erotic, in a sharpening of sensuous stimulants, in an increasing appetite for the marvelous, in immoralism, perversion, and the cult of sin.[15] No doubt this trait of modernism is best illustrated from mass culture rather than from literature. I find both the sense of dehumanization and the characteristic effort to escape from it in the work of Dos Passos, however.

Running counter to these trends in modernism, we have the effort to maintain, salvage, reconstruct or transmit the values of the humanist tradition. The two trends, modernism and humanism, may at times be embodied in separate works, but more characteristically they are to be seen in conflict with one another in specific novels, plays, and poems.

I would suggest that in this account of the significant twentieth-century experience we have a theoretical apparatus more complex, more convincing, and more adequate to explain the concrete cultural expression of our time than the simplifying thesis of Madden and Peckham. What Madden and Peckham give us is in fact a rather narrow segment of the great canvas of twentieth-century experience. Their discovery about the possibility of rejoicing in the midst of tragedy represents a certain tonality of *Angst* within the general framework of modernist anti-intellectualism.

One cannot help pointing out here the massive irony involved

in these American books incorporating an existentialist outlook. For these attitudes derive essentially from the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, the Sartre of *L'Etre et le Néant* of 1943. But now we discover that in his recent work, the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique,* 1960, Sartre has come around to the position that Marxism is "the one philosophy of our time which we cannot go beyond" and that existentialism itself is merely "an enclave inside Marxism."[16] So here we have a condition where American scholars, oblivious to Marxism, have taken their lead from Sartre, who in the meantime has been going deeper and deeper into the study of Marx and now says that Marxism offers "the only valid interpretation of how man makes his history," who accepts the key Marxist contentions that the mode of production is the decisive determining influence in historical transformations, that history is in large part the history of class struggles, that the dominant ideas and values of a period are those of the dominant class, and that the only acceptable goal for man is the goal of a classless society.[17]

Here we confront the intellectual disgrace of American scholarship which in important humanist studies lags so badly behind what the best Europeans do. The neglect and misrepresentation of Marxism are at the very heart of this intellectual disgrace.

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No Marxist will hope to understand the phenomenon of modernism, or to persuade anyone else to accept his interpretation of it, except by demonstrating that there is in fact a connection between cultural trends and changes in class relations which themselves grow out of transformations in the mode of production. The deepest cause of the revolt against the reason, for example, may well lie in fundamental class realities that generate a climate inhospitable to the humanities and social sciences, though not to the natural sciences. How else can we explain the fact that the natural sciences prosper while the humanities and social sciences suffocate in an atmosphere of formalism, trivia, Alexandrianism and jargon? Can there really be any doubt that it is a fundamental collision between the reason and the existing social structure that provides the ultimate source of the retreat from reason in our time?

The preoccupation with a private dimension of experience, again, may well have its deepest source in a class situation in which the entire apparatus of social and political decision-making is brought increasingly under monopoly control, with the consequence that the average man is increasingly cognizant of his own powerlessness. As the world at large appears to be swayed by forces difficult to comprehend and seemingly impossible to influence, public life becomes an area in which we feel we can no longer function effectively. Estranged from outer reality, we retreat to the area of personal and private experience, where outer influences appear not to intrude and we have the notion that we can secure a measure of freedom. This no doubt is an illusory freedom, but illusory freedom is understandably preferred to the reality of powerlessness.[18]

To take other examples of the connection between trends in modernism and the basic realities of our time, the *Angst* that pervades the cultural expression of the West is surely to be understood as an expression in part at least of the fact that this is a society that has lost its sense of mission, its sense of being in possession of the future. Or to take another example, the automatonization, depersonalization, and trivialization of life may be traced back to the realities of powerlessness just mentioned; and no doubt these trends are intensified also by the condition of concentrated control of the mass media and the purposes for which the media are used. This is the general kind of explanation that we must work if we are going to develop a plausible theory of modernism.

In contemporary American scholarship the relationship between literature and fundamental class realities is either bypassed altogether or touched upon in a spirit of timidity and evasion. Even when some effort is made to see literature in the context of social realities, the changes that are actually taking place in society are rarely examined with theoretical rigor. In *Radical Innocence*,[19] for example, Ihab Hassan is in fact concerned with the phenomena of modernism—the abdication of reason, the retreat into private experience, rejection of responsibility, the tonality of *Angst*. To his credit he sees that these phenomena, many of them typified in the "rebel victim" in contemporary novels, have their roots in a given social structure. But instead of drawing the kind of moral that this analysis would require

and describing the rebel victim as in fact a tragic casualty of social decay, Hassan views him as an embodiment of the will to freedom. The pseudo-profundity, the general twisting of values in Hassan's idealization of the rebel-victim is a measure of the corrosion that now pervades the intellectual life of this country.

In *Anatomy of Criticism*,[20] Northrop Frye likewise makes reference to most of the phenomena of modernism, but here the tendencies are accounted for without any reference to society whatsoever. What Northrop Frye presents, instead, is a theory of literary "modes." He views the whole of Western literature as if it were to be accounted for in terms of a seemingly autonomous succession of modes, the heroic mode, the mode of romance, the high mimetic, low mimetic, and ironic mode being the chief of these. When we come to the epoch of the ironic mode (that is, when we come to the time in which we live), we observe that the hero is portrayed as inferior to the reader in intelligence and power, and "we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity."[21] Furthermore, the "widespread interest in sacramental philosophy and dogmatic theology" in our time is explained not in relationship to the retreat from reason (this in turn having a certain social causation) but as an example of the later phase of the ironic mode, when irony returns to myth![32] So Frye is able to accomplish the really remarkable feat of talking about the tendencies of modernism without even hinting that there might be a connection between these trends and the characteristics of a concrete social system. In Northrop Frye we perhaps reach the ultimate point beyond which the withdrawal of the intellect from the problems of the modern world cannot go. In reading his book we are often overwhelmed with a sense of unreality, in that the great immovable facts of contemporary history are treated as if they did not exist. The consistent transformation of reality makes one think somehow of the moral climate of a totalitarian regime (which is not to accuse Frye of having totalitarian impulses!). *Anatomy of Criticism* is one of the curiosities of our contemporary rococo scholasticism, with its drive to destroy every filament that connects literature with the rest of life.

How, we are bound to ask, is it possible for one of America's most brilliant critics, a man of great learning, wit and originality, to perform this extraordinary feat of writing about literature as

if influences emanating from the social order were not worth mentioning? He proceeds, he tells us, on the assumption that criticism must not get its criteria from outside literature itself[23] and on the assumption also that literature is not "necessarily involved in the worlds of truth and fact nor necessarily withdrawn from them" but may enter into various relationships with these worlds.[24] But if we want to solve the riddle, it will not help us to examine Frye's critical method; rather we should note that he himself embodies the very tendencies of modernism that he fails to comprehend in the literature under consideration. Withdrawal of the intellect from the problems of contemporary reality is the chief of these trends.[25]

The practice in America of a literary criticism divorced from the rest of life is having the effect of depriving literature of its status as the crowning study of man and reducing it to a pseudo-learned, semi-frivolous avocation for students who have some ability but who are not remarkable for the strength of the drive to master reality. Some years ago an English writer told me that after reading American literary criticism he had about decided that the study of literature in the university should be abolished altogether! He proposed that insofar as it was studied at all in the university, literature should be taken over by the departments of history.

I would like to suggest that Marxist scholarship (and perhaps Marxist scholarship *only*) can revitalize literary study in such a way as to enable us to get a real sense of the meaning of the literature of our time, and in this way restore something of the central weight and dignity that used to be attached to literary study.

In the interpretation of romanticism and modernism I have summarized, we have a key to the significance of the cultural expression of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A great effort of Marxist scholarship would be required to work out the hints given here. The task would be to explore fully the complicated and subtle relationships between the arts and the society that produces them, and almost every area of experience would require a fresh examination—the mode of production, basic class relationships, all segments of the superstructure, and of course primarily the dominant forms of literary expression themselves. The task would be to carry out such studies without over-

simplification, without vulgarization, but also insisting patiently on the connections that do in fact exist between the arts and the totality of experience within which they function.

If we are going to get started with this work, we will have to be more in touch with each other than in the past. For a consequence of the backwardness of American scholarship in this area is that we hardly have vehicles to keep each other informed about what is going on. If I may speak for myself, it was largely an accident that, in a footnote of a book by Erich Fromm, I came upon a reference to the German publication *Marxismusstudien;* then, also almost by accident, I learned through correspondence with the editor of *Marxismusstudien* about the work being done on the nineteenth century by Alfred Kurella[27] in East Germany. In the effort to follow up Kurella's work I learned that for ten years East Germany has been publishing a scholarly journal devoted exclusively to English and American literature, the *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*,[28] and I eventually discovered also that there exists a Marxist study of our own American New Criticism, namely, *New Criticism und die Entwicklung bürgerlicher Literaturwissenschaft* by Robert Weimann.[29]

What we need is a means of keeeping in touch with each other so that we will be able to discover what we need to learn by a process less indirect, less subject to accident, less wasteful than this. The hope is that the American Institute for Marxist Studies will supply this need.

NOTES

[1] Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951).

[2] Walter Edwards Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, Conn., 1957).

[3] Boris Ford, ed., *From Dickens to Hardy* (*Pelican Guide to English Literature,* Vol. VI, 1958).

[4] William A. Madden, "The Burden of the Artist," in *1859: Entering an Age of Crisis* (Bloomington, Ind., 1959), pp. 247-268, and "The Victorian Sensibility," in *Victorian Studies,* Vol. VII, No. 1 (September, 1963), pp. 67-97.

[5] Madden, "The Victorian Sensibility," p. 72.

[6] Morse Peckham, *Beyond the Tragic Vision: The Quest for Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1962).

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 368.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 370.

[9] For the view of romanticism advanced here I am indebted in part to the interpretation of romanticism in the *History of English Literature*, Vol. II (Moscow, 1952) and to the discussion of romanticism by A. A. Jelistratowa in *The Heritage of English Romanticism and the Present Time* (Moscow, 1960) and in "Zum Problem der Wechselbeziehung zwischen Realismus und Romantik" in *Probleme des Realismus in der Weltliteratur* (Berlin, 1962) and by D. G. Gacev in *Teorija Literatury* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 186-312.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Willi and Ursula Beitz of Martin Luther Universität (Halle), who have supplied me with information concerning the Russian literary history cited above and have helped me to clarify the interpretation of romanticism and modernism presented in this paper.

[10] H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Thought, 1890-1930* (New York, 1958).

[11] John Desmond Bernal, *Science and History* (London, 1954), p. 819.

[12] D. G. Gacev, in *Teorija Literatury*.

[13] *Idem.*

[14] Georg Lukacs, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (London, 1962).

[15] See Henri Lefèbvre, *Critique de la Vie Quotidienne*, Vol. I (Paris, 1958), pp. 115-118.

[16] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York, 1963), p. xxxiv.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. xix.

[18] A point for which I am again indebted to D. G. Gacev in *Teorija Literatury*.

[19] Ihab Hassan, *Radical Innocence: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel* (Princeton, N. J., 1961).

[20] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, N. J., 1957).

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

[25] The essential irresponsibility of this approach to literature can hardly be camouflaged, and we are not surprised to note that Frye conforms to the fashion of American literary scholars in the way he raids other disciplines for symbol and metaphor but feels no obligation to make responsible use of the insights these disciplines provide. In the area of psychology, for example, Frye belongs to the 90% of literary scholars who make more use of Jung than of Freud without any apparent embarrassment over the fact that psychiatrists are almost unanimous in the view that Freud has the greater scientific value. This general point concerning the unscholarly use of data from other disciplines is made by Robert Weimann in *New Criticism und die Entwicklung bürgerlicher Literaturwissenschaft* (Halle, 1962), p. 140.

[26] Iring Fetscher, ed., *Marxismusstudien* (Tübingen, 1957).

[27] Alfred Kurella, *Der Mensch als Schöpfer seiner Selbst* (Berlin, 1961).

[28] Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaft, Berlin.

[29] See note 25.

V.

MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY IN CUBA

J. P. Morray

It is evident that the word "democracy" is used equivocally in modern political debate. The competing claims of United States and Soviet leaders to be true champions of democracy are underwritten by their respective intellectual and educational establishments. This controversy over the application of a word to different social and political realities is one feature of the ideological struggle of the Cold War. Not since the Yalta Conference in 1945 has a responsible American leader consented to include communists in the category of democrats. That gallantry on the part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt belonged to an earlier period, before the Cold War had closed the campuses and Washington to Marxist ideology. The propaganda lines have since been hardened to the point that virtually all American writers, teachers and political leaders assume the struggle against communism to be a struggle for democracy. This assumption has become an axiom, a self-evident truth.

To frame the issue as democracy vs. communism has potent propaganda effect. To the great majority of Americans democracy is a good thing, part of a cherished heritage from past struggles. It is a progressive accomplishment, worth defending and worth propagating. It belongs in the American credo. This favorable disposition of mass opinion toward democracy, historically determined, is now challenged only by the extreme Right and the fascist fringe. Their candid repudiation of democracy has done little as yet to weaken the positive American response to the word as a claim, a goal and a battle-cry. Hence the enlistment of the word in the struggle against communism. The embarrassment from Roosevelt's having agreed with Stalin to share the word and apply it to the Soviet as well as the Anglo-American order is buried in oblivion. Nevertheless, that agreement, reached at the end of a period when openminded study of Marxism was still permitted, suggests that the present American dogma to the

contrary may be a product of the Cold War rather than of careful analysis.

In fact, Marxists concur with the broad American public in the judgment on democracy: it is the best of states. States are to be judged as more or less progressive according to whether they are more or less democratic. Only when the state has withered away in a society freed of class antagonisms will a political order superior even to democracy become possible. In the meantime, which is a very long time, communists are taught by the most authoritative Marxist thinkers, from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to Mao and others, that an immediate political task is the struggle for democracy. (It is a commentary on the state of freedom in the United States that not one American in ten thousand, including the college graduates, has been allowed to discover that elementary fact about Marxism. Promotion of the antithesis "democracy vs. communism," so effective as a propaganda device, is made possible by a pervasive, *de facto* censorship and distortion of Marxism in schools, texts, news media and official pronouncements. Because Americans are systematically kept in ignorance of what Marxism really teaches, they are among the most victimized people in the world. This in a land that is supposed to be free!)

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Despite the agreement in principle between Marxists and the American credo on the merits of democracy there remain serious differences between Marxists and non-Marxists over the content of the democratic concept. These lead to conflicting judgments on concrete states and to disputes over whether certain political orders are or are not democratic. The case of Cuba is an example.

In the welter of controversy over the Cuban Revolution one opinion seems to be widely shared as a point of departure: the Batista regime brought Cuban politics to a crisis by its violation of democratic principles. "Democracy" means rule by the "demos," the people. It is contrasted with monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, and plutocracy, which give supreme importance to the will and interests of a privileged minority. A movement is democratic if it seeks to give greater effect to popular will, to extend freedom and to extend popular participation in political

life. The *coup d'etat* of March 10, 1952, did not fit any definition of democratic. On that date General Fulgencio Batista, relying on support from the army, landlords, and the Catholic Church, seized power to forestall his defeat as a candidate for the presidency in elections three months away. Batista was running a poor third in the pre-election polls. The likely winner, had the elections been held, was a reformist professor of sociology of the University of Havana, Roberto Agramonte, candidate of the Orthodox Party.

Now Agramonte could hardly be described as a great champion of popular rights. Yet neither was he regarded as a threat to such rights. He and his party were winning votes by their attacks on a very vulnerable target, corruption in government. When Batista moved to forestall defeat at the polls, those who excused this violation of the constitution did not do so on the ground that the "demos" demanded it. Batista was not leading a popular revolution. "No one," he said, "can accuse me of desire for revolution." He was saving the social order from the chaotic consequences of political liberalism. Radicalism, anti-imperialism, communism were spreading, the result, in Batista's view, of too much freedom for political agitation and too much democracy. To save the nation from "anarchy" he set out to restore order with strong rule. He promised to "wipe out gangsterism," "to establish public peace and cordiality among Cubans" and "to stop the wave of anarchy and chaos." The prospect was welcomed by the propertied classes and by American investors, since he promised "the fullest protection to all United States capital now here or that may be attracted to make investments in Cuba in the future." Batista, like Franco in Spain, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic and Somoza in Nicaragua, expressed by his acts if not by his words, a repudiation of democracy. That "the people are not yet qualified to rule" is an axiom among the apologists for such governments.

Batista implemented his promises of a restoration of order by dissolving Congress and by suspending freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly. The police were continually active against his political opponents. In the name of order Batista tried to cancel the guarantees of democratic rights proclaimed in the 1940 Cuban constitution. In Marxist literature these rights are described as bourgeois-democratic. They

are associated historically with revolutions led by the bourgeoisie against absolutism and feudalism during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. They are rights once demanded by revolutionary bourgeois leaders, heedless of their own future struggle against a new revolutionary class, in the name of the nation.

Batista's repudiation of the bourgeois-democratic constitution had the support of a powerful sector of the Cuban and American bourgeoisie. Why? Because the dialectic of history has turned the bourgeois revolutionary into a bourgeois counter-revolutionary. The weapons the bourgeoisie fashioned against the feudal aristocracy are now being turned against itself. The "anarchy and chaos" which Batista promised to suppress were symptoms of an approaching social crisis. To some, military dictatorship and the personal ambition of a strong man appeared to be the most effective guard against that crisis.

But such a repudiation of its own democratic past divides the bourgeoisie. Many educated Cubans saw in Batista's police-order a violation of hallowed traditions. Furthermore, many feared that a resort to military dictatorship, however convenient in the short run, would further weaken the bourgeois social order in the long run. The suppression of political liberty by police-violence seemed to initiate a civil war that might lead to armed insurrection by communists and the total overthrow of the system. Many wealthy members of the Cuban bourgeoisie, at odds with others in their class, supported the struggle to oust Batista and restore the bourgeois-democratic constitution. So did lawyers, judges and college professors. The Civic Resistance Movement, composed of such highly respectable professional defenders of the bourgeois order, grew in numbers as Batista's police provoked more and more violence and counter-violence. The manifesto of these civic groups based a demand for the restoration of democracy "on an instinct of social preservation."

Meanwhile another front had opened in the anti-Batista struggle. Fidel Castro, after an unsuccessful attempt to launch an armed insurrection in 1953, established his first guerrilla warfare mountain base in December 1956. Castro, too, was fighting for democratic goals. He, too, called for a restoration of the 1940 constitution. But in Castro's program a solution of the landlord-peasant problem, long promised and long neglected, also held an important place. By the Sierra Maestra Agrarian Reform Law

of 1958, implemented by the Castro guerrillas in zones under their control, outright ownership to 67 acres of land was conferred gratis on the small peasants who were tilling the soil as tenants, share-croppers or squatters. While the law tactfully acknowledged and saluted the constitutional right of the landlord to compensation from the state for his loss of rights as owner, there was a well-grounded skepticism as to whether the state would be in a position to make good on this promise.

Among Marxists such a measure is also described as bourgeois-democratic. It is democratic in that it increases the social and economic rights of a multitude of the poorest people in the population, the oppressed peasants. It is called bourgeois because it extends private ownership and because it is similar to measures taken against feudal landlords in earlier bourgeois revolutions. The French Revolution, for example, under the leadership of bourgeois Girondists and petty-bourgeois Jacobins, conferred land ownership on the French peasantry by abolishing feudal dues.

But the democratic content of Castro's Agrarian Reform deeply offended the bourgeois leadership of the Civic Resistance Movement. The Cuban landlords of 1959 were not a feudal nobility pitted against a rising bourgeoisie as in 18th century France. They were wealthy bourgeois investors, indistinguishable from if not identical with the wealthy Cuban and American investors who reaped profits from their ownership of the Island's commercial and industrial enterprises. Castro's democracy was abolishing property rights! (More accurately, it was *transferring* property rights from landlord to peasant.) The bourgeoisie of the Civic Resistance Movement assumed that this Jacobin excess would be repaired on the morrow of Batista's overthrow.

Here in an incipient form was the first contradiction within the Cuban Revolution that finally brought it to Marxism-Leninism: the demands of democracy collided with the property rights of the bourgeoisie. Castro's revolutionary, petty-bourgeois, democratic achievement of giving land to the peasants, supported by Jacobins and communists, had to overcome bourgeois opposition. Class differentiation within the anti-Batista coalition began to work its formidable effects.

The process was accelerated by a series of radical, reformist economic decrees, democratic in content, announced by the revolutionary government following Castro's entry into the office of

Prime Minister in February 1959. These interfered with rights of property and contract by cutting rents as much as 50 percent (for the poorest of city tenants) and by compelling sale of unimproved property at a capital gain of only 15 percent over cost to the owner. (Consider what havoc that wrought with the plans of real estate speculators!). The prices of meat and medicines, free enterprise merchandise, were also cut by government fiat. These measures evoked popular enthusiasm and bourgeois misgivings. The restraints on democracy supposed to result from bourgeois property rights were weakening.

The 1940 constitution amidst other pompous phrases, solemn words and high-sounding slogans promised agrarian reform. Article 90 proclaimed:

> Great estates (*latifundio*) are hereby prohibited . . . The law will fix a limit on the amount of land any individual or organization can own, etc.

But other clauses of the constitution canceled this promise by leaving implementation to Congress and by guaranteeing compensation in cast to landlords for expropriated land. In May 1959 Castro persuaded his Council of Ministers to resolve this contradiction in the bourgeois-democratic constitution with a thoroughgoing agrarian reform, which included outright confiscation of land holdings in excess of 1,000 acres. "Compensation" was offered in the form of bonds of the revolutionary governmennt payable twenty years later. Valuation was to be based on values declared by the owners for tax purposes during the previous years. The big landowners, among them American corporations, were outraged. So were their bankers, their lawyers, their judges, their professional politicians, their university professors and the editors of their newspapers. This indignation did not spring from a zeal for democracy. It expressed the bitterness of an exploiting class at an unprecedented excess of meliorating democracy. Castro was proving worse than a demagogue. Not only did he promise agrarian reform. He carried out his promise, despite opposition from the most respectable and authoritative voices in the bourgeois social order. The result was a polarization of opinion about Castro. With the poorer peasants, landless sugar workers and the city poor, all beneficiaries of the government's radical measures,

Castro emerged as a new champion of the exploited majority of the nation against the privileged beneficiaries of the old order. "The Republic that we are building," he said in answer to his critics, "will not be a paradise for vested interests, as it was in the past, but rather a home where humble people can find happiness." From this commitment Castro has never deviated. Who can deny its democratic spirit?

Marx and Engels predicted in the Communist Manifesto that a truly democratic government would carry out "despotic inroads on the rights of property." The bourgeoisie with popular support had committed such inroads on feudal rights. That had been a democratic achievement in its day not because the bourgeoisie led it, but because the great majority of the nation wanted such a revolution and benefited from it. In Cuba in 1959 the big bourgeoise found itself on the defensive, no longer supported by a majority of the nation in the contest over use of the country's resources. As the old nobility and its ideologists had once insisted on maintaining the fetters of feudalism on society as essential to the general welfare, so the bourgeoisie and its ideologists now defended the fetters of bourgeois right. Castro discovered that a resolute struggle for democracy in a capitalist country becomes a class struggle with the bourgeoisie leading the opposition.

In the United States, where democracy still means bourgeois democracy, the Cuban struggle against the bourgeoisie is reported as a struggle against democracy. It is no easy task to rectify this falsification, since Cuba, far from being behind the United States in political development, as Americans like to suppose, has in reality leaped ahead into a struggle strange to those who have not yet experienced it.

For example, there is no longer any opposition press in Cuba, no opposition political parties, and all radio and television stations are controlled by the government. No national elections have been held and no Congress exists. How can such a state be called democratic?

Freedom for an anti-democratic opposition is not the criteria of democracy. Castro's democratic reforms gradually crystallized as a challenge to the domination of society by a wealthy minority. As the challenge became clearer, the opposition became more desperate. A revolution was taking place. All the old privileges conferred by money, birth, race, education, and investments were

being undermined. The constitution, laws, written and unwritten, and ruling ideas were losing their grip on the masses, who now became conscious that revolution was possible, that victimization and exploitation could be ended. But that possibility depended precisely on a willingness in the nation to shake off its awe for property rights, for the laws that defined them, for the church hierarchy that sanctified them, for the professors who justified them and for the military force of the United States which guaranteed them. Very few human beings can remain neutral and objective in the heat of such a struggle. Cuban newspapers took sides. Most of them were dependent on investors and advertisers for their existence. As the character of the new government evolved in the crises of 1959 and 1960, ever more radical, ever bolder in its inroads on the sacred rights of property and ever more defiant of the United States, these bourgeois newspapers took their stand with Washington and the wealthy. Their plain message to the Cuban public was the same as that of the American press and, in fact, came from the same United Press and Associated Press wire services. That message was: the revolution must be stopped, which meant Castro must go. They made it their task to weaken confidence in the government, to excite fears for religious freedom under Castro, and to frighten the public with hints of armed intervention by the United States. They magnified the role of communists in the revolutionary government. Truthfulness and accuracy yielded to the needs of the class struggle.

Liberals contend that counter-revolutionaries should be permitted to spread their propaganda as long as someone is willing and able to pay the costs. By this test the Cuban government ceased to be liberal in 1960. But that does not mean it ceased to be democratic. Democracy is not the same thing as respect for property, which means it is not the same thing as freedom for the bourgeois press. Where capital rules society it is logical that the investor's right to publish should be protected from government interference. Liberalism is the ally of plutocracy. But even liberals qualify their loyalty to freedom when a clear and present danger threatens the social order.

In Cuba in 1960 the dangers of counter-revolutionary attempts to overthrow the government were clear and present. One such attempt began to be prepared under United States supervision in March 1960. These menacing preparations, which went on for

more than a year before they materialized in the invasion at the Bay of Pigs, are no longer in dispute. They are admitted by the principal participants, both Cuban and American. The demise of the Cuban bourgeois press took place during this period of counter-revolutionary air-raids, sabotage, guerrilla bands in the Escambray Mountains, airdrops of equipment from the CIA, defections to Miami by civilian and military notables, intrigue against the government by labor union officials and church hierarchy and training of an invasion force in Puerto Rico and Central America. Even liberals would have to admit that these extraordinary conditions of civil war and threatening invasion justified a suspension of the customary rights of newspapers.

As a question of democracy the answer is even more compelling. While the bourgeois press was dying, the Cuban people were inaugurating more democracy than they had ever known before. With the creation of the popular militia and the committees for the defense of the revolution, hundreds of thousands of the poorest Cubans began voluntarily to take an active part in political life. New peasant associations were formed in which the peasant masses for the first time participated in the development and implementation of agrarian policies. Two facts, among others, registered the rooting of democracy: the toiling part of the population, the people who lacked the special training formerly considered necessary for understanding political problems, were holding meetings, meetings, and more meetings; and they had arms in their hands. Through this combination of words and weapons they became the conscious guardians and the real masters of the new state.

Women were brought into active political life through their own mass organizations, and through their participation in the militia and the neighborhood committees. Domestic servants, political ciphers under the old regime, now spent hours each week in political meetings, educational classes, and community service. In a mixed society of Negroes and whites, not unlike our own Southern states, color bars were dropped. Negroes began to participate in political and social life on a basis of equality, free for the first time from racial discrimination. The inability of the United States to solve a similar problem testifies to the importance of this Cuban democratic achievement. In no country of the hemisphere is there better ground for claiming fulfillment

of Lincoln's description of democracy, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Great masses of people, formerly inert in the political sense, have been brought upon the scene. More and more Cubans have thrown off what Lenin called "the old bourgeois prejudice that simple workers and peasants cannot administer the state."

True, a minority refuses to accept the revolution, sulks in sullen withdrawal from political life and feels itself oppressed. These are the mourners for the bourgeois press, for the exclusive clubs, for racial and economic segregation, for "civilized" society, and for other such amenities of the old order. Because they equated democracy with the legal despotism of property, rationalized and embellished by liberal ideology, and implemented through representative parliaments, "democracy" has been overthrown for this minority. Their funereal mourning is a symptom of the thoroughness of the revolution. Democracy for the rich, bourgeois democracy, has given way to democracy for the many, for the poor, for women as well as men and for Negroes as well as whites.

When Castro took office as Prime Minister in the provisional government, he was still expressing an expectation that elections of representatives to Congress would be held within 18 months. But the class opposition evoked by his radical reform program opened everyone's eyes. Newpapers opposed to the reforms began with the cry of "elections!" to agitate for an earlier restoration of Congress. The wealthy dreaded the consequences of a further consolidation of the provisional democratic dictatorship headed by Castro, implemented by the Council of Ministers, defended by the Rebel Army and ratified by popular enthusiasm and mass meetings. The social order was endangered by this highly popular dictatorship. The convening of Congress would have put an end to the extraordinary legislative authority of the Council of Ministers. Restoration of the old electoral process would have given the established bourgeois political parties an opportunity to win seats in the legislature. They were confident of their ability to get "reliable" candidates elected, all professing loyalty to the revolution, of course, but screened and selected for a sense of responsibility toward the capitalist system and good relations with the United States. A Cuban Congress became the hope of the conservatives for putting a brake on Castro and the revolution.

That is why the cry of "elections!" evoked no popular support in the Cuban masses. Elections meant a restoration of Congress, a return to 1952. Castro had already shown the nation a more exciting alternative: a revolution that would put an end to poverty, to illiteracy, to racial discrimination and to humiliation by the United States. He did not need a Congress to carry it out. The propertied classes wanted a Congress in order to preserve their own interests by putting new obstacles in Castro's path and weakening his authority. Elections were demanded, not in order to promote democracy, but in order to protect property. During Batista's dictatorship the bourgeois-democratic goal of reviving such a Congress under free elections seemed to Castro a progressive demand. Though that judgment may be open to question, it was shared by the other groups in the anti-Batista coalition. But with the overthrow of the dictatorship and the installation of a government that was proving its democratic commitment by deeds, the restoration of Congress clearly would have meant a step backwards, a revival of bourgeois restraints on democratic reforms. The Cuban masses sensed this before Castro, who brought with him many upper-class prejudices. The hoots and cat-calls from the populace against elections preceded and undoubtedly influenced his own change of position.

It is absurd to charge Castro with a betrayal of democracy because of the changes that brought him to Marxism-Leninism. It would be more accurate to say that his loyalty to democracy, matured by guerrilla struggle amidst the peasants, enabled him to overcome his prejudices when they became a handicap. His devotion to democracy gradually evolved under the hammer blows of opposition into a full appreciation of the class struggle on which democracy now depends.

VI.

PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Jean Suret-Canale
(translated by R. H. Frankenberg, Jr.)

On reading some authors inspired by a certain nostalgia for the "good old" colonial days, the experience of these last few years supposedly proved that the peoples of Africa—especially those occupying the regions located to the South of the Sahara—were not "ready" for democracy (and therefore for liberty).

The same opinion—for all practical purposes—may frequently be found in authors who lay claim to anticolonialism. The latter doubtless recognize that the oppressive colonial system weighed intolerably on these peoples: but independence would supposedly have led only to a changing of masters. Presumably the European colonialists would have been exchanged for African ruling castes, the white proconsuls for black dictators. And these authors do not hesitate to extend this assertion (which agrees with the evidence for the countries in which classical colonialism has simply changed into neo-colonialism) to countries which have resolutely committed themselves to the road of political and economic independence, such as Mali, Guinea or Ghana.

It is a fact that the political system in power in these countries assumes very different forms from what the Occidental is accustomed to consider as democracy. "Accepted ideas" in Europe establish a sort of identity between democracy and parliamentary government—the existence of several parties among which are one or several legally tolerated opposition parties.

Can one be satisfied with this comparison and therefore assert that democracy does not exist anywhere in Africa?

It is worthy of note that these authors who sermonize the Africans in such a manner are hardly deepening the concept of democracy and consider their accepted ideas as brooking no discussion.

It would be well to study more attentively what is implied by

the concept of democracy if we wish to examine how it is being realized or can become a reality in Africa.

* * *

It was, I believe, Abraham Lincoln, who gave this very complete definition of democracy—which he set down as an ideal: "Government of the people, for the people and by the people."

This very judicious formula does not limit itself in effect to translating the Greek word Democracy (power of the people) but specifies the content and form of such government: it should act for the people, make its interests triumph; it should be exercised by the people itself.

The studies of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the origin and nature of the State are well known.

They furnish us less a "theory" of the State —a term which can be admitted in the sense of a "theoretical generalization" but which can lead to misunderstanding if one desired to see in it a "closed system," something utterly foreign to the spirit of Marxism —than an objective analysis always capable of being completed and enriched, but which no fact and no argument has contradicted up to the present.

But, if we carry the analysis further, we are led to ask ourselves what conditions are presupposed by the application of such a formula.

It is here that Marxism, considered as a method of scientific investigation in the social domain, is in a position to render us invaluable service.

One cannot in effect reflect on the conditions of democracy without first of all elucidating the nature of a government, a state power and consequently the State itself.

The State has on the one hand the appearance of an administrative apparatus of men and things in the interest of the collectivity at the head of which it is placed, an appearance to which one is all the more easily tempted to give an absolute value as it always reflects reality to a certain measure.

The State, in effect, fulfils a certain number of *public functions*— in the juridical, economic, educational fields, etc . . . which in themselves possess a characteristic of general interest.

But what one too quickly forgets is that these functions in them-

selves do not necessarily have a statist character, do not necessarily imply the existence of State power. As it happens, precolonial Africa offers us some striking examples of this fact.

Western ethnologists who have the least knowledge of Marxism generally admit as a fundamental criterion of discrimination among the diverse types of ancient African society, the existence or the absence of the State. Now, in the societies which these ethnologists themselves style as "stateless," the public functions which we have enumerated exist although in an elementary form, at level of the social cell (village or tribe).

The "head of the land" who divides among the families the village lands to be cultivated, administers the order of planting crops and the dates of labor; the "war chief" who takes command of the warriors in case of conflict; the "water master" who divides the fishing zones and sets the time and manner of fishing—all are "public officials," filling a specialized post on behalf and in the interest of the collectivity.

They do not for all that command any State power; their decisions are enforced only through the "consensus" of the collectivity, without their possessing any special coercive force.

If there are recalcitrants—and that happens—it is the members of the collectivity themselves who by persuasion or force, will set them straight, or will at least try to do so.

Outside of their functions these "specialists" again become members of the community like the rest, without special authority or privilege which might place them outside or above the commonality.

These stateless societies are characterized by their relatively egalitarian structure: they often already present signs of social differentiation—for example, differences of wealth among patriarchal families—but no *clearly characterized antagonistic social classes.*

The State appears only with the constitution of a coercive force separate from the Community itself: armed followings of chiefs or kings, formed of professional warriors of various origins (often servile) destined to assure the domination of an aristocracy over the mass of the tributaries.

In short, the State only arises where *clearly delineated class antagonisms* have made their appearance.

Here is found corroboration for Engels' opinion, who concluded

his historical analysis of the formation of the State in Athens, Rome and Germany in the following terms:

> The State is not therefore a power imposed from the outside onto society; nor is it 'the reality of the moral idea,' 'the image and the reality of reason,' as Hegel claims. It is rather a product of society at a given stage of its development; it is the admission that this society becomes enmeshed in an insoluble contradiction with itself, having split into irreconcilable opposites with which it is incapable of coping. But in order that the antagonisms, the classes with antithetical economic interests might not destroy each other (both themselves and society) in a futile struggle, the need is felt for a power which, seemingly set above society, is supposed to tone down the conflict, keep it within the limits of 'order,' and this power, born of society, but which places itself above it and becomes ever more alienated from it, is the State. *

And he continues, referring to the contemporary State:

> As the State is born from the need of curbing class struggles, but as it is born at the same time in the middle of these class conflicts, it is as a rule the State of the most powerful class, of that which dominates from the economic point of view and which thanks to that fact, also becomes the dominant political class and thus acquires new means for bringing to heel and exploiting the oppressed class. *

It clearly follows, that perfect and ideal democracy, which would assure a genuine government for the people and by the people as a whole could not exist as a form of the State: the day when it will become a reality, it will no longer constitute a government, a State power in the traditional sense of the term, but rather an administrative system which will no longer have a specifically political character.

* F. Engels: Les origines de la famille, de la propriete privee et de l'Etat. Paris, Editions Sociales, 1954. p. 155-156. [For other renderings in English of this passage from Engels, see the International Publishers edition, N. Y., 1942, p. 155; or the Kerr edition, Chicago, 1902, p. 206.]

* l.c., p. 157.

Democracy, then, never exists save as an imperfect institution, the conditions most absolutely necessary for it being inconsistent with the very concept of the State.

Its full fruition, which will blend with the withering away of the State, cannot be contemplated save with the advent of the highest stage of Communism, and will mean by that very fact, the elimination of democracy inasmuch as it is a form of State power.

We do not believe that we should develop here ideas expatiated on by Marx, Engels and Lenin (especially by the latter in *State and Revolution*).

Government for the people: If one understands by people the entirety of the population of a nation, it is clear that no society based on the domination of a privileged, exploitative minority, such as capitalist society, could be democratic *in its content*.

"The bourgeois Democratic Republic," noted Engels; "no longer officially recognizes differences of fortune. There, wealth wields its power in an indirect manner, but all the more harshly. On the one hand, in the form of the direct bribery of the magistrates, of which America offers a classic example, on the other, in the form of an alliance between the government and the Stock Market." *

In this sense, as Lenin strongly emphasized in his time, the dictatorship of the proletariat, in whatever form it may be exercised (a form which, due to the circumstances and historical conditions in which the first socialist States came into being, occasionally have seemed not very "democratic") will always be essentially more democratic *in its content* than the most "democratic" bourgeois State, in its form, in its *appearances*.

Universal suffrage in the capitalist States gives only the illusion of government by the people: at the most, the people can place pressure on the State power; but the essence of the latter always eludes the people.

This does not mean that one can be indifferent to the form of the State. It is not by chance that the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries has never adapted itself to totally democratic forms: it tolerates or uses these forms to the extent that they *conceal* the reality of its class dictatorship, but rejects them as soon as they risk basically challenging this dictatorship. Therefore, the working

* l.c., p. 158.

class and in general the laboring masses of the capitalist countries struggle methodically for the democratizing of institutions, a forerunner to making society itself democratic.

The socialist State has, for the first time, a democratic *content.* It brings into reality government *for the people.* Thereby, it is alone able to open the way to *government by the people.*

In the socialist State, the advent of *truly democratic forms* for the first time becomes possible, but does not become a reality by that very fact alone. In an economically and politically backward nation, the realization of Lenin's ideal, according to which each commoner takes part in the government of the State, is a long-term job. The force of deep-rooted habits can check, delay the process—the history of the U.S.S.R. under Stalin proves the point.

All this seems to take us away from Africa. It is, however, I think, quite relevant.

How can we analyze the forms of the State in Africa? Where neo-colonialist ascendancy is maintained, it is essentially a foreign power which persists (that of the imperialist monopolies which dominate the economy of the country—large commercial and mining societies, banks) therefore profoundly anti-democratic in its content.

Its agents, instead of being white and wearing decorated uniforms, are black and wear suits. But the nature of the power has not changed, nor, in general, its forms, which remain authoritarian and dictatorial on all levels. Guiding its action in a direction fundamentally contrary to that of the masses of the people, depending only on narrow, corrupt minorities, this State power cannot adapt itself to democratic forms. The Congo-Brazzaville of Fulbert Youlou, the Congo-Leopoldville of Adoule and of Tshombé offer, in this respect, characteristic illustrations.

But how about the national States? May one not note in Guinea, Mali, Ghana—which essentially have rejected the tutelage of the imperialist monopolies—the use of methods, the adoption of measures, which do not always appear consonant with the principles of formal democracy?

What is the social basis of these States?

It is formed by a national anti-imperialist front which includes the immense majority of the population, almost the entirety: the working class (generally weak), the peasantry (the great mass) and sometimes even certain bourgeois elements.

It is to be noted that these bourgeois elements are generally very weak, as much in number as in their economic role. Confining themselves to commercial or speculative activities, they do not constitute a national bourgeoisie in the proper sense of the term, but boil down to being comprador elements which generally side with imperialism, to which they are linked.

If we examine the policy of these States, a policy which is, of course, commensurate with the means at their disposal, we note that its orientation, its fundamental content, answers to the profound and real interests of the masses of the people.

One may then consider as valid the use made by Sekou Touré of the term *national democracy* to designate the type of State set up in Guinea.

Let us now examine in what forms this State power is exercised.

The example of Guinea appears to us typical of what an African democracy can be in the present state of affairs: we shall refer to it extensively, without disregarding the neighboring examples of Mali and Ghana.

The fulcrum of political life is formed there by a single, or better stated, *unified* political party, the *Democratic Party of Guinea* (Parti Démocratique de Guinée or P.D.G.).

For many Westerners, the "single Party"would be incompatible with democracy. It is true that in countries whose population is divided into social classes having frankly antagonistic interests, the single Party means that one of these classes at least (and eventually several) , is deprived of the right of expressing itself politically.

Now, the striking thing in most contemporary tropical African countries is that this structuring into antagonistic social classes is not generally the dominant fact in the social picture.

From this point of view, only Senegal and the Ivory Coast, in the territories formerly colonized by France in Western and Equatorial Africa, form somewhat of an exception: a bourgeoisie exists there.

Elsewhere this bourgeoisie remains numerically, economically and politically insignificant.

Without doubt, there exist contradictions in the heart of the rural and urban population: there are the proletarians and the employers. But the fundamental antagonism remains that which pits the masses of the people (working class, few in number, but rather well organized, and having traditions of struggle and the

peasant masses) against *foreign imperialism* formerly propped up on a *chefferie system* (vestige of the precolonial aristocracies given status by colonization) and some *bourgeois* elements.

Moreover, the parties formed in these countries have never had a class base similar to that to be observed in evolved capitalist countries.

The people's parties have always tended to have as a social basis the *single anti-imperialist front* uniting working class and peasant masses. When there were or are several parties, they generally do not differ in their social basis, but in their geographical, ethnic context or again, the division reflects personal quarrels among leaders. The platforms are practically the same.

If there is a difference in platform, it reflects not internal antagonisms (at least not in basic matters) but the fundamental antagonisms we noted previously between the masses and colonial imperialism.

Thus, on the eve of independence, there was in Guinea a party opposed to the Democratic Party of Guinea: this party, called the African Coalition of Guinea (Bloc African de Guinée, or B.A.G.), was the very prototype of the "ruling class party," created by the colonial authorities to "counter" the Democratic Party of Guinea (P.D.G.).

Its extremely meager social basis, revealed by the result of the elections as soon as they were relatively free beginning with 1956* were mainly formed by circles linked to the *chefferie* system. It is true that there were to be found in it people sincerely opposed to colonialism, whom personal quarrels had led there and who were heading in the direction of another orientation; as intervention by the colonial administration or by colonial economic circles became more difficult, and especially when, at the end of 1957, the already socially dissolved *chefferie* system was also abolished by law. As popular pressure became strong in the direction of independence, the B.A.G. was led to adopt a program which differed practically not at all from that of the P.D.G.

It is true that there were, in 1958, violent and even bloody clashes between the militants of the two parties, especially at Conakry: these riots had not a social but a *racist* basis (immigrant Foulas against aboriginal Soussous from Conakry).

* At this time there were several parties opposed to the PDG which only later amalgamated to form the BAG.

When, several weeks after these riots, there loomed up the problem of the constitutional referendum imposed by General de Gaulle, the B.A.G., like the P.D.G. decided for the "No" vote and for independence.

In October, 1958, independence having been proclaimed, the B.A.G., carried away by popular enthusiasm, decided to combine with the P.D.G. and its officers received ministerial posts.

Hence the single party is, as already indicated, really a *unified party*. The absence of another party has not been imposed by decree nor law, nor by any other form of coercion: it results from a spontaneous movement and from the fact that there is no real social basis for another party.

A single front party, the P.D.G., is not a party of "cadres" nor of militants, but a people's party which merges with practically the totality of the population.

In Guinea, one is a member of the P.D.G. as one is a voter: not to be is a mark of social disgrace, which public opinion condemns if it is voluntary (there are examples of this) or which is imposed as a penalty (exclusion) for particularly serious reasons.

This identity of the Party with the population possessing civil rights led to making local administrative organs of the village Party committees. The population did not understand how there could be, on the one hand, the party committee (elected) and on the other, the municipal council* (also elected) and usually made up of the same people.

The village committee of the P.D.G. puts into practice a *direct and real system of democracy*, the like of which is not to be seen in the "democratic" countries of the West.

The basic Party organization which comprises almost all the men, women and youth of the village, meets weekly or fortnightly, and deliberates on matters of local administration. Circulars from the governing organs of the Party at different levels—the "National Political Bureau," the "Federation," or the "Section"—are read and answered as necessary.

The carrying out of decisions is assured by a committee of ten members, five elected in the General Assembly, three elected on

* The village committees had been instituted in 1957 by the first autonomous Guinean government established under the still semi-colonial regime of the loi-cadre.

the side by the women, two elected on the side by the young men and women.

This Committee is renewed annually, and this renewal is not a mere formality; the elections give rise to keen competition, which, moreover, one cannot always be satisfied with as evidence of "democracy" (they can mask unhealthy personal or clan rivalries).

This direct democracy corresponds on the one hand to ancient traditions. Sékou Touré refers to the traditional "communocracy" in Africa, and other African leaders see in the African village a model of democracy previous to the intrusion of European ideas, indeed a model of socialism.

It is doubtless true that the African village retains a certain heritage of the "primitive community" prior to the appearance of antagonisms innate in society; e.g., absence of private ownership of land and discussions involving the people preceding the decisions of the chiefs. But it is true also that even before colonization (which strove to introduce the absolute authority of the village chief) this democracy had already greatly deteriorated. The women and the youth were not entitled to a hearing. The old men, the patriarchal family heads alone were really entitled to speak and vote, the others hardly ever being admitted save to listen and eventually to approve or disapprove the opinions expressed.

The system was less rule by the people than the rule of old men. It is not by chance that the P.D.G. based its action most especially on the women and the youth and under the Articles gave them half the seats in the elected committees.

The African village was not democratic by nature, but it could furnish a framework favorable to a real democracy. At the same time, it is necessary to note that this "direct democracy" is linked to structures inherited from the preindustrial age.

In Western history, the sansculottist "sections" of the revolutionary Paris of 1793 offer about the only similar example, linked to analogous petty bourgeois and artisan structures.

Hence, democracy exists at the basis. The observers least favorable to Guinea admit it, however little they may have taken the trouble to extend their field of observation beyond the horizon of the large international hotels. But they ardently dispute it at summit conferences.

If "direct democracy" was able to adapt itself to the precolonial

structures of the African village, it cannot adapt itself as easily to the new structures introduced by colonization.

And already one may note that it is much less vital in the towns than in the country. In the towns, the basic party organization is the *committee of the quarter*. Spontaneously, the African who has emigrated to the towns seeks there to rediscover and to reconstitute the village structures. As a matter of fact, in the small towns, the quarter—often a more or less enlarged former village—barely differs from the rural agglomeration, save by the pursuits of its inhabitants. But political life is less keen there; the proportion of people who do not carry the Party card or who, having one, rarely attend their committee meetings, is larger. In the large cities, and especially at Conakry, the quarter is often nothing more than a conventional division and attendance at the Committee meetings is often limited to a minority of activists. The "lumpenproletariat" and more generally the transient, unsettled population, has hardly any interest in it.

At the city level, and all the more at the regional or State level, direct democracy is inapplicable.

From the colonial era, Guinea inherited an administrative apparatus conceived for the needs of colonization, an apparatus which merges in practice with the rather narrow class of people who have been educated in the schools, those whom the colonists call the "developed ones"—almost all officials with a French education.

Schools, in the colonial regime, received hardly more than a small percentage of the population (toward 1945, around 5% of the children of school age) and the proportion of illiterates in the whole population exceeded 95% of the population.

The child having attended school and earned the "certificate of primary studies" by that very fact had a right to a job as an official; all the more so if he had attained a higher level.

The role of the schools was to furnish the colonial administrative apparatus with *minor* officials, a driving belt between the European cadres and the illiterate mass.

It is they—and also the African officials of a higher rank, nonexistent in 1945, but in a growing number since, in 1946, the doors of the French universities were opened to the young Africans —who have replaced the European cadres.

Must one conclude from this, as some do, that it is this class or official caste which today forms the "dominant class" in Africa?

An author, M. Ameillon, has just affirmed this in regard to Guinea.* According to him, the Guinean State is supposedly the "class State" of the "best paid" officials. This opinion, which derives from an ill-understood and badly digested Marxism, hardly bears up under scrutiny.

The position of this social class is almost the same in all African states, in Guinea or in Mali as in Senegal and on the Ivory Coast.

Can it, however, be denied that these countries have a fundamentally different political orientation? Could the interests of an identical class tend in divergent, indeed, opposite political direction?

A social class and the common interests (opposed to those of other classes) which form the basis of the class's very existence, cannot be created save by a role determined in social production, in the relations of production.

In this sense, the officials, well or ill-paid, never constitute a social class. In capitalist countries, they are connected with the middle classes, undecided and wavering between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

In the African countries, they "fluctuate" between colonial imperialism which schooled them and has tried to bind them to its chariot wheel through material advantages, and the people from whom they are descended. Where the pressure of colonial imperialism dominates, they are, in the majority, in the service of colonialism or neo-colonialism: only a conscious minority goes over again to the side of the people and furnishes its leaders. Where, as in Guinea or in Mali, a strongly structured mass party has allowed the people to organize and to exert a dominant pressure, they have put themselves—with more or less good will—at the service of the people. But many hanker for the colonial regime, or aspire to combine with the bourgeoisie-in-the-making which could take up where the colonizers left off.

Those elected (members of the National Assemblies, governing cadres of the Party on the national or regional level) come from this intermediate class. It cannot be otherwise, for the exercise of governmental functions implies a minimum of learning which the officials alone have acquired.

The result is that in the State apparatus and even in the Party organizations—even if these bodies are regularly elected and func-

*B. Ameillon. *Guinea, bilan d'une independance,* Paris, Maspero, 1964.

tion, as in the case of Guinea, according to the principles of democratic centralism—the cadres are not naturally nor easily the spokesmen for the aspirations and the interests of the people.

Representative democracy obliges the people in Africa to delegate its powers to men belonging to a social class which in many respects is alien to their own.

Thus, the application of the formal principles of representative democracy in Africa runs the risk of ending in the negation of true democracy. This explains how sometimes the action of a leader or of leaders who have the confidence of the people because they have become the spokesmen for their aspirations and their interests, can go in the direction of democracy, even when it seemingly derogates from the principles of formal democracy.

Ghana offers a striking example of this situation. The middle class and feudal elements continue to exist but they are too feeble to oppose the people all alone, or to create a mass base for themselves; for that reason they rely on foreign imperialism. Therefore, in Ghana the personal action of Nkrumah, even if certain of its aspects may offend, possesses an obvious democratic content.

To the extent that the officials—and especially the high officials, including the cadres of the C.P.P. (Convention People's Party of Ghana)—have close ties with the bourgeois and feudal classes, the formal application of the principles of representative democracy would end frequently in turning over the direction of the State to the enemies of the people. It is clear that if Nkrumah did not represent the interests of the people and did not rely on the people, he would not have the power to keep such officials in check. His exceptional role reflects the difficulties of this social situation.

Of course, this state of affairs could not be considered as an ideal. It is to be noted, moreover, that in Guinea and in Mali, the existence of an important class of cadres devoted to the people and even already, in some cases, stemming from the people, allows lessening the contradictions between the content of a democratic policy and the risks contained in the forms of representative democracy.

Only the development of the economy and of education and the promotion of cadres sprung directly from the people will be able to keep formal democracy in Africa from being dangerous to real democracy.

The measures taken against formal democracy; even if they are

sometimes necessary for the sake of real democracy, are nonetheless dangerous for this real democracy; the most popular leaders can betray the cause of the people. There have been examples of this in Africa. A particular people's party— as in the case of the Ivory Coast Democratic Party between 1945 and 1950—can degenerate into a hierarchy of committees of notables; their leaders can abandon the cause of the masses for the sake of a compromise between the middle classes and foreign imperialism.

Democracy, as it is practiced in Ghana, Guinea and Mali cannot therefore be considered as altogether satisfactory. But the fact remains that the governments of these countries have an undeniably more democratic content than the regimes in power in the U.S. or in Great Britain, without mentioning the monarchy set up in France by the Fifth Republic, in the name of which certain individuals sometimes like to sermonize the African nations. Their action in a resolutely democratic direction contributes in creating the conditions which will progressively make possible the active participation of the masses in the government on the State as well as village level.

As elsewhere, democracy in Africa will result from a people's conquest, from a continuous creating.

VII.

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Examined too late for inclusion in its proper place, but too important to go unmentioned is:

Praxis, Vol. I, No. 2, Nov.-Dec. 1964. This is published in Zagreb in Serbo-Croatian and English translation. This issue's overall title is, "The Meaning and Prospects of Socialism," and contains several essays dealing with Socialism and Democracy.

Note is to be taken of several recent unpublished doctoral dissertations accepted in United States universities:

Elliott, C. J., "Freedom and Revolution: The Political Thought of Rosa Luxemburg," Harvard, 1964.

McLean, E. B., "Rosa Luxemburg's Revolutionary Socialism: A Study in Marxian Radicalism," Indiana, 1963.

Smulkstys, Julius, "The Marxist Concept of Democracy," Indiana, 1963.

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