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THE MODERN QUARTERLY

The Modern Quarterly

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THE MODERN QUARTERLY

NEW SERIES. Volume I Number I DECEMBER 1945

Contents

The Editor of the MODERN QUARTERLY will be pleased to receive Communications raising issues for discussion or criticising articles which have appeared. Suggestions as to full-length review articles will be gratefully received. Contributions of articles dealing with science, economics, æsthetics and literary criticism, ethics and philosophy will be welcomed. All communications should be addressed to the Editor: Dr. John Lewis, 40 Claremont Park, Finchley, London, N.3.

Editorial

WE have been neglecting a serious and urgent task. Immersed in the immediate problems of the war, and now of the post-war international situation, occupied with political controversy and the distractions of our economic difficulties, we have of late given less time than we should to the assumptions which underlie all public controversies. Two consequences follow: our own thinking is insecurely based; and we allow the many and influential sophistries of our time to confuse our minds because no one has the patience to expose them. The consequences are serious because, as Julian Huxley reminds us, we are living in a revolution. Social and political conflicts are reaching a new intensity and this is reflected in the conflict of ideas. We do not always remember that it is on the plane of philosophy as well as politics that the struggles of our time must be fought out. An attempt to face some of these issues was indeed made in the MODERN QUARTERLY which appeared in 1938 and 1939 and became an early casualty of the war. But the time has come to take up again and do better, if we can, the task then begun.

"*Ideas have their influence*, not as disembodied notions, but as the creeds of bodies of men whom they inspire to action." The popular ideas and more consciously formulated philosophies of our time are in need of a more fundamental criticism, criticism not only on intellectual grounds but of their social significance. Especially when reason is used to undermine reason, as it has been in our time from Mack and Bergson to Eddington, is it necessary to probe the very foundations of scientific thought if its validity is to be established. The cult of unreason has its more popular effect in the growth of superstition. Its prophets, as Laski says, "suspend by their philosophies those processes of intellectual liberation by which a people is restored to sanity."

The ground we need to cover, which is perhaps wider than our present resources, ranges from economics and history to philosophy and ethics. In science, while specialised information is beyond our scope, it is clear that we need the help which anthropology, biology and sociology can throw on the nature of man and many of his problems. As we have already indicated, the significance of modern theories of matter and of recent scientific theories raise problems

of the very nature of scientific knowledge, as well as of the nature of the physical universe, in which all thoughtful people are profoundly interested.

But has science anything to say on ethics, for instance, or are the fields of fact and value utterly distinct as many believe? The MODERN QUARTERLY will strive for the closest interpenetration of science and subjects hitherto separated from science. This means that it will ask the biological specialist, for instance, to emerge from his isolation and communicate his results to a wider public by showing their significance for modern thought. As an example, what light is thrown upon the body-mind problem and the vitalist controversy by recent bio-chemistry and the present attitude of biologists to "life"? or upon the same problem by studies in the development of thought on the child and in primitive man?

If science has much to teach us which we have still to learn, science must also be aware that it is fiercely assailed to-day by those who fear that man has power at his disposal beyond his moral capacity to control it. This is precisely one of those glib and pretentious ideas that is in need of ruthless criticism. It is closely associated with the new pessimism regarding man. "Evil wells up in our society from the abysmal depths of the perverted will of man," says a popular broadcaster. It was Pétain's gospel of despair to compel all France into "repentance and remorse" for the "sin" which had laid France low. *Everything* in France which had led up to the armistice had been wrong, especially trade unionism, socialism, democracy, rationalism. Thus subtly was attention withdrawn from the real *sinners* by involving all, indiscriminately, in *sin*. So would our Joads and Aldous Huxleys, our theologians and broadcasters, our C. S. Lewises and Reinhold Niebuhrs persuade us in England. What plainer propaganda for reaction!

From another angle the persistent attempts to confuse moral issues, to break down the distinction between right and wrong, meets with some success and paralyses many wills. It may be the sophistries of a George Orwell in the new theoretical publication, *Polemic*, finding no difference whatever between guilty Germans hanging innocent civilians in 1941 and the victorious allies hanging those same guilty Germans for their crimes in 1945; or it may be Joad in the same issue, pretending to be more moral than anybody by exalting as Sacred Absolutes whatever he at the moment feels

to be 'right', be it Pacifism, as it was yesterday, or something else to-day; the underlying effect is the same, to blur the real moral issues of our time.

The whole basis of ethics needs re-examination, as the gallant attempt by Dr. Waddington and his collaborators in *Science and Ethics* shows only too plainly.

It is in philosophy itself that the intellectual root of much of our scepticism rests. The rejection of metaphysics, as Engels says, is always by those who "are slaves to precisely the worst vulgarised relics of the worst philosophers." "We have no choice whether we shall form philosophies for ourselves," says one of our coolest thinkers, "only the choice whether we shall do so consciously and in accord with some intelligible principle or unconsciously and at random." The MODERN QUARTERLY has a double function here: to criticise philosophy in disintegration, whether the rotting carcase of mediaevalism or the sophisticated nihilism of Logical Positivism; whether frantic revivals of mysticism, intuitionism, superstitious dualism, seeking to establish ground for sheer supernaturalism, or despairing irrationalism and solipsism locking us up to our own sensations, our own mental constructs and the "mythologies" to which they reduce science. This on the one hand; on the other, to recover from the wreckage of past systems what is permanent, to distinguish from the confused philosophies of the present what is true, to encourage the boldest restatement of philosophical issues in modern terms.

Modern philosophy has suffered from its almost complete neglect of the work of Marx and Engels, and where this has not been neglected it has been shamefully distorted; on the other hand Marxists often seem unaware of the kind of philosophy which shows the full impact of modern science, the evolutionary naturalism of certain American Realists like Sellars, and the philosophy of organism of Whitehead. A *critical* evaluation of converging tendencies as well as of diverging tendencies is much needed to-day.

There are three other departments of thought at least in which restatement and criticism is urgent and in which Marxism must come forward to play its part. In economics, industrial development and the war have brought such profound changes that the orthodoxies of yesterday are completely left behind. What is known as "the new economics" must be examined, and Marxist economists must

tell us how they and their Soviet colleagues evaluate it. What new "fetishes" are bedevilling our minds to-day, and are the old ones all quite exorcised?

In history we want to see more clearly what is the driving force of that history in the making which is the politics of our day. We want a complete restatement of the economic interpretation of historical developments which will make plain to the non-historical reader how far even orthodox historical science has departed from mere historical record, from theories of purely *political* development, as well as from the "great man" mythology of earlier days.

Finally in Literature and Art we need a new criticism. Criticism and critical theory is essential to art. The nonsense that art and philosophy are the mere epiphenomena of economic events, *mere* superstructure, finds no justification in Marxism. It is as false as the opposite view which would regard the definite expression of a political or ethical creed as a base intrusion into the sacred isolation of "significant form" or "art for art's sake."

There is no field of thought that we do not wish to cover, but our capacity to do so depends upon the response of our readers, who are invited to let us have their "communications" and criticisms, and of writers who will regard these theoretical tasks as priorities and not as frivolities.

We need to engage in a vigorous polemic along the whole line. The issues raised are not academic and must not be allowed to become so. We do not wish to encourage any aloof and tepid approach which reflects neither burning conviction nor sincere desire to be understood and accepted by the people. We desire to make the writing of this journal as forceful and clear, lively and enthusiastic, as the significance of our material demands.

One final word: There is wide scope for differences of opinion within our terms of reference. A certain speculative freedom and adventurousness of presentation is not only allowable but eminently desirable. No one should be deterred by feeling that his views may shock any kind of orthodoxy, left or right, from stating his case. On the other hand if the holiest canons seem to be unwisely and ignorantly challenged there is always a remedy—instant and effective reply.

Editorial

The theories we wish to discuss play either an obstructive role as the allies of the established order or lend consciousness and attacking power to the rival groups and classes which social development has called into being. That is why the war of ideas as well as the social and political struggles of our day requires an organ such as the MODERN QUARTERLY. Almost every significant reactionary trend of modern thought has to-day its literary medium of expression; progressive thought has been handicapped in this respect. The MODERN QUARTERLY will do what it can to remedy this lack.

GREETINGS FROM AMERICA

"The Editors of SCIENCE AND SOCIETY greet the reappearance of THE MODERN QUARTERLY. In this period of world reconstruction in which intellectual life as well as the economic and social life of humanity is being transformed, MODERN QUARTERLY will offer the leadership that is needed, and will serve as an effective guide to enlightened activity. We hope that it will have the wide and enthusiastic reading public which it so richly deserves."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our thanks are due to the Directors of the Tate Gallery, London, and the City Art Gallery, Manchester, for permission to reproduce the two paintings by Ford Madox Brown and to the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. for those by Alexei Pakhomov.

Intellectual Liberty and Spiritual Values[1]

WE are met to celebrate the tercentenary of Milton's *Areopagitica*, a protest against the censorship of books, but our main business is a discussion of the relative importance of spiritual and economic values. To-day, however, it is also our good fortune to celebrate the liberation of Paris. Every human being is freer because Paris is free. I ask you to rise in your places in honour of the men and women who have died in Paris for their freedom and ours.

Milton objected to a law according to which books, before publication, had to be submitted to a board of censors. This law was ultimately repealed. Unfortunately, as I shall try to show, what Parliament did not dare to do has been achieved piecemeal by lawyers and judges, and to-day we should be lamenting the liberties lost in our own day rather than celebrating those gained by our ancestors. I do not speak of the special conditions of war, when some form of censorship is inevitable, even though it has been grossly abused.

In the first place, the principle of censorship before publication, to which Milton objected so vigorously, is applied to the drama, the cinema, and the radio, of which the two latter, at least, reach a far wider audience than any book. As Shaw has pointed out, the censorship of stage plays was adopted as a purely political measure. Its most important application is still to the preservation of abuses. Had *Mrs. Warren's Profession* been performed when it was written, it would have accelerated the decline of prostitution in this country by several years. It was only shown when it had ceased to be immediately topical. Any play written to-day dealing with prostitution as it actually exists would meet with the same fate. The most realistic recent English book on this subject, *To Beg I am Ashamed*, was banned.[2]

But at least we can read banned plays, and they can even be acted by private societies. The case of the film is far more serious.

[1] An address delivered at a meeting of the P.E.N. club in June 1944, held to celebrate the tercentenary of the publication of Milton's *Areopagitica*, and to discuss the relation of spiritual and economic values.

[2] On the other hand, Darling Dora is not realistic. On the contrary, if every tart were like her, there would be very little case against prostitution. So *Fanny's First Play* was not banned.

The costs of production are so great that every British film must be shot with one eye on the British Board of Film Censors. The British people find it difficult to understand the American people, and the results may be disastrous for the peace of the world in the future. One reason for this is that their ideas on the American people are largely derived from films filtered through the American Hays film censorship. This remarkable organisation never allows wrong to triumph, or ministers of religion to appear as villains. If Sophocles had written *Antigone* as a film, the heroine would have retired to a cottage, or possibly risen to a throne as Haimon's bride, in the last act; while the Reverend Mr. Saygrace, to descend to a lower level,[1] would have wrestled in prayer for Lady Touchwood's immortal soul. No wonder we are apt to think of the Americans as alternating incomprehensibly between violence and smugness.

The question of radio freedom is more difficult. Here we cannot give everyone a hearing, because enough wavelengths are not available; but once a month we could allow distinguished men to say what they think and write. I cannot believe that the British public would be corrupted, even if sections of it were annoyed, if they were allowed to hear what Shaw thinks of medical research, and Wells of Catholicism. In practice, all scripts are rigidly censored, and those broadcasters who require more than occasional correction are regarded as nuisances, and rarely invited to the microphone.

The censorship of the films and radio has come about largely because writers did not do their duty in standing up for intellectual liberty. But the situation as regards books and periodicals is little better. Every newspaper and almost every publisher employs at least one lawyer to expunge potential libels. In practice, therefore, literature is now subjected, as it was in Milton's day, to censorship before publication. The great libel industry protects the rich rather than the poor. It is difficult for a bus-driver to prove that a libel has done him £500 damages; it is easy for a company director to do so. The law is different in America. That is why everyone knows that big business in America is corrupt, and in England spotless. Our judicial system is equally impeccable. The law of libel prevents me from publishing certain facts about some of its leading members now alive, and the unwritten law of good taste protects them when dead. A publishing firm has recently refused to publish some remarks of mine on a late Lord Chancellor because they are in bad

[1] The reference is to Congreve's *The Double Dealer*.

taste. They may be. So, in the opinion of the last speaker, were many passages in Milton's work.

At the present time the Home Secretary can suppress any newspaper on his mere motion, as King Henry VIII would have put it, and recently suppressed the one with which I am associated. It is doubtless necessary that the State should have such powers in wartime. But I can see no justification for the grant of such powers without the right of appeal to a Court of Law. The *Daily Worker* is the only daily newspaper suppressed in England during the war. It is also the only paper which has had an editor killed fighting as a volunteer in battle against fascism. The two facts are not unconnected.

I must now turn to our second theme, the relative importance of spiritual and economic values. Here I am doubly handicapped. I object to the word "value." I can only suppose that it means a quality in an action, a person, or a thing, of which someone approves. The important question is who. Some authors appear to think that values are independent of men.

> *"But value dwells not in particular will;*
> *It holds his estimate and dignity*
> *As well wherein 'tis precious of itself*
> *As in the prizer,"*

says Hector to Troilus. This view is intelligible if they represent the opinions of a personal God. On no other hypothesis do I find it intelligible. In fact, the notion of values divorced from individual valuers appears to me to combine, to a singular degree, the intellectual disadvantages of theism and atheism. I particularly object to the phrase "economic values," simply because the word "value" is already used in one of several senses in economics, such as use value, labour value, or exchange value, and its use in a wholly different sense in the present discussion can only lead to confusion or worse.

Secondly, I am a materialist, and cannot see how to distinguish between economic and spiritual values. Earlier speakers in this discussion have made some instructive attempts to classify the unclassifiable, beginning with Mr. Forster's division into "musts" and "oughts," and culminating in Mr. Green's remark that he would rather be a dreamer than an endocrinologist. He must have said this in momentary oblivion of the fact that O'Shaughessy, who wrote "We are the music-makers and we are the dreamers of

dreams," was Curator of Insects at the Natural History Museum.

Let us give a concrete example of the difficulty of separating economic and spiritual values. Sir Philip Sidney wrote *Astrophel and Stella*, which, in the terminology that I must unfortunately use, embodied certain æsthetic values, which I suppose are taken to be spiritual. Later on he got a bullet through his thigh bone, and refused a drink of water in favour of a comrade, saying, "Thy need is greater than my need." During the last two months the value behind these words has been exemplified by the actions of many quite ordinary men and women during the bombardment of London. Sir Philip was enunciating the basic principle of communism, "To each according to his needs," and was acting on the principle as well as uttering it. But when an attempt is made to apply this principle in a broad manner—for example, in the Beveridge Report —we are given to understand that this is a matter of economic rather than spiritual values. I begin to harbour the suspicion that, in controversy, spiritual values are those to which the speaker attaches importance, while economic values are those supported by his opponent.

This is probably unfair. Perhaps we shall approach nearer to the truth by considering what most people would assess as an economic value—namely, cleanliness. This is something you can get if you have money, and cannot if you have not. It was certainly a prerequisite for science. Chemistry and physics demand a higher standard of cleanliness than cooking or cosmetics. It is probably a prerequisite for many kinds of art. I do not see how painting with clean lines and pure colours could have developed in an atmosphere of squalor. And I do not hesitate to say that for the men or more probably women who started the ideal of cleanliness it was at first an æsthetic value, presumably therefore a "spiritual" one. A neolithic woman who swept her floor, polished her pottery, and washed her face, when her neighbours did not, was making a far more important contribution to civilisation than if she had loved her neighbours or attributed an unusually merciful character to the local idol.

Once, however, cleanliness is established as a generally respected value, one can often realise other values by going against it—for example, by going without a bath for weeks in war, by dissecting human corpses, by feeding lice on one's body, and so on. New values are often made by overriding the old ones.

In fact when a spiritual value is sufficiently widely accepted in a

community it becomes an economic value. The clergy, who claim to be special custodians of spiritual values, are paid for their work. So are authors and artists who enunciate spiritual values which are accepted, if not acted on, by the community in which they live.

"The True, the Good, the Beautiful,
These are the things that pay,"

as the Rev. Charles Dodgson[1] put it; and he had been well paid for his literary output. It seems, then, that we must recognise, either that the dichotomy between spiritual and economic values is false, or that a value ceases to be spiritual when those who enunciate it are rewarded by cheques, chairs, or benefices, rather than rotten eggs, libel actions, or crucifixion. Though I am a strong critic of most existing societies, I am not prepared to go quite as far as that. I think that, in so far as any meaning can be attached to the words, a spiritual value may also be an economic value. This is doubtless rather a rare coincidence in an evil type of society like our own; but we should endeavour to make the two coincide, as, for example, Ruskin devoted much of his energy to raising the market value of what he regarded as good pictures, and Lenin to raising the market value of creative labour and lowering that of what he (and Ruskin) regarded as dishonest practices.

I object to the term "spiritual values" for another reason. The word "spiritual" is taken over from the terminology of religion, and it appears to be tacitly assumed that a spiritual value is good. But yet most religions admit the existence of evil spirits. Consider the value embodied in the words (from the *Götterdämmerung*):

"Lachend lass uns verderben,
Lachend zu Grunde geh'n.
Fahr hin, Valhall's leuchtende Welt;
Lebe wohl, prägende Götter Prächt
End' in Wonne, du ewig' Geschlecht."

These words are probably inspiring thousands of Germans at present.[2] I think they must be said to express a spiritual value, but probably an evil one. The same is true of many of the spiritual values put forward by the Churches. Here is the papal encyclical

[1] Better known under his *alias* of Lewis Carroll.

[2] Perhaps I was wrong here. A member of the audience who had interrogated German prisoners told me that most of them did not know who Wagner was.

Quadragesimo Anno, published in translation by the Catholic Truth Society. It contains attacks on capitalism, liberalism and socialism which would not have displeased Carlyle or Ruskin. When we turn to the Index and look up "Fascist corporative régime," we are referred to such passages as this: "Little reflection is required to perceive the advantage of the institution thus summarily described: peaceful collaboration of various classes, repression of socialist organisations and efforts, the moderating influence of a special régime." If these are spiritual values, they are no more wanted than the spiritual values which urged the then Archbishop of Canterbury to his famous defence in the House of Lords of Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938. It was apparently such values as these that inspired the present Archbishop of Westminster, in his first public speech, to demand a censorship of books. The Romish hierarchy, and those clergy of other sects who imitate them, are as great a danger to intellectual liberty to-day as they were when Milton wrote.

After these unfortunately necessary preliminaries, we come to the core of the discussion. There are those, and I am one, who hold that the intellectual, æsthetic and moral ideas current in a society —its spiritual values, if you like that phrase—are primarily determined by its productive forces and relations, matters with which economists deal. This, of course, applies not only to the orthodox ideas, but to the unorthodox ones, and particularly to those held by revolutionary minorities who may be about to change the economic system, or at least to accelerate and to some extent guide a change when this becomes inevitable. My opponents say that it is the ideas which make the society. I cannot attempt to argue the case here in detail. I leave that to Marx and Engels. I would simply point out that such seminal ideas as those of Newton were unacceptable in the Middle Ages, and that it is reasonably certain that had Newton died in infancy almost all his scientific ideas would have arisen in other minds during the century following his birth. Society produced these ideas through the agency of Newton. It could have produced them through other agencies, notably Leibniz and Hooke.

If this is correct, we cannot hope for great improvement in our spiritual values without improvement in the economic structure of society. We need not be Marxists to believe this. The Dutch statesman John de Witt was not a Marxist when he wrote of "trade and navigation, which are the very soul and inner substance of our

state." It is noteworthy that Ruskin demonstrated it both by precept and example. For his failure to produce or inspire great architecture amid his economic surroundings is at least as instructive as *The Seven Lamps of Architecture.*

The opposition to historical materialism arises largely from the false belief that when you have stated the conditions for a human activity you have explained it away. Bach could not have written his music for a five-stringed lyre, but the theory of organs does not explain Bach away. However, musical progress is impossible without technical progress. Moral or intellectual progress is equally impossible.

Another reason for opposition is the fear of men and women engaged in intellectual pursuits that, as a result of changes in the economic system, they will have to do work judged to be of more immediate economic value than their present work. I have little sympathy with this view. I have been doing applied science during the last five years, and find that it raises problems of great intellectual interest. I think that everyone should do work judged by the community to be of economic value, but that everyone should have leisure for other work. If the community will pay for intellectual work, so much the better; if not—well, St. Paul, Spinoza and the *douanier* Rousseau, to take three names at random, earned their livings in other ways. I should like every scientist to devote part of his or her time to applied science, in the interests of pure science as well as that of the community. Conversely, I should like to see every applied scientist given facilities for some "pure" or fundamental research.

It is alleged that where, as in the Soviet Union, almost all research is paid for by the State, the free expression of scientific opinion is necessarily checked. Thus on p. 135 of *Phœnix*, published in 1942, Mr. H. G. Wells wrote: "In the last ten years young biologists have had to make a hasty departure from the country because they published their belief in the Darwinian survival of the fittest, and that was judged to be contrary to the dogma of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

As a member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., I should have protested had this been proved correct. I therefore asked Mr. Wells for the names of any of the men in question. He did not know them, but stated that his information came from an American, whose name, but not his address, he remembered. I have been unable to confirm his statement, or other similar ones, from

sources at my disposal, which include "White" exiles. I rest my case.

I think that a very great deal of the opposition to historical materialism comes from a mixture of pride and misunderstanding, as did the opposition to Darwinism. It is as unpleasant, for some people, to think that our intellectual activities are largely determined by economic causes as that we are descended from apes. But both may be true, and in my opinion are so. Marxists at any rate believe that this economic determinism is a temporary phenomenon from which man can and will liberate himself by producing a classless society in which there is plenty for all; and the present tyranny of things over people will end. They believe that the first step in overcoming an evil is to recognise its existence, and that those who lay claim to such superhuman virtue that their spiritual activities are uninfluenced by economic facts are doing a very poor service to the spiritual values whose champions they proclaim themselves.

A world of health, leisure, and plenty is technically possible. In such a world some people will be content with no more action than the minimum demanded of them. But others will develop the various faculties of man in the ways to which the term "spiritual value" applies. This is at any rate what the rare possessors of plenty and leisure have done in the past. But there will be two great differences. All will have opportunities of full "spiritual" development, and life will not be warped by the necessity to defend and justify privilege. Some will find their highest expression in asceticism, using the word in its original sense.[1] No casual labourer, no monk, is exposed to such voluntary poverty as an Arctic explorer, no worker in a dangerous trade to such concentrated risk as a rock-climber. Pain, danger, and disease are rarely ennobling unless they are voluntary.

That is why I believe that the realisation of economic values is a necessary prerequisite to that of spiritual values. At every new cultural level new spiritual values emerge, at first in the minds of a few cranks, then of a minority, and finally of a majority. For example, in the nineteenth century the conditions of human existence rose high enough in a few European countries to make the idea acceptable that animals as well as men have rights. If by spiritual values you mean those values whose existence is only discerned by a small minority, I say that that minority will only be increased when you have satisfied needs which were once spiritual

[1] ἄσκησις means "athletic training."

values in this sense, and are now expressed in economic demand—for example, the needs for cleanliness and country holidays.

Man is a noble and insatiable animal. I believe that he will always make fresh demands on the world and on himself, and thus create new spiritual values. Let us frankly admit that we writers are mostly champions of values which have been current for some centuries, and have now perhaps less claim to spirituality than when they were first perceived. Let us beware of claiming to be gifted with inner light, and of rejecting the claims of those less fortunately placed than ourselves in the name of spirituality. If there are spiritual values, there is also such a thing as spiritual pride.

By that sin fell the angels.

J. B. S. HALDANE.

"Modern Economics" and Politics

"THE savage . . . has his experts, his medicine men, who by chant or howl, by sacrifice or incantation, attempt to cajole the destroying force. The capitalist world also has its experts, its economists. The phenomena of crisis lie, however, outside the scope of their science. This fact is not widely realised. Yet there will be no difficulty in citing the explicit admissions of the theoretical experts of capitalism that their science offers no explanation of the existence of crises. They have evolved a science of economics which seems to explain the exact workings of the capitalist system and (incidentally) justifies those workings in every respect. There is only one difficulty. The system periodically refuses to work." This passage, written by John Strachey just over ten years ago,[1] is a fair criticism of "orthodox" or "academic" economics at that time. While it had been plausible to explain the economic disturbances of the 'twenties as the aftermath of the War of 1914–18, the unparalleled economic crisis of the early 'thirties, particularly in the United States, whose economy had been least distorted by the war, was something which could not be explained away. The orthodox economic theory was manifestly wrong.

Only the Marxists seemed able to explain what was happening. They had foreseen the crisis at a time when almost every orthodox economist believed that a new era of capitalist expansion had begun, and they claimed a body of thought which offered a comprehensible analysis, not only of the crisis of the early 'thirties, but of the more profound crisis in Western civilisation. What the Marxists failed to do was to refine and develop to any significant extent Marxist economics.[2] They were content to use *Capital* as a store of biblical texts to encourage their friends and confound their enemies, among the latter being included from time to time most "orthodox" economists of progressive tendencies.

Yet it was in academic economics that a profound revolution took place. Just a year after the words which open this article were written, Lord Keynes published *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Nor was this the only upheaval in academic circles. The classical theory of prices, based upon the assumption of perfect competition, had already been undermined by disclosures

[1] *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*, p. 15.
[2] We are not here concerned with any failure of the Marxists in action.

of the remarkable divergence between the costs of production of firms engaged in the same processes, which were a by-product of the State control of production in certain sectors of industry in the last war. In the middle 'thirties a beginning was made in the systematic analysis of imperfect or monopolistic competition. Finally, the improvement both in the quantity and quality of statistical economic data, and in the technique for handling these data, have been of great importance in the advancement of economic theory.

The purpose of this article is to sketch in barest outlines these recent developments and to suggest that they have an important bearing upon the struggle for socialism.

Light in Dark Places

Economic propositions are concerned with the relation between quantities. When Marx writes about changes in the "rate of exploitation" or the "organic structure of capital," or the Keynesian economists describe the "multiplier effect," one can imagine the clerks in the Celestial Statistical Office busily translating the propositions into quantitative terms. What is important for us, however, is that the computations of the Celestial statisticians should be published by the Stationery Office. It is not generally realised how miserably inadequate the supply of statistical data, in a form which was of any use to economists, was before the war, particularly in Britain. Most of the figures came from official sources, and were the by-product of administration. Because there was a system of Statutory Unemployment Insurance, for example, we were able to get figures for unemployment among *insured* workers. For workers outside the scope of Unemployment Insurance, which meant most salaried people at that time, we had only the 1931 Census of Population. By the exercise of a good deal of statistical ingenuity, or inspired guessing, it was possible to make an estimate of the total number of unemployed in a particular year. This is only one of many examples which might be given. And indeed the greatness of the pioneers of British national income estimates, such as Bowley and Clark, was in no small part to be found in their boldness and perseverance in detective work! Considerable delays in publication reduced the value of some of the official sources: the Final Report on the 1935 Census of Production was in fact never issued because of the outbreak of war in 1939. There has never been a Census of Distribution in Britain, so that we do not

even know how many shops there are. Perhaps most important of all, we have no comprehensive data about costs and profits in separate industries or for different firms within an industry.

Once again war has proved a forcing house for economic knowledge; the Government has been obliged to obtain all kinds of information which private enterprise was successful in withholding before. Much of this information has been kept within the confines of Whitehall behind the statistical blackout, but some has seen the light. The 1945 edition of the series of White Papers entitled *An Analysis of the Sources of War Finance and Estimates of the National Income*—a series begun in 1941 and prepared in the Central Statistical Office, itself a wartime product—contains in its thirty-five tables the most comprehensive quantitative account of Britain's national economy yet given. The authors of this White Paper point out that "there is nothing in this method which limits its application to wartime. In peacetime, too, such an approach to any large change in expenditure, whether public or private, on armaments, for example, or capital equipment, is both possible and, in view of the Government's employment policy, necessary." In addition, we are promised a good many more official statistics, on savings, projected capital expenditure, public and private, etc., while the preparations for the first Census of Distribution have recently been started. Among the many claims upon the energy of the Labour Government, the need to obtain from industrialists a great many figures which so far they have managed to keep to themselves should occupy a high place.

There is, of course, a considerable, and growing, literature of realistic studies in economics, and already economic theory has benefited greatly from the facts at our disposal in this country and the fuller information obtainable in other countries, notably the U.S.A. To take only one example from the work of Mr. Kalecki.[1] The perfect competition theory of price formation is still widely used in academic economics, and needless to say, this theory is the *rationale* of the advocates of "free enterprise." It can easily be shown that if this theory were correct it would follow that the relative share of wages in value added (i.e. the net output of an industry or enterprise) should fall in the boom and rise in the slump. Now this relative share of wages in value added can be calculated for U.S. manufacturing industry from 1919 to 1937, and it is found that

[1] Mr. Kalecki was one of the first theoretical economists writing in this country to make full use of statistical data to check the validity of his theories. Cf. *Essays in the Theory of Economic Fluctuations*, 1939, and *Studies in Economic Dynamics*, 1943.

the theory fits the facts only for the slump year of 1921. For the remaining years the facts go against the theory.

This example must suffice to show that the increasing knowledge of the facts has already had a beneficial effect on economic theory in clearing away a good deal of controversial lumber.[1]

The Theory of Price Formation

"Practical men," says Lord Keynes, "are usually the slaves of some defunct economist." The biggest monopolists in the country are wont to defend their position with arguments derived from the theory of perfect competition. It was already clear at the end of the war of 1914–18 that the text-book theory bore little relation to the facts. In one of the most interesting of the Carnegie Endowment economic histories of the last war, Mr. E. M. H. Lloyd wrote:[2]

> "Nothing illustrates the extraordinary extent to which competition is in fact limited in operation throughout trade and industry than the striking divergence between the costs of production of different firms engaged in the same processes. According to economic theory, the competition of producers should be constantly tending to drive the inefficient out of production. To the extent to which this tendency does not operate, the economists say that friction exists. But friction of one kind and another would almost seem to be a more important feature of the economic system than free competition. Some day the economists will have to analyse the laws of friction to supplement the laws of supply and demand, and construct an economics in which combination, inertia and vested interests provide the rule, and competition and individual enterprise the exception. In many trades and industries, even with the qualification 'in the long run' added, such a topsy-turvy theory of political economy might give a truer picture."

Two major attempts to break the ground of "topsy-turvy" economics came in the 'thirties from the American, Professor Chamberlin and Joan Robinson. The starting point of the imperfect competition theory is that the normal firm has some *degree* of monoply:

[1] This is not to say that all economists at once accept the evidence before their eyes. They cling to their long-standing fallacies with unusual pertinacity; perhaps the most remarkable example being Ludwig Mises' denial of the possibility of planning, published in English when Soviet planning already had been going on for five years!

[2] *Experiments in State Control*, 1924.

that is to say, owing to the numerous imperfections of the market, particularly product differentiation which may be supported by advertising, a single producer who raises his price somewhat will not at once lose all his custom—which is what would occur under perfect competition—but only part of it. The new theory also takes into account any restriction on entry into the trade. No excessive claims can be made on behalf of the imperfect competition analysis: indeed, it has suffered some damaging criticisms, not least from Mrs. Robinson herself.[1] Albeit the theory did shatter the illusion that all factors of production, land, labour and capital, obtain their *true reward*, which provided the ethical basis of the competitive theory. On the contrary, the imperfect competition analysis reintroduced the concept of exploitation, though the extent to which "exploitation" implies moral condemnation of the economic system is not very clear,[2] and it also makes possible a plausible explanation of the distribution of incomes, especially of the constancy of the relative share of wages in total output.

What the modern economists have succeeded in doing is to undermine partially the competitive theory. Not completely: further necessary destruction awaits them in the field of international trade theory, where a great part of current discussion is still carried on with the implicit assumptions of universal full employment and free competition. The housebreakers are beginning already in various corners of the structure; but the new theoretical structure is not rising as fast as the old is being destroyed. What we have so far are some useful tools of analysis and various fairly well-founded parts of a building.[3]

The Keynesian Revolution

Apart from its particular weakness in so over-simplifying the model of the market mechanism as to give a false picture, the orthodox competition theory was in fact only a *partial* equilibrium theory. Its laws were derived from the analysis of particular situations conducted upon the assumption that all other factors remained the same. This is, of course, a perfectly legitimate type of analysis provided that its limitations are realised. To give one

[1] Cf. *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, p. 97.

[2] Chamberlin, for example, points out that with the definition of exploitation first used by Mrs. Robinson *all* factors of production are exploited!

[3] See, for example, Joan Robinson, "The Foreign Exchanges," in *Essays in the Theory of Employment*, and T. Balogh, "The International Aspects of Full Employment," in *The Economics of Full Employment*.

example: if the wages in *one* industry are reduced and the employers reduce prices, they will be able to sell more of their product and thus employment in the industry will increase. For it is reasonable to assume that the reduction in the wages of, say, textile workers will not significantly effect the demand for textiles as a whole.[1] But it is quite wrong to generalise for the economy as a whole a law of this kind derived from a particular situation, and to conclude that an all-round reduction in money wages will lead to an increase in total employment. For the wage cut reduces money demand for output correspondingly, whereas the particular analysis was conducted on the assumption of *constant* money demand for the particular product (textiles). The conclusion, in fact, would be valid only if the money expenditure of capitalists on consumption or on investment increased immediately to offset the reduction in the expenditure of workers. And there is no reason why this should happen automatically; in fact, it is far more likely not to happen, with the result that the final position is one of lower money wages, lower prices, and the same output and employment as before. A complete analysis of the effect of wage changes is, needless to say, a good deal more complicated than this,[2] but this example was mentioned simply to illustrate a fundamental weakness of the classical theory.

It was the great achievement of Lord Keynes that he provided a general theory of the capitalist system as a whole which does not founder on this rock. The Keynesian theory has been criticised, or else neglected, by many Marxists and socialists because it seems to imply that capitalist crisis can be remedied, and full employment permanently maintained without making serious inroads into the private ownership of the means of production; indeed both Lord Keynes and, more recently, Sir William Beveridge have argued on such lines. Nevertheless, the Keynesian theory, if we include in this term more recent developments, is of the utmost importance to the labour movement, in so far as it can be used to fill a most important gap in socialist strategy.

In the Keynesian system the determinants of the level of employment are the rate of investment in real capital equipment, the building up of stocks and so on, and the propensity to consume.

[1] We also notice that a cut in *money* wages in the textile industry means an almost exactly proportional cut in *real* wages, for the prices of all goods other than textiles will remain the same, while the reduction in textile prices will not significantly alter the cost of living of textile workers.

[2] Cf. Kalecki, *Essays in the Theory of Economic Fluctuations.*

The former depends upon the expectations of capitalists about the profitability of new investment, taking account of the rate of interest which would be obtained if their money was not used to purchase real assets, factories, machines, etc., but interest-bearing securities.[1] The "propensity to consume," the amount of a given total income which the community as a whole wishes to spend on consumption goods and services depends upon the distribution of income and upon psychological factors. People with low incomes spend all they earn because they have to in order to live at all; but as we go up the income scale people are in a position to save an increasing proportion of their income. Thus if the income distribution is highly unequal we expect a lower propensity to consume for the community as a whole than if incomes were more equally distributed.[2] We can put this the other way round and say that the proportion of its income which the community as a whole will desire to save will be larger, the more unequal the distribution of income. Further, if the distribution remains much the same, but the income as a whole increases, the proportion saved out of the higher national income will be greater.

Given the propensity to consume, the level of employment will be determined by the rate of investment. This can perhaps best be seen by an illustration. In the accompanying table there are two columns. In the first column we have various possible (hypothetical) levels of the national income, the largest (5,000 p.a. in our example) being that which would correspond to full employment. In the second column we have the amount which people wish to spend and in the third column the amounts which the community would wish to save out of the corresponding income.

Net national income	*Consumption*	*Net saving*
3,000	3,000	0
3,500	3,400	100
4,000	3,800	200
4,500	4,100	400
5,000	4,200	800

[1] If the capitalist borrows to finance his investment, he must cover the interest on the loan out of the profits derived from the new investment.

[2] There is good evidence of the tendency for the proportion of personal increase saved to rise, as income rises, for the U.S.A. The evidence in Great Britain is little and inconclusive. A high proportion of peacetime saving, however, is in the form of "undistributed profits" of companies. Thus the argument certainly holds for any redistribution from profits to wages, and probably holds for a more equal distribution of personal incomes.

Suppose the rate of investment is 200 p.a.; then the income will be 4,000, with a corresponding level of employment: to get full employment, investment of 800 p.a. would be necessary.

So far, of course, all this is purely formal. The theoretical analysis is concerned with the interrelations between investment and consumption. An increase in the former, by generating additional incomes, will cause an expansion in consumption: an increase in the latter will increase the profitability of existing capital and may lead to a rise in the rate of investment. This is in strong contrast to the classical theory which, in effect, assumed that an increase in investment could only take place if there was an increase in saving, i.e. a decline in consumption, and vice versa: an assumption which is only true if there is *always* full employment. Lord Keynes' *General Theory* shows that there is no *automatic* tendency to full employment; on the contrary, an equilibrium position with considerable unemployment is the normal case in modern capitalism. Keynes himself only sketched out a theory of the trade cycle, which would follow from his analysis: in more recent works, more comprehensive theories of the trade cycle have been developed.

The "modern" theory has many affinities with the economic analysis of *Capital*. Three years ago Mrs. Robinson, one of the most brilliant of the modern economists, compared in some detail the classical, "modern," and Marxian analyses.[1] She tried to clear out of the way those parts of Marx's theory which do not in fact play any part in the later stages of his argument. In particular, she asserts that "no point of substance in Marx's argument depends upon the labour theory of value," and also says that "none of the important ideas which he expresses in terms of the concept of *value* cannot be better expressed without it." The peculiar merit, in fact, of the modern theory is that its concepts, its analytical tools, are more precise and, what is more, many of them are measurable, so that it is possible to exercise a constant check, not only upon the plausibility of the theory as a whole, but on its constituent parts. In the earlier years of its still very short life, the Keynesian school concentrated upon short-run problems—with the obvious motive of trying to get out of the slump—to the neglect of the long-run dynamic analysis which is so characteristic of Marx, and Mrs. Robinson concludes that "if there is any hope of progress in economics at all, it must be in using academic methods to solve the problems posed by Marx."

[1] *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, 1942.

"Modern Economics" and Politics

The Political Implications of the Modern Theory

"The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it." We have tried to show that considerable advances have been made in economic analysis, linked with realistic research, in understanding "how the system works," and we have suggested that in the interpretation of economic development the methods of modern economics are more precise than those of Marx. Have the modern economists anything to say about changing the world? Their formal answer would be that, quâ economists, changing the world is not their business. But if we go behind the formal answer we find a notable change in outlook. Until recently the answer carried with it the implication that any change, or interference, in the economic system was of itself undesirable. Certain forms of State intervention might indeed be accepted, but only as necessary evils, and the idea remained that the competitive capitalist system was a natural order, with laws of its own, which might be studied but not altered. To-day, however, the formal answer implies something quite different. That the economic system, and the way in which any particular system works, are alterable is now generally accepted. State intervention in various fields is no longer regarded as an unavoidable evil but as an essential requirement if certain desirable objectives are to be reached, and the economist constructs hypothetical models to show how a given objective could be achieved. As one would expect, the creation of "model systems"—"essays in political economy" is perhaps a better description—has been carried furthest in the study of the problem of instability and mass-unemployment.

The dilemma of modern capitalism can be simply, if crudely, stated as follows: Given the present distribution of income, with its concomitant "propensity to consume," the amount which the community, capitalists and workers, together, would wish to save is rather high. There will *in fact* be full employment if the rate of investment is high enough to offset the savings which people desire to make. Effective demand would then be sufficient to absorb all workers into productive employment. But this high rate of investment would lead to an accumulation of capital faster than the national income is rising (as a result of technical progress). Thus the rate of profit[1] will tend to fall—because the new factories, etc.,

[1] Not the absolute amount of profits which, if the distribution of income is unaltered, will remain the same, or even rise if there is technical progress.

will compete with the old for a limited market. With a falling rate of profits capitalists' expectations about the future will deteriorate and they will cease to take the risk of new investment. As soon as they cut down the rate of investment, workers will be thrown out of their jobs, their consumption will fall, causing a further fall in the rate of profit, and the whole cumulative downward movement of the crisis will be set in motion. But, say the modern economists, governments need not be concerned with any "rate of profit" on public expenditure. Thus, if the government will borrow and spend on public investment or subsidising consumption—claim, in fact, those resources which out of the "full employment income" no one else wishes to claim—the problem is solved. That this is possible is proved by the war experience in every capitalist country. The scale of public expenditure in peace necessary to ensure full employment would, of course, be much less than the expenditures in war: for in the latter case the objective was maximum war output and civilian production, and non-essential private investment was severely curtailed.[1] Such a "deficit-spending" policy would seem to be in the interest of all classes—capitalists as well as workers: while the latter would get regular jobs, the former would have boom profits guaranteed. Even the consequence of such "unorthodox" public finance, a growing National Debt, is generally agreed to be a minor problem.

The modern economists have a second string to their bow. Why, they say, assume that the "propensity to consume" is unalterable, when it is so plainly alterable by taxation? Indirect taxes fall mainly on mass consumption; direct taxes, income tax and surtax, partly on saving. Taxation in fact is a powerful instrument for the redistribution of income, so as to raise the "propensity to consume" out of a given income, thus stimulating consumption and employment. Even this method, while reducing the share of profits in total income would not reduce much, if at all, the absolute amount of profits (net of taxation)—the capitalists would receive a smaller share of a larger cake.[2]

[1] Not in every case. In 1943, when her armament output nearly equalled that of the rest of the world put together, U.S. real consumption was 10 to 15 per cent. *higher* than in 1939. This gives some idea of the vast productive capacity of the U.S. economy and of the extent to which it was wasted before the war in mass unemployment.

[2] For a comprehensive analysis of the problems of full employment in a capitalist economy, including the special question of foreign trade, see *The Economics of Full Employment*, prepared at the Oxford University Institute of Statistics.

There are no inherent *economic* contradictions in such a full-employment capitalist system. All that is required is the will on behalf of the Government to pursue the right fiscal policy, and it would appear that the capitalists should be as much in favour of such a policy as the workers.

There is, however, an unexplained residue in the analysis of capitalism by the modern economists and the policy which flows from it. Why were the capitalists in the United States so violently hostile to the New Deal, a mild expansionist policy which did not get anywhere near full employment? Why did no such policy emerge in Britain? Why *did* it emerge in Nazi Germany, albeit the public expenditures were mainly on military roads and rearmament? The answer is that the capitalists can tolerate political democracy provided they retain economic power, and this is possible only if the working class is divided. It needs no elaborate theory to see that in a political democracy a *united* working class must achieve all its objectives—including the socialisation of the means of production which is desirable, both on the grounds of social justice and as a means of accelerating economic progress. If capitalism is to survive the working class must be constantly split, and split again: and unemployment breeds disunity. Not only can the most militant workers be conveniently black-listed and condemned to a life of semi-starvation for themselves and their families, but sectional loyalties triumph over the interests of the working class as a whole. In the search for some security and better standards for their own members, some trade unions make arrangements with the monopoly capitalists in their own industry which in fact benefit them at the expense of the rest of the community, including their fellow workers in other industries.[1] The political programme of the workers becomes dominated by sectional interests: for example, the guts of the 1935 Labour Party Programme, *For Socialism and Peace*, were proposals for nationalising certain major industries, the proposal for *general* economic policy being, in contrast, tentative and secondary.

It is for this reason that the "modern" economics fills a most important gap in socialist strategy. Full employment in a political democracy will strengthen and unite the working class. Jobs and the security they bring will increase the confidence of the workers,

[1] That sectionalism is still very strong in the Trade Union Movement is plain from the T.U.C. Interim Report on Reconstruction, where for non-nationalised industries the T.U.C. propose joint worker-employer Industrial Boards which may be granted powers of control of the industry.

not only in themselves, but in the government whose policy brings them. The sheer inefficiency of so many industries will not only be clearly exposed, but private monopolies will be attacked as fetters on production, and demands for socialisation and other forms of public control will pass from the realm of pious hope to practical necessity.[1]

There is a deeper significance to the policy of full employment. We know only too well that if the capitalist citadels are threatened, their occupants turn to fascism. Of fascism as an attitude of mind there is plenty of evidence in Britain even to-day: but to be effective fascism must become a social force with some mass support, including gangs of men made desperate by prolonged hunger and inactivity. Full employment will deprive the capitalists in this country of their only hope of recovery from the tremendous blow they suffered on July 26th.[2] They will try to resist full employment by oblique propaganda—a direct attack is not possible—and by other means. They will be defeated if the Labour Movement, its leaders and the rank-and-file, knows all the answers. But it must be admitted that the comments of many socialist publicists on the Beveridge full-employment proposals, to say nothing of many Labour spokesmen, were evidence not of a superior political strategy, but of a sheer ignorance of economics. We cannot afford such ignorance.

G. D. N. Worswick.

[1] It is obvious that workers will not be enthusiastic about technical improvements if they fear that they will simply put more men out of work.

[2] In fact, the full employment of war contributed to their defeat. For perhaps the first time in any General Election money was not an effective substitute for the mass organisation of voluntary helpers.

Marxism and Ideology

(*Translated from* La Pensée, *No.* 2, *March*, 1945.)

THE word "ideology" can be understood in two different senses. On the one hand we can use the term to define the expression in human consciousness of reality, interpreted on the spiritual level in a religious, philosophical or political form (pagan ideology, materialist ideology, socialist ideology); on the other hand, as a transposition of reality into thought by the process that Marx has analysed under the name "mystification." This consists of removing from reality its own character in order to confer it on abstractions and thus to substitute an imaginary world for the world of reality. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate absolutely these two aspects of ideology; but when Ideology is considered in opposition to Marxism it is in this second sense that it must be understood.

That which characterises ideology and opposes it to Marxism is its conception of the connection of thought with reality and its conception of action. Ideology separates man from real life, from concrete activity; from this it considers ideas as something apart from reality and transfers action on to an intellectual and moral level. It is thus led necessarily to a metaphysical conception of the world, to attributing to ideas an existence independent of the real life of man, and for that reason possessing an absolute value.

As opposed to this, Marxism unites thought and reality in action, conceived as concrete, real activity, rejects all metaphysic and considers all reality, both spiritual and material, in a dialectical manner, in its connection with the essential element in human life, with economic and social activity.

This fundamental difference between ideology and Marxism appears most clearly from the way in which Marx arrived at his doctrine. This he formulated in action, that is, by criticism of the most powerful of modern ideologies, the system of Hegel.

Marx did not make this criticism in an abstract or dogmatic way, but by confronting, in action, the Hegelian philosophy with reality, in order to discard its ideology and to retain only those elements with which he could renew communist doctrine.

At the commencement of his political action he defended the

liberal movement and from the outset attacked the conservative system of Hegel. Hegelianism, contradicting the dialectical principle of the continual transformation of reality, considered the Prussian State in a metaphysical way and the Christian religion as perfect and definite expressions of the absolute Idea.

Criticising the static side of this system in order only to conserve its dialectical element, he evolved first of all from the Hegelian philosophy a doctrine of action of an idealist character. Since he retained his belief in the omnipotence of mind and the rational character of the State, he believed it was possible to realise the transformation of the State, conditioning that of society, simply by criticism of its present institutions.

The check to this attempt, which was shown by the suppression of the *Rhenish Gazette*, which he directed, convinced him at one and the same time of the insufficiency of criticism as a means of action and of his erroneous conception of the State.

Then in the light of his political experience he criticised the Hegelian conception of the State which had guided him in his action, demonstrating in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* that the State was conceived by the latter metaphysically, in itself, as an entity, as an idea-force determining *a priori* all social organisation. In order to arrive at an exact notion of the connection between society and the State, it is necessary, he said, by an inversion of Hegel's system, to consider society as the fundamental element, for it is society which determines the essential character of the State. This is seen most clearly in a society founded on the private ownership of the means of production, where the State has for its fundamental task the defence of private ownership.

Criticism of society founded on private property, to which his analysis of the character and the role of the State had led him, caused him to turn towards a form of communism. This was at first ideological, in which society is not studied in itself, and where the proletariat is only the instrument of the idea, the antithetic element charged with the realisation of progress.

Nevertheless, as he no longer believed in the possibility of arriving by the power of thought alone at a radical transformation of things, he turned from critical philosophy towards political action in conjunction with social action. He was thus led to make contact, in the course of his sojourn in Paris, where he then went, with the Parisian proletariat. This participation in the very life of the working class made him give to communism, which up to

then had been for him only an abstract conception, a realistic character and a concrete content.

Rejecting all ideology and all Utopian ideas, he sought in society itself the causes of its development and with increasing precision accounted for the causes and character of historical and social evolution. He was assisted in this essential transformation of his conceptions by F. Engels, who, in his articles in the *Franco-German Annals*, had criticised the English economic and social régime. Engels showed how communism is given birth by the very evolution of the régime of private property, destined to disappear by the effect of an internal dialectic which, in intensifying the crises born of competition and over-production, aggravates the class-struggle and determines inevitably a social revolution.

Abstraction and Phantasmagoria

At the same time as he was turning towards scientific communism, Marx completed his criticism of ideology with his analysis of mechanism in *The Holy Family*. He showed how ideology, after removing from beings and things their own reality to confer it on abstractions, sets out from these abstractions and reconstructs the world, making concrete being and reality the product of these abstractions. He revealed the mystery of this speculative construction, in which all ideology indulges, by the analysis, masterly yet full of humour, of the concept *fruit*. If, he said, we reduce the different fruits, apples, pears, etc., to the concept *fruit*, and if we consider that this concept, existing apart from them, constitutes their essence, we then made this concept the "substance" of the fruit and any apple or pear simply modes of existence of the latter. Henceforth that which is essential in the apple or the pear is not its concrete being, but the abstract entity, the concept that we have substituted for it. Real, particular fruits are only apparent fruits of which the substance, the fruit considered in itself, is the true essence. Thus speculation, after having reduced reality to a concept, has to go back from the abstract to the actual fruit, considered in its concrete reality, in order to arrive at the appearance of a real content. But if it is easy to draw from the different fruits the concept *fruit*, we can only, in setting out from this concept, arrive at the real fruit by renouncing the abstraction. That is what speculative philosophy does, but only in appearance. If, says the speculative philosopher, fruit, which exists really only as substance,

appears under different forms, a fact contrary to the unity of substance, that happens because fruit considered as a concept is not abstract being, but a living entity. The varieties of fruit are only different expressions. Real fruit, apples, pears, are only different degrees of the development of the concept *fruit*.

Thus, having reduced objects to a substance, speculative philosophy recreates them, making each of them an incarnation of this substance. But these real objects are then only appearances, modes of being of an abstract concept; their essential quality is not their natural quality, and their sole interest is to represent and constitute an exteriorisation of the concept, a necessary stage of its evolution.

This false idealism, this ideology which, by a mysterious act of creation, conjures out of rational and unreal entities, out of pure concepts, natural entities, beings and objects, substitutes for the real world a purely imaginary world and for history a vast phantasmagoria.

Marxism and the Exterior World

This criticism of ideology posed for Marx the problem of the union of man with the external world, the problem which idealism had resolved by reducing being to concepts, by making concrete reality the creation of mind and by showing that the identity of reality and ideas, of the object and the thinking subject is realised effectively in knowledge, where the object which is known and the subject which knows are merged.

To this idealist conception of the identity of subject and object Marx objected that in this kind of knowledge the mind alone has real existence. On the other hand concrete nature, the external reality, reduced to an abstraction, is only an appearance; from this fact unity between mind and being is realised only as an illusion. For this unity to be effective, in order that there may truly be an integration of man in Nature and of Nature in man, we must retain for the world outside, for the world of the senses, its own reality and not reduce it to an idea.

This integration is produced in fact in concrete, real activity by labour which places man in his environment and adapts it to human needs, thus performing the role of mediator between Nature and man, a function which the ideologists attribute to intellectual activity, to knowledge.

In this conception of labour, of concrete activity realising the

dynamic unity of thought and being, of mind and matter, of man and the external world, Marx at one step goes beyond both idealism and static and mechanistic materialism. He made a similar criticism of the latter in his *Theses on Feuerbach*. He accused both of considering man outside real, concrete, practical action. From this fact, idealism, in reducing the activity of man to intellectual activity, gives him an illusory character; and static and mechanistic materialism, considering Nature apart from human activity, finally arrives at a contemplative doctrine which prevents us both from arriving at a true knowledge of the world and of acting on it in order to transform it.

By these means Marx gave to the problem of action, which neither the idealists nor the old materialists, both equally ideologists, were able to solve, a new solution. Action, in fact, is neither subjected, as with the materialists, to an absolute determinism, man submitting passively to the influence of Nature; nor placed, as with the idealists, on the plane of the opposition of being and thought and referring thereby to an intellectual activity distinct from human, concrete, practical activity, but integrated rather in the latter activity.

It is this new conception of Nature and the role of action, of human action, which is fundamental to his whole system. It is indeed on the study of concrete man, considered not in connection with an intellectual or moral ideal or with Nature as such, but in his real, practical activity which integrates him with the world, that Marx founded his conception of historical and dialectical materialism. This allowed him to explain the organisation and transformation of economic and social life and the historical process.

It is by concrete, practical activity that the progressive adaptation of the environment to man and of man to his environment is realised; it is by labour that he becomes integrated in Nature and transforms it according to his needs. From this it will be seen that the understanding of history is essentially found in the study of the conditions, the modality and the ends of human activity considered under its economic and social aspect. It is because of having neglected this study, which they considered secondary, that the ideologists were led to separate historical evolution from concrete life, from economic and social life, and thus to reduce history to an intellectual or moral development or to a succession of political and religious struggles considered in themselves. These were

supposed to be the efficient causes of historical evolution, when really they were only the ideological forms which appear in the consciousness of men or peoples as the real motive of their action.

Thus, setting out from man considered in his economic and social activity, Marx showed that the mode of production determines at one and the same time both the economic organisation and the relations between men. Each stage of historical evolution is characterised by a transformation of the forces of production adapted to new needs, and the passage from one stage to another operates dialectically by the opposition between the new forces of production and the social organisation which, adapted to an earlier mode of production, constitutes a restraint to the development of these forces and must be replaced by a new social organisation.

It is this adaptation of the social organisation to the new forces of production, an adaptation characterised essentially by a new form of the division of labour and of property, which constitutes essentially a revolution. Viewed in this way, the French Revolution was the adaptation of the political and social régime which was still feudal to the new mode of production founded on the principle of competition and free enterprise. The present revolution in which we are all implicated is the adaptation to a new mode of production, characterised by the widespread and the perfecting of the machine, of the social organisation founded on "liberty of production," which is no longer compatible with the rational application of the new forces of production.

Marxism and Spiritual Activity

Historical and dialectical materialism, which thus essentially refers back the evolution of history to the development of economic production and the transformation of social relations determined by it, shows equally the influence of economic and social evolution on the formation and development of all the manifestations of spiritual life, religion, ethics, philosophy and art, which are the expressions of it on the spiritual level.

While connecting the different manifestations of the spirit to social and economic movement, which alone in the last analysis can explain their character and deep causes, Marxism does not, however, pretend to connect and strictly subordinate them to it. To establish between the two series a rigorous parallelism could only be arbitrary and false. Marx has underlined in

the famous passage of his *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* that the ensemble of religious, philosophical, ethical, juridical and æsthetic conceptions of a society do not evolve with the same rhythm nor in the same manner as the economic and social organisation. While the transformation of the forces of production necessarily brings with it a parallel modification of the political and social structure, the change operates more slowly in the domain of ideas, whose links with the mode of production are less direct and looser. This explains the survival, at any given time, of conceptions corresponding to an earlier epoch and their co-existence with opposed conceptions.

Although it thus denies the primary role in historical evolution to spiritual conceptions, Marxism, however, does consider them as a *very important* social reality, which influence as such the development of history, the rhythm and modality of which they are able to modify, if not the general course.

Rejecting ideology as the determining factor in historical evolution, Marx did not make man, by a return to mechanical materialism, the passive instrument of economic forces, the object of a fatalistic determinism. In all his work, which was born of action and led to action, he showed on the contrary that there was in fact constant action and reaction of the environment on man and man on his environment and that far from being a passive product of his environment, man transformed it by his concrete activity, by his labour, and that in this fact lay the revolutionary character of human activity. This activity had a collective character and was manifested in a society divided into classes by the class-struggle, which was an essential element in the historical process. To this collective activity is opposed individual activity, which is necessarily sterile, since it isolates man from his social environment. Human activity, in order to be useful and fruitful, must be integrated in economic and social life and applied towards the general evolution of that life; it must not separate consciousness from action and action from reality. It is in these conditions alone that man can fulfil his true mission, which is to understand the world in order to transform it.

Characteristics Common to all Ideology

The characteristics common to all ideologies, each of which is explained by particular necessities, is the metaphysical tendency which, by separating them from concrete analysis of reality, con-

ceived both in its necessity and its becoming, leads them either to deny all value to present reality (reactionary or utopian tendency) or to give to it an absolute value (conservative tendency).

Reactionary ideology is that of the ascendant classes (classes still insufficiently developed to organise society effectively according to their needs and aspirations). This ideology denies equally all value to present reality, above all from the moral point of view, and endeavours to determine dogmatically the essential characteristics of future reality.

The conservative ideology indeed condemns the past, but halts all development at the present, and gives to it an absolute value, making the particular traits which characterise it the expression of eternal truth.

Under all its forms and in all its doctrines ideology presents the following characteristics:

1. It sets out from concrete, real data: from the inadaptation of society to the moral order, of knowledge to reality, to arrive at the reactionary ideology; from the positive value of present reality to arrive at the conservative ideology; from the necessity of remedying economic and social imperfections to arrive at the utopian ideology.

2. From these concrete data ideology disengages by means of general abstract ideas a philosophic, social and moral ideal to which it gives an absolute value by detaching it from reality and considering it in itself, after the manner of the metaphysicians.

3. Finally, in order to give a dogmatic content to these ideas, to this ideal, ideology forges theories founded no longer, as at the point of departure, on real possibilities determined and limited by concrete reality, but on *formal possibilities*. These *possibles* are limited only by logical ratiocination, by the principle of non-contradiction, which allows all sorts of theories to be constructed having reality only in the minds of those who conceive them.

All these theories, as strange and individual as they may sometimes appear, are—and in this lies their interest—determined in the last analysis by economic and social evolution and the interests of class. And, in fact, even spiritual manifestations, theories farthest removed from concrete reality have in this their determining cause and find in it their explanation.

In this essay in the application of Marxist criticism to ideology we will take as examples: in the philosophical field, the romantic doctrine of idealism; in the literary field, modern decadent literatrue; and in the social field, Utopianism.

German Romantic Philosophy

Romantic Idealism translates on the ideological level, together with Rationalism and the Reformation which preceded it, the economic and social evolution of Germany from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The renewal of economic life, in particular in the realm of commerce, which followed on the great discoveries of the fifteenth century and which is marked by a new economic régime characterised by the freer circulation of riches, was expressed on the spiritual level first in the religious domain (which formed then the essential element of spiritual life) by the Reformation. This constituted the first great adaptation of the general conception of the world to the new mode of life.

To the idea of liberty, which thus was manifested originally in the form of the liberation of the religious conscience, was added the idea of progress, which expressed the continual development of the new economic and social régime. This idea of progress, limited at first to man and considered essentially on the spiritual level, man being the incarnation of the divine reason, found its expression in Rationalism.

Rationalism was unable to give, since the economic and social development was still insufficient, a complete expression of the historical process, and limited it to man whom it contrasted with a Nature ignorant of the laws of reason. In reducing human evolution to an intellectual development and to a perfecting of the moral sense, Rationalism is led to consider man in himself, as an individual and not as a social element. It arrives in this way at the notion of a type of universal man, of an incarnate humanity with its specific characters in each individual. Human effort is summed up in the task imposed on each of yielding to a higher morality and a greater wisdom, in order that he may raise up his individuality to that degree of perfection when it merges with man considered in his generality.

This transition from the conception of liberty limited to the conscience (the conception which the Reformation expresses) to the conception of a rational progress both intellectual and moral realised in liberty (the conception which Rationalism expresses) did not come about in Europe in a uniform fashion. The Thirty Years' War transformed Germany into a battlefield for the armies of Europe who massacred the inhabitants, ravaged and pillaged,

This war was the cause of a delay in the economic and social development which lasted right on till the first half of the nineteenth century. From this fact we see the influence of the Reformation, which expressed the first stage of the ideological liberation, persist in the form of the German pietist movement more deeply and for a longer period than elsewhere, and why Rationalism came about more slowly.

In the eighteenth century Germany remained almost completely apart from the great industrial revolution which brought about in England and France, by the progressive substitution of the machine for handiwork, a profound transformation of society. The German *bourgeoisie*, very different from the French *bourgeoisie* (who, already mistress of the economy, went on in the Revolution to seize political power), was still too undeveloped and too feeble to modify profoundly the structure of the existing régime. The dominant conception, then, is a semi-static one, corresponding to a period of economic and social stability, and found its expression in the rationalist movement of the *Aufklaerung*, of the *siècle de lumières*.

The Roots of the New Doctrine

The economic and social upheaval caused by the régime of liberty of production and circulation was expressed in France, on the ideological level, by the theories of the Encyclopædists and Rousseau, and on the political and social level, by the Revolution. Under its influence there came about in the same way in Germany, at the end of the eighteenth century, an evolution in ideas which led to a new philosophical rather than political doctrine, the romantic movement, founded on a conception of the world which dominated equally the notion of liberty and movement.

By translating on the ideological level the tendencies and effects of the economic development, which was expressed by an ever greater control by man of the world which he transforms and by his more and more profound integration with nature, romanticism broadened the rationalist conception. At the same time it integrated man in nature instead of opposing him to it (considering reality under all its aspects as the manifestation of the same life animating all beings) and extended to the entire world the notion of development and progress, which was limited by the rationalists to the spiritual activity of man.

Thus there appeared a new conception of the world, in which romanticism saw no longer an ensemble of things regulated from outside and functioning in the manner of a mechanism, but an immense organism ceaselessly in process of transformation. This conception posed for the romantic philosophers a double problem.

Life is, in fact, in spite of the variety and multiplicity of its forms, necessarily one and can be conceived only in its development. They were obliged, therefore, in order to explain the world in its transformation, to restore all material and spiritual reality to a fundamental unity, a monism, and to show how this reality is transformed and evolves.

Because of the lack of knowledge of Nature and its laws and the tendency, inherent in a certain type of philosophy, to consider the spiritual element as essential, these philosophers, who inherited from Rationalism its faith in the value and pre-eminence of the mind, were naturally led, in their attempt to explain the world considered as a living entity, to attach all reality and all activity to the spiritual life.

Since reality so penetrated with life had been reduced to mind, they strove to show how mind, by slow labour and long effort, penetrated the world, in its innermost essence, and controlled its evolution. They rejected the static and mechanistic conception of the world, but they still did not conceive that change might have its *raison d'être* in things themselves; thus they made of mind a principle at one and the same time external to and inherent in the world, a world in which it is realised and of which it is both cause and end. To evolution thus conceived the romantic philosophers assigned as its End, liberty, which appeared to them as the very manifestation of the divine spirit.

In their conception of the world considered as process they reflected the essential characteristics of the new economic régime. They also expressed, when they placed the realisation of liberty as the end of evolution, the aspiration of the *bourgeoisie* who availed themselves of this principle as much in the economic field as in the political. Because the German *bourgeoisie* was still too weak to achieve liberty in the political field, the romantic philosophers, transposing their desire for action on to the level of thought, proposed to realise liberty by spiritual means, by the action of the mind. They were convinced that, from the correlation between the development of things and that of the

mind, men could, by the power of thought alone, act on the world and transform it.

Progressive Affirmation of the Important Role of Concrete Reality

In constructing their systems, these philosophers, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, were inspired by the work of Kant. Kant, despite the fundamental opposition established by him between the world of liberty and that of causality, each of them being impenetrable to the other—had already presented the elements of an organic and spiritual conception of the world. The primacy of the practical reason implied in effect the subordination, the dependence of the world of causality on the world of liberty, which constitutes for it an end. On the other hand society and even nature assumed already with him, in a certain measure, the aspect of organisms evolving towards liberty. In his philosophy of history, indeed, he showed how from the play of human passions was born an unceasing progress which led men towards liberty, and again in his *Critique of Judgment* he demonstrated that the phenomenal world might be said to achieve liberty through art, which is its symbol.

It was this dynamic side of Kant's system that the romantic philosophers took up, replacing the Kantian dualism, which was incompatible with an organic and vitalistic conception of the world, with a monism. Abolishing the thing-in-itself which maintained for being a reality outside the thinking subject, they claimed for mind all concrete reality, all matter, which is no more than its changing expression, evolving along with it. By this means the movement of reality, which became simultaneously object and subject, could be explained as the spiritual development, by a self-determination of mind.

That which distinguishes their systems is a more and more marked tendency towards realism. This led them to give to the world, considered first as the simple expression of mind, a reality which, though remaining spiritual, took an increasingly objective and concrete character. They expressed by this means the very progress of the new economic organisation which, through the development of production, attested in an ever-increasing degree the value and the important role of concrete reality in the evolution of human life.

Fichte, who was the first among these philosophers, established

an idealist system of the most absolute kind by a complete reduction of material reality to spiritual reality. Setting out from the notion of knowledge, which implied the identity of subject and object, he made the object the creation of the subject. He thus suppressed the external world as such and reduced it to being only the instrument that the mind, the spiritual ego, created in order to determine itself and to achieve by a dialectical process an ever-greater autonomy.

This system had the weakness of abolishing reality and of reducing it to being simply an obstacle to the activity of the ego. This activity, conceived on the ideological level, had a purely theoretical character and was in the end simply just the free play of the mind. The work of the romantic philosophers who followed him was an attempt to give, while retaining the essentials of his system, a greater reality to the external world.

The philosophy of Schelling, compared with that of Fichte, marks the first evolution of idealism and subjectivism in the direction of objective realism. Rejecting the absolute opposition between the ego and the non-ego which had led Fichte to abolish the latter, Schelling gave to Nature, to the external world, a reality beyond the ego. After the manner of Spinoza he considered Nature and mind as two expressions of the divine, different in their form but alike in their essence. He showed in his system how Nature attains progressively to the mind, which from its side penetrates Nature and is realised in it, and how the world arrives thus at a state of complete indifferentiation where Nature is mind and mind Nature.

Finally Hegel endeavoured to give to this still transcendental realism an immanent and concrete character by showing how in the course of history there was effectively introduced a progressive integration of mind into the world and of the world into mind.

Mind, the creative and regulating principle of all things, is manifested under the form of concrete ideas which are (and this is a conception peculiar to Hegel), not only the representation, the expression of reality, but reality itself in its essential being, purified of all that is irrational, contingent, accidental in it, and raised to that point where it completely merges with its concept. Reality thus reduced to concepts evolves by virtue of inherent oppositions and contradictions in everything that exists.

It is this evolution that expresses a new logic, dialectics, which applies not only to ideas considered as such, but to reality in its entirety. Different from the old logic, this logic does not obey the

principle of identity, which supposes the exclusion of contraries and corresponds to a static conception of the world, but to the principle of contradiction. Contradiction, antithesis, is not considered as in the old logic as a defect of things, as their pure negation, but on the contrary as their essential reality, as the principle without which there is no development, no life.

This system in which all reality is implicated in an immense dialectical process, expresses in its rational progress the development of the idea, and constitutes the final stage of the spiritual romantic conception. This was at one and the same time both monistic and dynamic, since it effectively united all reality in the development of mind and showed the causes and character of this development.

In spite of their transcendental character these systems were in their essential traits the reflection of their epoch. They translated on the ideological level the integration of man in Nature, his union with his environment, a union realised by labour, by economic production, on an ever vaster scale and with increasing depth. From all this there emerged the fundamental notion that the idea, the spiritual ego, does not exist in itself as an abstract entity, and that it is only able to be conscious of itself in reference to something else, to the non-ego, to the external world, to which it is indissolubly bound. This general notion that no particular bit of reality has an existence in itself, but that it is bound to that which constitutes its environment, implies the progressive abandonment of the metaphysical conception of the world. We thus pass from the absolute idealism of Fichte towards the realistic idealism of Hegel, which, by integrating the idea in reality, considers things under an aspect no longer transcendental but immanent and concrete.

From this notion of the interdependence of ideas and reality there emerged at length the conception of constant action and reaction, assuming the form of a process, of a dialectical progression engendered by the opposition of contraries whose value appeared no longer negative but eminently positive..

Transition and Compromise

At the same time as they expressed in their fundamental character the general tendencies of the evolution of modern life, these systems, the reflections of a transitional epoch (marked in Germany by the end of the feudal régime and the advent of that of free

enterprise, a transition which accelerated the economic development and added to the power of the *bourgeoisie*), presented like the epoch itself a character of transition and compromise.

They formed in one way a compromise between idealism and realism. In their attempt to grasp reality in its totality they established the dynamic unity of thought and being in the idea; but in spite of their essentially mental character, they marked the passage to realism, since they were obliged to integrate all reality in mind.

These systems formed on the other hand a compromise between the static conception and the dynamic conception of the world. They were in fact steeped in a dynamism which expressed the continual change, the unceasing evolution of ideas, being and things considered in the process of becoming; but this dynamism was not yet fully inherent in reality, since evolution was determined by a principle superior to things. Mind, the stable element in the eternal becoming, of which it constituted both the cause and the end, finds itself at the end of this evolution at the height of its power, since all reality was only the externalisation of its substance. Because of this, evolution remained in reality illusory and assumed the form of involution, of a return on itself, which connected these systems still with the old static conception of the world.

The Reflections of Social Contradictions

Again, on the political level, these systems expressed, by the different ends they assigned to evolution, the social contradictions and the class-struggle, the opposition of the rising *bourgeoisie* to decaying feudalism. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were inspired by the same fundamental conception of the world, considered as an immense organism embracing Nature and humanity and developing by virtue of internal necessities and laws. They gave to the idea of organic development applied to the political and social field a different interpretation, varying according to tendencies and needs of the class whose aspirations they expressed, and for this reason they reached political and social conceptions diametrically opposed.

Schelling, expressing the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the decaying feudal class, gave a reactionary interpretation to the idea of organic development. Insisting on the importance of origins in all development, he condemned not only all revolutionary movement tending to subvert and overthrow the established order, but generally all idea of progress. For him, in fact, the essential

element of the present, its true *raison d'être*, is that which constitutes its source, its origin—that is, the past. It is then towards the past, to which he gives an absolute value, that we must return if we wish to conform to the profound reality of the present; it is from this that we must draw our inspiration in order that we may regulate the organisation of political, economic and social life in all its manifestations.

Expressing the conservative tendencies in the state, Hegel interpreted the conception of the organic development of the world no longer in a reactionary and counter-revolutionary way, but from a conservative point of view. That which he attempted to justify was not the past but the present, considered as the necessary result of evolution; but he arrested evolution at the present and gave it an absolute value.

At length Fichte interpreted the aspirations no longer of reactionary feudalism or conservative statecraft, but of the revolutionary people, and placed the stress, in his conception of the organic development of humanity, not on the finished past nor on an immutable present, but on the future, in preparing for which their sole *raison d'être* lies.

It will be apparent from this analysis of the different romantic idealist systems that they are the expression of the tendencies of their time, as much in their general characteristics as in their particular traits. They express the transformation accomplished in the world by the new mode of economic activity, which integrates man more and more in his milieu, adding to the action of Nature on man an increasingly powerful reaction of man on the external world which he adapts to his needs. This integration is expressed on the ideological level by the new notion of a vitalistic and dynamic monism characteristic of these new systems of philosophy. This formulation, succeeding a dualistic and semi-static rationalism, considers the ensemble of beings and things as an immense organism of which mind is the creating and regulating element.

This conception implies an incessant becoming which is expressed in these systems by a dialectic development born of the opposition of contraries; but this development, this evolution, takes a character of involution from the fact that it derives from mind, that is to say from a principle at the same time inherent in and superior to things, which relates it still with the old static conception of the world.

Coming after romanticism, Marxism, which is the expression of a new stage in economic and social development, overcomes the contradiction inherent in these systems; it derives, by reversing the principle of idealism, spiritual activity from material activity, and places in reality itself the cause of its transformation; thus it arrives on the one hand at a more exact notion of the integration of man in the world through its conception of action, on the other hand at a more exact notion of evolution by its conception of historical and dialectical materialism.

A. Cornu.

(To be continued)

Belief and Action

Introduction

THIS is a time for endings and beginnings. The atom bomb may stand as its symbol of doom and promise. Never before in history has the world had such widespread misery, such fearsome apprehension and such great hope of escaping once and for all from the privations and violence of the past. The end of the war, the crushing of the fascist powers, the liberation of Europe and Eastern Asia, the discovery of a source of power incalculably greater than that man has controlled before, would seem enough great events for one year. But these events are only symptoms of something greater and more important that is happening to mankind. Man is becoming conscious for the first time of the possibility, as well as the necessity, of conscious control of his world. We are at the beginning of a new era in which the people, at last firmly in power, can plan and act. Action implies belief. Man can only act efficiently on the basis of some accepted, working picture of the world and of the place of man and society in it. But the old picture will not serve the new situation. The need for new lines of action makes it imperative to examine and to state the new beliefs that justify them and give them consistency and purpose.

The new beliefs are not an abstract, logical scheme to be imposed on men's minds. They arise out of old beliefs, though they are not mere variants of them. They first appeared in a few penetrating minds from the experiences of the earlier struggles against capitalism: they have spread and grown through the revolutionary and constructive experiences of the Soviet Union, of China and Spain and many other countries. They are now burnt into the minds of millions throughout the world by the experiences of the war.

Experience and belief grow together. New beliefs, transformed from old ones by experience, are also verified by it and can become secure bases for action. This war, to the millions of soldiers, workers and intellectuals who have taken part in it, has been won *against* treating men as machines and slaves in the hands of a leader or master race and *for* a world which will realise the full possibilities of every man, woman and child. They also know, from the experience of what went before the war, that, although liberty and democracy must be secured, these ideals in themselves will not be enough; they

will need to be supplemented by organised drives to achieve realisable political and economic ends. Future wars must be prevented. The atom bomb could produce, in a few days, desolation far worse than years of war produced in Germany and Japan. There will be no good living conditions without well-organised industry and agriculture: no health or economic security without a State medical and a State employment system. The acceptance of these principles of organised action marks a radical break from the pure liberal philosophy of western Europe, a philosophy that first grew up for a society of tradesmen and farmers. It does not, however, mean the discarding of the ideals of that philosophy. Planning is not incompatible with liberty, much as those who hate both would like us to think so. The key to the integration of old beliefs and new conditions, is to be found in the philosophy of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Their intellectual basis is the combination of social analysis and the new knowledge of the world of matter and life that has come from the revolutionary advances of the natural sciences.

These beliefs are solidly materialist, but they are none the less humanist. The social evolution of man is not limited to economic and political forms: it includes the whole of culture and philosophy. Millions of people, far more than are consciously aware of it, already accept them partially or wholly. The attempt to state them here in a small compass will serve its purpose if it shows—better perhaps than the volumes or libraries that would be needed to expound them fully—how coherent they are and how they may well serve the needs of the new times.

The argument can be summed up in the most direct manner in six theses:

I. The most important job in the world to-day is to ensure that all human beings have a chance of full development.

II. This can be done only by a conscious, organised effort under the direction of the people themselves. The majority of the people can be trusted: no superior or elite groups can be.

III. The material and social conditions necessary for the realisation of human possibilities can be achieved only through a well-organised productive and distributive system. This implies the continuous raising, through scientific research and improved organisation, of the standard of life particularly for all depressed classes and races.

IV. A new outlook and transformation of values are needed to

effect these changes. The new values must incorporate the old tradition, but also bring it into relation with present needs. The essentially immoral influence of capitalist individualism must be replaced by a morality which emphasises intelligent working together for common good.

V. Art and culture should become a common living heritage actively shared in by all and not a dead achievement to be admired by a selected few. Philosophy must cease to be a refuge of reaction and mysticism and become an active expression of human understanding of the world and of our ability to change it.

VI. Beliefs and attitudes must be concretely related to the solution of the problems of the new era: to the final eradication of fascism and to the assurance of peace and democracy. A large measure of collaboration between people of different political and economic opinions will be necessary. The achievement of this collaboration will be easier the more people come to understand the operation of social forces in the ways exemplified in the theories of Marx and the practice of Lenin and Stalin.

I. Man is the Measure of All Things

Both in belief and in action, a Marxist is a humanist: he lives by human values achieved through human action. This humanism is not, however, as in the past, based on a mystical feeling of man's affinity with the gods or on the belief that the whole world has been created and maintained as a stage for man's salvation. We value man more now because we know more. Man's character and man's achievement become greater and not less when viewed objectively and scientifically. The old idea that man was the centre of a universe created for his especial benefit, though wrong as a physical statement, is right in intention: it is equivalent to the present view of human society as the growing point of universal development. But man is no longer an example of a universal type, an image of his "creator." He is a component—a product and at the same time a producer of a complex, developing an ever more conscious society. The centre of human interest and of human action lies in that society and its development. Because an individual man is a product of society, he needs must incorporate in himself, in behaviour and belief, to the degree in which he is educated, all the traditions and history of that society. This in itself makes him of a different order of existence from any animal.

Animals inherit in their bodies the accumulative results of organic evolution. In man this bodily inheritance is only a foundation, his distinctive personality is a social inheritance. "Organisms are born; man is made."

But society is not a fixed order: every man's life adds to it and changes it. Every man is a maker, a poet. "The grass groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth." Not so man. No life passes but that something is contributed to the common inheritance. Every human life influences others. The lives of companions and children are consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, changed by it. The pattern of the future society is the product of all such changes.

This makes it both wrong and stupid to treat any man as a machine or part of a machine. The respect for human individuality and human capacity found its logical basis in the understanding of society and its transformations, given us by Marxism. Respect for the individual man can be reached emotionally and is embedded in the framework of all great religions. Only too often, however, has the assertion of the uniqueness and sanctity of the individual been used as an excuse to degrade men and to deprive them of education, opportunity and democratic rights. To respect human individuality does not mean such pious acceptance of present conditions of human life.

What any man is now is only a small fraction of what he might be if his powers could find direction and scope. Human potential is enormous; we cannot know how great it is, that can only be found out by allowing it to develop itself. The greatest crime in the world is not the denial of food and shelter to the human animal, but depriving man of his inheritance of thought and the possibility of full and constructive expression of it.

Human potential can only be realised in and through society. The balance between society and the individuals composing it is only now coming into human consciousness. Too great an insistence on individuality means an anarchy in which the material conditions necessary for the realisation of full human possibilities cannot be achieved. Too little insistence on it means a tyranny in which the individual is limited to a particular function and in which, by demeaning man, the purpose of the organisation itself is frustrated. The maintenance of the balance is the greatest of responsibilities. It is too great to be borne by individuals: it is the responsibility of the people.

II. Government of the People, by the People, for the People

Belief in the people follows from the understanding of the importance of man in society and of the evolutions of that society. This belief is no more mystical and vague than the equivalent statement of the importance of man. Because the isolated man is a fiction, we can find no better criterion for understanding value or action than in the collective judgment of the people. Ideally, in an equalitarian, communist society, that judgment will be freely expressed. In our present, class-divided societies, it is more difficult to discover, but it is there: it finds expression more in action than in words. The forms of accepted belief may often be traditional, may represent the choice of a dead society; they are tacitly modified in action in closer accordance with the realities of the moment. The people may err and err gravely and fundamentally just as the individual man may suffer from lack of judgment or delusion. The mis-education inevitable in a class society, whether or not it is deliberate, may warp judgment for a while, but unlike the case of the individual man there are limits to the degree to which the whole of the people can be deceived in the interests of a few. Their experience will be too different from what they are led to believe for them to accept it. Over and over again, and never more than in these last years, the common feelings of justice, fellowship and liberty have reasserted themselves in the breakdown of oppressive systems. A selected elite may come to delude themselves for a while in their superiority to the common herd, but the repressed consciousness of their loss of community and the unfairness of their position is always turning them to futility and madness. The fable of Antæus as Stalin drew it, a giant whose strength came from the earth, is profoundly true. No man or party can separate itself from the people and live. In this sense, democracy has an absolute value; but democracy must be total, covering both the economic and political fields, and, also, sufficiently widespread so that every member of society can take an active part in it. "Every cook must learn to rule the State."

Democracy is by no means a simple idea. It is to-day the most abused of words, its different meanings being flung across the conference table in the attack and defence of very different systems of government and as a cloak for interests that have little in common with it. There are real differences—established democracy and democracy of transition. Our British democracy, from long

practice, does enable us to secure without coercion or bloodshed, but clumsily, far too slowly and with a heavy bias on ancient privilege. In countries with a long history of tyranny and feud, such democracy is unrealisable. All attempts to reproduce its forms, especially the giving of full freedom to the representatives of wealth and reaction, fatally impede the rapid and drastic decision on the rebuilding of industry and agriculture, on which the very lives of the people depend.

III. Planned Abundance

Belief in man and in the people expresses itself concretely in the struggle for better human and social conditions. Individual human capacity can only be realised, collective human activities can only be carried out, if the material and intellectual conditions are suitable. They are not so at present. But now we know enough of what is wrong to set about putting it right. What we have to do is to mobilise the material and human resources of the world, in a way which capitalism has never been able to do. Even in the most populous and already industrialised countries, there is everywhere insufficient education, insufficient scope for abilities; above all there is the taint of the profit motive which prevents the majority from even trying to give of their best. The war has shown how this can be altered under the most unfavourable material conditions, once there is a common, accepted purpose. The war will be effectively won only when the common purpose is made permanent and is turned from the defence of old civilisation to the achievement of a new and better one.

The most immediate task is the restoration of devastated Europe: the peoples are liberated, they have the will and, in great measure the ability, not only to restore what has been destroyed, but to build something much better in its place. At the moment they lack food, fuel and machinery; we must see to it that they get all these before starvation and disorganisation have seriously weakened their capacity for recovery.

Scarcely less urgent is the situation of the great populations of Asia and the tropics. Some thousand millions there are on the edge of starvation. Most of these are afflicted by preventable diseases and lack all the mechanical resources which have been developed in the past two hundred years. They have little or no education, are deprived of political rights and are economically

exploited. At least 90 per cent. of the human race has no chance of developing their potentialities as human beings as things are to-day.

It used to be urged that all this was inevitable; that, on account of climate and race, the natives of Asia and Africa were inherently unadaptable to Western civilisation. Now, in the light both of the experiences of the Soviet Union in the last thirty years and of many other parts of the world during the war, everybody can see what pernicious nonsense this view was. The undeveloped parts of the world contain a waste of human capacity and a mass of human suffering that calls out for instant remedy. And the remedy is clear and simple. It is the organisation of production of both agriculture and industry, planned so as to provide known needs of the people from known natural resources, by the aid and soon under the direction of the people of the countries themselves. The more advanced countries will have to provide capital goods and instruction, as was done by the Russian republics in Soviet Central Asia. Within a generation, however, the people themselves should be able to take over and make increasing and independent contributions, both material and cultural, to the world at large.

To realise the existing potential human resources of the whole world is elementary justice, but it is equally important to raise that potential by a steady improvement and rationalisation of the processes of production themselves. Physical and biological sciences, technology and economics must be welded together in an increasingly conscious way to provide a productive organisation yielding the maximum return with the minimum of monotonous or dangerous labour. We know from the experiences of the Soviet Union that this is a perfectly feasible aim, but to realise it under a capitalist economy, with its tendency to turn more and more to monopoly and restriction, is a difficult but not impossible task. Even the capitalist system can be made to organise production rationally, with due regard to the human factor, in times of war. With the same controls, it can be made to do so in peace, pending its reorganisation on more rational lines.

The advent of atomic power has removed once and for all any limitation on the material resources at man's disposal. We should have, in a few years' time, means to feed and to supply the whole population of the world at the highest present level of consumption. But this cannot be achieved unless we can dispel the secrecy and suspicion that the atom bomb has brought, and unless we

can, on an international scale, put an unprecedented effort into research and development.

It can be done. The single and steady purpose, the unity of the people the willingness to go all out and put up with every danger and discomfort that marked the peoples at war must not be lost in peace. There are new and real wars to be fought: for health, for knowledge, for the realisation of the human potential, wars against disease and hunger, wars against obscurantism and reaction. These are not metaphors. Such wars can be fought effectively; not, as in the past, solely by devoted individuals, piecemeal, but by bodies of men organised and planned. They will be backed by the material resources with which we fought fascism: the laboratories, the factories, the ships, the bulldozers, the food and drugs, and they will canalise in their service the same unity, enthusiasm and devotion.

IV. Transformation of Values

The continuation of capitalism is conditioned by its economic and political power, but it maintains this very largely through the prevalence of false beliefs. The original ideology of capitalism, material self-seeking and a salvation, other-world, religion, was in its time a liberation from the more restrictive ideology of feudal Europe. The advance of science and technology, however, has revealed it to be as untrue in fact as it has become anti-social in tendency. We do not know the whole truth about the universe and society—the essence of science is that we are always finding out more—but we do know what is nonsense and we should be more courageous in stating it. Much of liberal, capitalist ideology, particularly its economic, political and religious aspects, is demonstrably false. It needs to be transformed so as to bring it into line with our present knowledge of natural and social science, and converted into an ideology adequate for a consciously directed, human society. Not to do so would be to allow it to degenerate into a mystical, anti-rational, fascist ideology.

Ideologies are not transformed so much by argument as by experience and action; however objectively false a religious belief may be, if it provides emotional satisfaction and ethical justification it cannot be destroyed unless people find for themselves something to live for more fully than they could before. Piety, ignorance, economic and political ineffectiveness go together and need to be destroyed together.

Religion in the past has, at its best, represented communal human aspirations based on all that could be known of the world and of man; at its worst, as in Imperial Rome or in the decay of capitalism, it became an organisation to maintain social tranquillity in an unjust system on the basis of emotional religious experiences and intellectually untenable beliefs. In a society where social injustice no longer rules, religion may well find again its roots in honest human feeling and incorporate the new knowledge of the natural and social sciences. The religion of submission to higher and inscrutable forces with its implied other-world-ness and acceptance of existing evils, is to be replaced by collective pride and individual achievement in a task which is regarded as a common human effort for human ends. In this, people can retain that deep sense of community and human brotherhood and the duty and enjoyment of mutual help and betterment which is charity.

History and tradition should be powerful allies: when things changed slowly and memories were short, tradition served to preserve things as they were and as it was thought they had always been. Now we are in the midst of the most rapid and worldwide changes that humanity has ever experienced. Tradition can no longer be followed blindly: the material framework in which it operates is everywhere breaking down. Nevertheless, once we understand their nature, history and tradition can become accelerators and not brakes. We are leaving a history of dynasties and battles and are coming to see the whole picture of human social development from the first small scattered societies to the conscious, integrated scientific world society of to-day as one continuous though dialectical process. A strong people, as the Soviet Union has been showing us, can make its past live—however different from its present—and draw strength and unity from it. We all have our history to help us, nationally in each country, culturally for Western Europe or India or China, in common for the whole world. History can at the same time help us to see how changes can be brought about and help us to feel ourselves, in the making of the history of to-day, as a link between the people who came before us and those who will come after us. Techniques and social forms change, but a common humanity, that can be felt as well as known, runs through the whole of recorded or discoverable history from the obscure past to the unknown future.

The new phase of world history which we are now entering calls

for new men and new virtues; much of what now stands for virtue and morality belongs to the era of capitalist individualism. We are only beginning to realise how far the social vices of capitalism had penetrated the attitudes and moralities, not only of the bourgeoisie, but of the working class itself. Capitalist class society was in itself so fundamentally immoral because it made the status and relations of men dependent on considerations of money and inheritance instead of function and ability and because it actively prevented the expression of fellowship between men and men. This was corruption, however masked by legal forms created in the interests of property-owners seeking to preserve their wealth. The bourgeoisie in some countries has come to tolerate almost any perversion of justice to protect their own position, up to the full horrors of fascism. In the working class there was a double evil; some of the most able, seeking a decent material basis for life, were drawn away into the bourgeoisie: the rest were frightened into a cynical acquiescence by the fear of losing what they had and were so conditioned to accept an unjust inferiority that they could not realise their own power. By the acceptance of the class system, the great majority were forced to turn away from things that most concerned them—the possibilities for making a good life for all—to trivial and narrow fears and pleasures.

The immorality of the system was intellectual as well as material and social. Because the system would not stand honest examination, education was warped to prevent any serious study of it. Every child's birthright is the knowledge of the structure and meaning of the society to which he will contribute his life's work. But that knowledge has been deliberately withheld from the education of the people at large and was only permitted to the selected few at the universities in a deliberately distorted form. There is still no provision in schools or universities for the teaching of professed critics of the capitalist system.

When the system itself is basically immoral, it is impossible to build any decent morality which does not attack it. A radical change in morality is in any case required by the new social relations which men are already entering into in an organised and planned society. The relative importance of different virtues are bound to be affected. Old virtues may even appear as vices and new virtues instituted. Many of the basic virtues—truthfulness and good fellowship—are, of course, as old as humanity and need no changing, but those based on excessive concern with individual

rectitude need reorienting in the direction of social responsibility. Altogether new virtues must be added. These are implied in the recognition that a man is not simply the possessor of an immortal soul who will be judged in an after life on the basis of his following a certain set of rules in this, but is one member of a changing community with a vast task in front of it. His life, mental as well as material, comes from the community and goes on with it. To fulfil it, it needs to be given freely in its service.

Ignorance and innocence are no longer the proofs of sanctity. A man must know and understand the aims of society and the mechanism of society if he is to be effective in playing his part. This is no question of a blind and obedient carrying out of orders; that is fascism and the *fuehrer princip*. Each one is called upon to understand, to accept and to use his initiative in the furthering of the common aim, which he has himself taken part in forming.

The change from individual to collective morality corresponds to the realisation of the relative ineffectiveness of isolated individual action under modern conditions. If, in the last century, a man was struck by the misery and ignorance of the natives in Central Africa, he went out there as a medical missionary; to-day he would realise that the health and welfare of the African people is a political and economic problem to be solved by joint action between the African people and the workers and progressives in Britain. We now realise that piecemeal changes not only fail to achieve a general improvement, but actually retard it by diverting effort and by giving a delusive impression that something is being done. Because collective action in the industrial and political field is the only effective action, it is the only virtuous action.

V. Towards A Living Culture

The building of a world, free from disease, ignorance and wearing toil, in which the physical necessities of life have become everyone's birthright, is a practical material aim. It is also a social and spiritual aim. Until we have it the full realisation of human mental and social possibilities cannot be achieved, and unless we are working for it all human effort in the field of art or morals is poisoned at the roots. But the fact that we have a material aim does not mean that these other aspects of life are not considered or are to be neglected in the interim. The pursuit of art or scholarship has often been urged as a justification—or at least an extenuation

—of a system that, it is claimed, has made this possible. If we could only attend to the things of the spirit, the apologists for capitalism maintain, we would not find mere material things so distressing. Art and learning, like religion, are held up as things beyond and apart from the economic and social system. History shows this to be palpably false. The arts and humanities of the different epochs grow plainly out of the conditions of those times as Vico had already shown over two hundred years ago.

The forms of art—painting, literature, drama, poetry, music—are all expressions of the impact of society on individual human beings. They achieve the purpose of their makers in so far as they stir and express the feelings and aspirations of the less articulate members of that society. A great work of art may do more; drawing from social roots, it may produce a combination of forms or ideas that is absolutely new, but can, once established, be taken up and further developed by others. It is in this sense that art is creative. A work of art belongs to its time and is produced in the language of its time, but it may contain such a strong appeal to feelings common to all societies that its message reaches beyond its own time. That is the criterion of great art. The values that the artists express are social values, the relations of men to each other, the relations of men to Nature: Nature itself has beauty and meaning in so far as it is perceived and worked upon by man. Even the beauty of wild Nature was first appreciated only in contrast with that of town and field. The poets absorb unconsciously, but often consciously as well, the social strivings and intellectual achievements of their times and fix them so that they move the feelings as well as the minds of men. If we can help to make a live and positive society which is successfully achieving better material conditions for all, its arts and humanities will look after themselves. It may take time to find the appropriate means of expression. We have only past forms to go on, and past forms will need many modifications before they fit.

Science and scholarship can adapt more quickly. It is, after all, the work of science and education that has brought about both the knowledge of the physical needs of men and the means of satisfying them. The scientist has done this partly directly but even more indirectly by finding the relations of behaviour of material systems, living and non-living, and using those relations to control them. But the scientist now realises that what has gone before in the history of science are only the first easy steps, steps that could be

taken with simple ideas and simple apparatus by men working in isolation or in loose societies. To get to the bottom of real, basic problems of physics or biology, we now need team work on a large scale, with far more scientists and full popular appreciation of the meaning and value of science. It is a stupid and wilful misunderstanding to suggest that this will mean the neglect of fundamental science. All those who have worked in applied science realise how absolutely essential it is that fundamental science should be pursued, but also how much fundamental science has to gain in the new problems and the new techniques derived from applied science. Human culture is not a sickly plant which can only be kept alive by preserving the artificial conditions in which it is cultivated to-day, still less by a futile attempt to return to those of former times. It is a stunted plant which will only grow to its full stature when the latent abilities of all men can be realised in the new society.

Every great age in human history had its characteristic culture: a pattern of thinking and acting which was basically acceptable to the people of that time. The period we are just passing out of was no exception. The liberal, individualistic, almost atomic philosophy started in the Renaissance and grew to full stature with the French Revolution. It is a philosophy of the "rights of man," of "liberty, equality and fraternity," of private property, free enterprise and free trade. We have known it in such a debased form, so unrelated to the pattern of the needs of the times, that only lip service is paid to it, and honest but ignorant minds have preferred even the bestialities of fascism to its unreal and useless tenets. Liberal philosophy was not only political, it stretched over the whole field of the intellect; it was the creed of the pure scientist, the scholar, the artist and genius, each working by himself as he thought fit, but all contributing as surely as the individual trader or the individual manufacturer to that mysterious but perfectly natural process—the greatest good for the greatest number.

That philosophy is now discredited. Whilst recognising the greatness of its achievements, we also recognise that that way of doing things is finished. To try to perpetuate it is to tie down the present to the past. The achievements of liberal philosophy have themselves been incorporated in the new dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels. Consciously, and often unconsciously, it is coming to be accepted as a basis of thought. It is not the isolation of men but their increasingly conscious co-operation that now needs to be stressed. Dialectical materialism is a philosophy of unity, of inter-

dependence of parts rather than their isolation; it is a philosophy which unites thought and action; analysis and synthesis. It is pre-eminently appropriate to our times as it is a philosophy of struggle: a recognition of the absolute necessity of struggle as the only way in which new things and processes occur. It is far more a programme of thought and action than it is a system of philosophy in the old sense. In the light of Marxism, many subjects thought to be dull or even closed take on a new significance and acquire new interest. History ceases to be a meaningless chronicle and becomes a field of interplay of economic and social forces which lights our future as well as our past. Biology becomes unified and the phenomena of life are associated on the one hand with their own evolutionary history and on the other with the present satisfaction of men's needs. Physics, chemistry and even mathematics lose their absolute and unchangeable character and are seen as dissolubly linked with the nature and origin of the universe. Nothing is lost of the invaluable and reliable methods which the exact sciences had provided, and much is added to them. Dialectical materialism provides rather a method of finding out where we are going than of verifying the exact spot when we have got there—that remains in the sphere of the natural sciences. The great value of dialectical materialism is in helping to sum up and to comprehend the whole of knowledge in such terms as it can use for successful action here and now. It gives a scale of various developmental levels of the universe which shows us the overriding importance of society and of man, who makes it and is made by it. It is here and now, in the politics and economics of human society, that are occurring the decisive events of all time and space. Man recovers his own importance in the world scheme first conceded by religion, then denied by the materialism that came with the birth of science.

With that new picture comes new responsibility. Men individually must understand and collectively must work together to realise the possibilities than live within them.

VI. The Test of Action

Belief implies action. The tests of how well we have understood the workings of the universe and of society is how competently we can chart a course of future human development and maintain a conscious control over it. That is the basic difference between our

present times and all that went before. What began as an idea in the minds of Marx and Engels under the experiences of the turbulent rise of capitalism, what was tested in action in the Soviet Union by Lenin and Stalin for the past thirty years, has now become a worldwide phenomenon. Man has willy-nilly to control his material and social economy as one organised whole.

That responsibility has already been grasped. The one final attempt to reverse this process and to rob men of their heritage of knowledge and power, has been crushed in the war by the united efforts of the people of the Soviet Union and those of Europe and America. The lesson has been a terrible one. The unparalleled suffering and destruction is the penalty that has had to be paid for the hold that reactionary ideas have had in capitalist countries and the inability to break away from them in time. But the lesson has been learned and the war has been won and the world is about to enter the hard but glorious period of recovery and reconstruction. And this time there is no mistaking the people's purpose. Everywhere in Europe, and, most important of all, in Britain, elections have shown that the great majority are determined to control the forces which science and technology have provided and to use them for the common good and not for private profit, for peace and not for war.

That determination in itself is an enormous step forward, but it only marks the beginning of new struggles. By assuming responsibility for control, the popular forces have to meet the enormous physical and organisational problems of repairing the damage of war and bringing order out of the chaos of capitalist production. Everything that can be represented as a mistake will be used by the forces of reaction to weaken the people's faith in themselves and to cause disunion among the popular forces. This will be as true in the international as in the national field. The great alliance of the United Nations which has been achieved through the bitter needs of the war has now become even more important as a guarantee against future wars which might be far worse than that through which we have passed. To maintain that alliance and to guard it against its open enemies and the more subtle disseminators of mutual suspicion will require constant vigilance and continued efforts to reach ever-closer understanding. Lack of confidence, confusion, suspicion—all derive from ignorance. The fuller and more comprehensive our knowledge of social forces, the more easily can these be exposed and counteracted. Knowledge is not

academic: we have behind us the experience of war organisation in the forces and factories, an experience which has brought us in Britain much closer to the longer and even more dearly won experiences of the Soviet Union. To the degree to which we can see things in the same light can we go forward together in fellowship and hope.

J. D. BERNAL.

What Managerial Revolution?

SINCE the first publication of James Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* four years have elapsed in which this book has provoked considerable discussion. That it has recently appeared in a cheap edition[1] is evidence of the widespread interest in its main thesis. It continues to attract the attention of many people, both here and in the United States, who are searching for a coherent explanation of what is happening around them, though few may share Burnham's cynicism about the effectiveness of political activity or his despairing refusal to believe that any improvement in the contemporary situation is possible, however desirable it may seem. Others, as the controversy about this book clearly reveals, have tried to take over some of his more plausible arguments while rejecting his gloomy, fatalistic picture of a world in the grip of iron historical laws which will inevitably impose further years of suffering and misery upon it. Whatever criticisms can be brought against the *Managerial Revolution*, however, nobody can legitimately charge that it is unimportant. It owes much of its influence, indeed, to the fact that it poses certain fundamental questions about the future development of our society and provides answers to them which are at least superficially satisfying. That alone demands a careful consideration of its argument.

It is fallacious, says Burnham, to suppose that socialism is the only alternative to capitalist society. Though to make his point that capitalism is in a state of disintegration he borrows heavily from the traditional Marxist critique, he insists that socialism is not even a possible alternative, that the abolition of capitalist property rights has no socialist implication. Capitalism has lost its power; the impact of economic crisis, modern war and changing industrial technique upon an already enfeebled system have clearly demonstrated that its classical economic doctrines concerning unemployment, taxation, finance and State enterprise are but deceptive fallacies. The New Deal, the large-scale experiments in State organisation which the dictatorships have conducted, the character of Britain's war economy have all shown that the major powers are moving on a road along which there can be no return to the old methods of capitalist productive and social organisation. We are, Burnham concedes, in a period of transition analogous to the centuries when feudalism was giving place to capitalist society.

[1] *The Managerial Revolution*, by James Burnham. Pelican. 9*d*.

Only what is now emerging, contrary to Marxist expectations, is not socialist, but "managerial" society. That is, we are moving towards and have in part already accepted a social organisation where control is vested in the administrators of business and government, the elite of highly-trained and educated men—a society, in short, dominated by the manager and technician.

The future is their future. It will emphasise the State, the *Volk* rather than the individual, corporate rather than private enterprise, discipline, not liberty, technical efficiency *qua* technical efficiency, irrespective of its social purpose. Armament production or social welfare, bacteriological warfare or medical research—managerial society cannot recognise the existence or validity of such choices, which it considers to be purely moral questions. Parallel to this internal development, international affairs will become a struggle for world supremacy between three primary super-states: Europe (based on Germany), Asia (based on Japan), America (based on the United States). Each of these three super-states will be developed autarchic managerial societies, resting on State ownership of the means of production and managerial control of the State. Burnham considers that the U.S.S.R. is the country where the managerial revolution is most nearly completed, but that Nazi Germany and the United States have already advanced far along this path.

This revolution is divided into three distinct phases, which may, however, overlap. First, the seizure of political power from the capitalists and their reduction to a position of impotence; second, the curbing of the masses and their indoctrination with managerial ideologies; third, the struggle for world power against rival managerial states. In Burnham's opinion the process occurred in the model order in Russia: in Germany the curbing of the masses came first, the reduction of the capitalists at a later stage.

This summary reveals a number of propositions which are crucial to Burnham's general argument. He has to prove that the Nazis had virtually eliminated capitalism from the economy of Germany; that the Soviet Union is not socialist; that the New Deal was a serious blow against American monopoly capitalism; and that the managers are, in fact, securing control over the means of production in all the major capitalist states. Now, should Burnham fail to sustain any one of these assertions, the theory of the managerial revolution will rest on shaky foundations. If all of them are false, there is precious little left of it.

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There is little disagreement to-day about the growth of "managerial" groups, both in numbers and in influence. Burnham himself points out:

> "The rate of increase of decisive industrial workers compared to total population . . . in the last decade . . . in many nations . . . has changed to a decrease."

Now, in Western Europe at least, the outstanding feature of the years before 1914 was a decline in the ratio of workers to each unit of capital. There was, therefore, a *relative* decline in the number of decisive industrial workers. But after 1918—that is, after the "managerial revolution" has, in Burnham's opinion, begun—a significant change occurs; the number of decisive industrial workers tends to decline *absolutely*, more and more of the available labour force passes from the sphere of direct production into commercial, distributive and managerial activities. The organisation of industry requires more technicians, scientists, efficiency managers, production controllers. A change occurs in the structure of capitalism; the old entrepreneur who combines both financial and administrative functions becomes a curiosity. He is replaced, on the one hand by the coupon-clipper and the masses of small investors, on the other, by what Lord Keynes has called "the salaried office-boys who rule in the mausoleum he once occupied. . . . Time and the joint-stock company and the Civil Service" have divorced the technical from the financial aspects of production.

From this, which is a fairly accurate picture, Burnham proceeds a stage further. In this set-up, he argues, it is the managers who have *de facto* control over the means of production. Since he advances a descriptive rather than a statistical analysis as proof of this, let us examine more closely the position in the United States—which he uses as a touchstone of his argument.

Though he claims to go beyond the thesis put forward by Berle and Means in *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, Burnham leans heavily on the material in this book. Berle and Means argued that the dominant institutional feature of American economy to-day is the large corporation. Typically, they declared, this is controlled by its "management," who have no substantial ownership interest in it and, consequently, receive no benefit from its profitable operation beyond their salaries. According to them, in 1929, 65 per cent. of the 200 largest non-financial corporations, totalling 80 per cent. of their assets, were "management-controlled." Burnham, though quibbling at the definition of "management" put forward by Berle and Means, quotes their figures approvingly as evidence that capitalist ownership is no longer a decisive factor in the control of American economy.

Since the publication of *The Modern Corporation* in 1931, however, further research has been undertaken on similar lines by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Temporary National Economic Committee (T.N.E.C.). This reveals a feature of modern corporation control which is neglected by Burnham. In about 70 per cent. of the 200 largest non-financial corporations, a few large stockholders occupy a dominant position.

> "In about 140 of the 200 largest corporations the blocks of shares in the hands of one interest group were large enough to justify, together with other indications such as representation in the management, the classification of these companies, as more or less definitely under ownership control."[1]

This holds even more forcibly for the vast numbers of smaller companies and undertakings. Moreover, even where ownership has little relation to the selection of the managers actually operating the concern, the higher executives are nearly always owners of stock themselves, holdings which are *absolutely* considerable though *relatively* small compared to those in the hands of the dominant group. Together, the 2,500 officers and directors of the same 200 companies own more than two billion dollars worth of stock in these companies. This amount is heavily concentrated in the hands of about 250 men. It should also be remembered that under certain conditions, the dominant group need hold as little as 20 per cent. of the total stock to secure its control, provided it can arrange sufficient proxies and if the remainder of the stock is sufficiently dispersed.

Now, apart from the decisive controlling interest which rests with the members of these dominant groups—who fall outside Burnham's "managerial" category—there is a further question he fails to answer. In what sense, and how far, do the more important managers—whether they are stockholders or not—have interests, opinions and objectives different from the large-scale capitalists who employ them? Thorstead Veblen, who also saw technicians as a possible source of political and social leadership, understood the weakness of their position in this respect. Their work, in capitalist

[1] T.N.E.C. Monograph No. 29.

and socialist society alike, past, present and future, may change the face of the world. But in any society the form and result of such changes are conditioned by its economics, by its history and by its social system. By themselves, the managers are incapable of breaking away from those traditions. They are men, but they are as much instruments of productions as the machines they devise or control. What is the effect of a new departure in technique, the introduction of inventions, the discovery of new materials, processes or products? They may well revolutionise an industry, even the technical relations of industry as a whole, but, in themselves, they do not change the character of a social system. Collectively, the managers are dependent upon the ruling class in their society for the choice of their objectives, for the determination of the framework within which they work.

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Perhaps the most plausible part of Burnham's analysis is his designation of Nazi Germany as a non-capitalist society. This, indeed, is an argument which has found considerable support in circles which do not share Burnham's major assumptions. According to Konrad Heiden, for instance, it was the "armed bohemian" who seized State power in Germany in January, 1933. But how long can this "non-capitalist" thesis be maintained if, for the anonymous New York statistician who provided Burnham with his material, we substitute the official Nazi statistics? Burnham argues that the capitalist share in the national income of Germany—an index which he endows with great importance—was virtually eliminated. He puts the share of profit and interest at approximately 5 per cent., much of which, he adds, was immediately appropriated by taxes and State levies. The Nazi figures, however, give 28 per cent. as the 1938 level, as against 20 per cent. in 1933. Although this discrepancy is so large as to cast some doubt on Burnham's concern for accuracy, in itself it is not sufficient reason for rejecting his entire case. It is necessary to look more closely at the Nazi economic structure that he claims to be describing.

Burnham, unfortunately, often mistakes the Nazi slogans for a statement of actual policy, and his portrait of the Nazi State is consequently superficial. He accepts, for example, the elimination of mass unemployment in Germany as proof that, under Nazi leadership, the country had "entered the road of a new form of society," because the capitalist powers had proved that they could not eliminate it under capitalist institutions.

> "Even total war, the most drastic conceivable 'solution,' could not end mass unemployment in England and France, nor will it do so in this country [U.S.A.]."

But while Nazi Germany was developing an aggressive imperialism it would have been strange to find mass unemployment. In Britain, moreover, once the war effort had gathered momentum, total war did temporarily abolish unemployment, in spite of Burnham's categorical assertion to the contrary. If, however, the Nazi régime had survived to meet a period of relative stabilisation, either mass unemployment would have reappeared or there would have been a rapid fall in the rate of profit. Both these factors would have begun to drive it towards new imperialist ventures. Both of them are essential features of contemporary monopoly capitalism.

For the economy of Nazi Germany remained a form of monopoly capitalism to the end. By means of interlocking combines and monopolies, using all the familiar devices of interconnected directorates, proxy voting, plurality votes, exchange of shares and profit pooling, the big German monopolists exercised even closer control over the whole economy than their counterparts in Britain and the United States. Take some of the key men in the system. Were they merely managers holding monopolistic positions—or genuine private capitalists? For example, take Otto Wolff, Friedrich Flick (iron, steel and coal), the Quandt family (munitions, metallurgy, electrical trades, transport, building and chemicals), Ballestrem (Silesian iron and steel), Wintershall (potash, oil, coal), Krupp, Haniel and Klockner; and similar concentrations in textiles, glass and cement. These firms were run by men who were powerful capitalists as well as active managers. None of them fall either into Burnham's "managerial" class nor into that of mere *rentiers* and coupon-clippers.

In many cases, moreover, their salaried employees—Burnham's managers—have reached out beyond this status, assuming the role of capitalists proper (as in the United States), investing their savings in shares, often speculating with the funds of their own corporations and strengthening their personal financial power within them. It proves no part of Burnham's case to assert that this is producing a change in the personnel of the ruling class. That has happened elsewhere, though the emergence of hitherto unknown figures was facilitated by the peculiar conditions in Germany. The Nazi leaders, it should be noted, made strenuous efforts

to become part of the capitalist ruling class by the compulsory purchase, confiscation and penetration of large-scale enterprises. This is especially true in the case of Goering, but applies also to other high members of the hierarchy. Hitler, himself, was virtually a monopolist in certain lines of publishing which yielded him an enormous personal income. In spite of all the apparent changes, the social character of German economy remained essentially unchanged.

But, Burnham objects, was there not considerable direction and supervision of the whole economy by the State? Did not the centralised character of the German economy drastically curtail the operation of the old market laws of capitalism? On the contrary, these laws operate as before, though they find expression in new forms when their normal channels are blocked. Competition, for instance, remains as struggle between different cartels for raw materials, capital and markets. The structure of German economy has not remained frozen since 1933. Some firms have grown much bigger, some have been eliminated, some have made larger, some have made smaller profits—in conformity to same economic laws which operate in other capitalist societies. Further, the degree to which the State had itself replaced monopoly capitalist enterprises was not nearly so large as Burnham and others try to suggest. In 1937, for instance, capital invested in State enterprises in Nazi Germany was but 7 per cent. of the nominal capital of joint-stock companies as a whole, if communication services are excluded. At the same time, private capitalists moved in on the directing boards of State concerns to an increasing extent. In 1938 the general picture by no means corresponded to Burnham's conception of an economy from which capitalist profit had been virtually eliminated. At that time there were over 2,000 million marks accumulated undistributed profit, whilst 1,200 million marks were distributed as dividends.

. . . . .

Burnham regards the Soviet Union as the most highly developed managerial State. Since nobody will bother to assert that its economy is capitalist, it falls to Burnham to prove that it is not socialist. Now, as so often in his book, he uses the method of exploding his own definitions as a means of proof. Socialism, he says, is "international, classless and fully democratic." Since, he says, the U.S.S.R. satisfies none of these three categories, it cannot be

socialist. This is a facile solution to the problem, but it scarcely satisfies. Though Burnham concedes that classlessness is simply the absence of property rights in the instruments of production, it turns out later in his argument that what he really demands is something more like complete equality of income distribution. But what scientific socialist has claimed this as a definition of socialism ever since Marx wrote his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875? Is the Soviet Union "fully democratic . . . in all spheres . . . political, economic and social"? But what Marxist ever insisted that democracy would emerge fully-fledged from the shell of Tsarist society and the famine, destruction and upheaval of the Civil War? Since Burnham insists on closing his eyes to any developments other than those which seem to reveal a tendency towards managerial society, it is necessary for him to deny that the U.S.S.R. has made any progress whatsoever towards democracy. What, in addition, is meant by "international" in his definition? Should the Soviet Union have endeavoured to convert Europe to socialism with the bayonets of the Red Army? Or is it not socialist because socialism has not yet been established in the other major countries? Mr. Burnham reveals the source of this particular argument when he talks of the years in which he was a prominent member of the Trotskyist movement in the United States. Of course, the fact that he edited the chief theoretical organ of this movement does not effect the validity of his case; it shows, however, that certain parts of his analysis are taken over almost *in toto* from a previous political controversy. To discuss the implications of Burnham's general thesis against the background of the Soviet Union would go beyond the confines of this article. Here, the only question is whether Burnham has successfully established the definition on which he rests his analysis of the U.S.S.R. But what has emerged is that this definition has no real relationship to classical Marxist thought, in spite of Burnham's claim that it is based on Marxist formulations.

. . . . .

It is when Burnham discusses the New Deal—and, by implication, State intervention in other capitalist countries—that he lays bare the crucial weakness of his case. By definition, he insists that any move towards greater State participation in economic affairs is a move away from capitalism. In the specific instance of the New Deal, it was opposed by the capitalists who, Burnham contends,

knew their own business better than the Marxists who argued that the New Deal was the means by which American capital staved off complete economic collapse. But has it ever been seriously doubted that both Roosevelt and the other New Dealers intended to and did protect the general structure of capitalist property relations? Naturally, because the United States is a capitalist *democracy*, it was necessary to introduce certain policies in answer to public demand which were no doubt repugnant to many capitalists. But that is precisely the source of their sympathy with Nazi Germany which had given similar State assistance to an economy in difficulties, but had, at the same time, curbed the democratic forces which pressed for reforms. It was not the subsidies of the New Deal that were disliked by capitalists, but their unwelcome concomitant of social legislation.

But this does not prove that State intervention necessarily destroys the capitalist basis of society. The age of State economic neutrality and the liberal individualist ideology were the product of a particular phase of capitalist development. In this phase, two main characteristics may be distinguished: considerable competition and relatively unlimited opportunities for capital to expand. In the last two decades, both of these conditions are disappearing rapidly, not accidentally, but as a consequence of the working of the capitalist process. Monopoly replaces competition: the limits of accumulation narrow relatively to the needs of capital. A new phase appears in which both the liberal philosophy and the old economic structure are discarded by capitalism. But this does not mean the end of capitalism. Burnham seems to have forgotten that in the formative stage of bourgeois society, the active assistance of the State was required for the accumulation of capital. This was the essence of mercantilist policy. To-day, a new State policy and a new ideology are developed. The rapidity of this change is in direct proportion to the strength or weakness of the liberal phase in the country concerned. During the liberal period, political democracy reached its peak, until, in the imperialist era, it permitted the independent organisation of the working class. But, this done, the aims and objectives of the working class came into ever greater conflict with the aims and objectives of a capitalism which had begun to contract. Thus the ideology of the new period is not only anti-liberal in its economics; it is essentially opposed to political democracy. Economically, the process has two characteristics which can be distinguished in the major capitalist States,

whatever the precise form the government of those States may take. First, the development of a parasitic *rentier* class, with wide dispersion of sources of finance (small savings, insurance premiums, etc.) and narrowing dispersion of profit. In this case the primary concern of finance is not the immediate accumulation of new capital, but the diversion of the funds already existing to the control of the dominant groups of rentiers of monopolists. It is partly to counteract this tendency and to ensure the accumulation and *use* of new funds that State intervention becomes necessary. Second, there is a partial recognition of the social character of production, a tendency, that is, for there to be a fusion of the economic functions of capital with the political functions of the State. Even where State ownership has gone a considerable way, capitalist appropriation continues in the form of collectivised capitalist property under State supervision. And, as we saw in the case of Nazi Germany, this may well be accompanied by the introduction of capitalist representatives on to the directing boards of State concerns.

In the fascist States, of course, this process reached its most developed form. Nazi Germany was, perhaps, the classic example of this organic, anti-individualist producers' State. But because the shape and ideology of capitalism everywhere have entered on a new phase it cannot be assumed that a revolution analogous in social character to the French or Soviet Revolutions is taking place. The roots of Burnham's philosophy go back a long way; indeed, it bears a marked similarity to certain aspects of Saint-Simonism. It is of these aspects that Engels speaks when he says:

> "The working bourgeois, manufacturers, merchants, bankers, were intended to form themselves into a kind of public officials, of social trustees: but they were still to hold, *vis-à-vis* the workers, a commanding and economically privileged position."

The managers are not a class—in the sense that they can have separate aims in society from either of the two great classes in the modern world. To set up a managerial society they would have to develop a new mode of production, neither capitalist nor socialist. Burnham is conscious that this is the weakest part of his whole case. For he tries to show that managerial society has a different economic basis from capitalism. And since he insists throughout that the concept of socialism is a total illusion, he is forced at all costs to argue that the Soviet Union has never and could never

have been socialist. But in the end we find that managerial society is little more than a rationalisation of the most advanced form of monopoly capitalism, the State structure, the economic objectives, the political mechanisms, and the ideology of Nazi Germany. The perspective of world development that is held out by this pseudo revolution are not in any essential different from those of other theories of "super-imperialism." In his search for novelty, Mr. Burnham has only found a new name for fascism.

NORMAN MACKENZIE.

Black Spirituals and White

I SUPPOSE there is no kind of folksong anywhere in the world that is wider known or more loved than the Negro spiritual. It shows what nice characters people have. For it is not just the good catchy tunes of the spirituals and their simple poetic words that have caught the popular imagination. Other folksongs have better melodies and finer poetry and still have no success at all. The appeal of the spirituals goes deeper. It has a little to do with people's love for the exotic, but it has more to do with their sympathies and their sense of justice. The spirituals are held to be the music evolved by the negroes themselves while in their state of slavery: they are looked on as the songs of an exploited and oppressed people yearning for freedom. That, at bottom, is what gives them their pull.

The spirituals have been popular, especially among democratically-minded people, ever since the early seventies, when the first choir of coloured students, looking terribly respectable in their frockcoats and crinolines, set out to raise money for the newly-founded Fisk University at Nashville, Tennessee. The Jubilee Singers (that was what they were called) only sang ordinary gospel hymns at first—the spirituals were an uncomfortable reminder of their recent slave condition; and then again they feared they might sound a bit common; gospel hymns went better with frockcoats. But after a few months they were prevailed on to sing "slave songs," and they had such a success with them that before long they were singing little else. In the Northern States and in England (they came to England twice, in 1872 and 1875; they sang *Steal Away* and *Go Down Moses* to Queen Victoria), the "slave songs" were a wildfire success. Everybody hummed them, Queen Victoria as well. Many printed collections of them appeared. In concert halls and aspidistra-decked parlours, baritones moved their audiences to bright tears with *Ah Got Shoes* (making a terrible mess of the dialect, no doubt). The way was clear for the greatest exploitation any kind of folk-music ever had.

If the ordinary cotton-field Negro had known about it, he would have been puzzled. True, for two decades before the Civil War and for quite a while after the spirituals played a big part in the life of the Southern negroes. But they were not the only songs the

negroes had, of course. Indeed, they were only a small part of a big repertoire that included work songs, love songs, banjo songs, protest songs. They were, however, the kind of negro songs most sung before white people, and the most palatable to them, and so the most widely printed and known.

Not only were spirituals not the only songs the Negroes had, they were not the only *religious* songs they had. Even in the rickety clapboard churches in the backlands of Georgia, Louisiana and the Carolinas, the Negro congregations commonest sing the standard hymn-book hymns of whatever denomination their fancy is. If they sing spirituals, they prefer to sing them on weekday nights, and then not so much in church as in the social meetings at home. Ordinarily it is only at revivals or during times of great stress (when lynching is in the air, for instance), that the spirituals will outnumber the conventional hymns in church. Over recent years, however, the practice of singing spirituals has rather increased. The hard times of depression and dust storms and the strain of war has something to do with it; and the fact that spirituals are now commonly taught in Negro schools (often by white teachers) has something to do with it, too.

All spirituals are not such orderly, rational, and immediately appealing songs as the examples we are most used to hearing on the radio or on the gramophone records or the concert platform. To this day many of the older Negroes and poor whites, still under the influence of the religious sectarianism of the early settlers, believe that all secular tunes are devil's tunes. To them, music is of two kinds—sacred and sinful. But it must be said that this division is not strictly kept to, and it is common to find spirituals in which the elements of secular and sacred songs are mixed up. Most spirituals as they are sung to-day in the South are hybrids. Commonly they are compounded of two or more songs. Sometimes they are just a string of verses from a dozen different sources—from worksongs, nigger minstrel songs, blues, as well as from other spirituals. This interchangeable quality, this jumble-up of verses and of melodies too, is common to all kinds of folksong; but American folksong probably has it to a higher degree than any. R. W. Gordon[1] quotes the words of one expert, who, giving up in despair an attempt to classify spirituals, has said: "A spiritual is nothing but a tune—never twice the same—accompanied by not

[1] In his chapter on "The Negro Spiritual" in *The Carolina Low Country*, ed. by A. T. Smythe and others (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932).

more than two standard verses—not the same—followed by as many other verses from different songs as the singer happens at the time to remember."

There are a few spirituals which have a fairly standard form—that is, they are sung to much the same tune and with much the same words anywhere you go. The chances are that these have been influenced by some printed form or other (*Go Down Moses, Steal Away, Swing Low Sweet Chariot* are sung in most cases very much as they were first printed by the Jubilee Singers in 1872); but other spirituals you will find sung differently, not only as you go from state to state, but from town to town or from shack to shack.

Where all these spirituals and bits-and-pieces of spirituals came from, nobody seemed to know, nobody seemed to care. It was assumed that these were the Negroes' own songs, whose sentiments had sprung straight out of slavery, and whose forms had been evolved by the African exile. Nobody imagined that the new-caught slaves marched out of the Congo jungle singing *Deep River* (nobody outside of Hollywood, that is). But it is commonly presumed that the slaves somehow evolved these songs, maybe by throwing together some Negro repetitive verse-patterns and some scraps of African melody and adding a pinch of common white salt. At least, that is what Krehbiel thought, and he was an eminent music critic. In 1914 he wrote a book called *Afro-American Folksongs*. It is a book whose argument is still pretty generally accepted by writers on Negro music. Very briefly, the argument is this: there was no folksong-building environment anywhere in the South except among the slaves; an analysis of the modes, intervals, and structure of these songs shows a considerable use of pentatonic and hexatonic scales, which are characteristic of African music, and could only have originated in Africa as far as the spirituals are concerned; in fact, the spirituals show a style learned in Africa and developed in the land of bondage.

Following Krehbiel came another eminent commentator, more rhapsodic, less scientific, but a man who is reckoned to know about these things, James Weldon Johnson. He said: "The American Negroes came from various localities in Africa. They did not all speak the same language. Here they were, suddenly cut off from the moorings of their old native culture, scattered without regard to their old tribal relations, having to adjust themselves to a completely alien civilisation, having to learn a strange language, and, moreover, held under an increasingly harsh system of slavery; yet

it was from these people that this mass of noble music sprang; this music which is America's only folk music, and, up to this time, the finest distinctive artistic contribution she has to offer the world. It is strange!"[1]

It is indeed strange. It is even nonsense. Johnson's theory, like Krehbiel's, holds no more water than a sieve. In the first place there has been, at any rate since the eighteenth century, a vast body of white folksong in the South, and much of it pentatonic or hexatonic like its parent song in Scotland or Ireland. And in the second place there is good reason for believing that, as a form of folk hymn, the spirituals were not evolved by Negroes at all, but by white settlers, in circumstances quite other than under the stress of slavery, but no less socially significant—for they arose out of the fight for religious freedom which was part of the greater fight for political freedom in eighteenth-century America.

Before we go any further, let me say this: writing about Negroes is like writing about Jews or Communists—however objective you think you are, your reader suspects you of taking sides. I am not objective. If it is a question of taking sides, then on principle I am on the Negroes' side; because, the way things are with whites and Negroes, the white side is most likely the unjust one. Sometimes people wear their sympathies like blinkers; they do not see what is so and what is not so. I believe this has happened here. The proper sympathy felt for the Negroes has led to certain misconceptions of their contribution to American folk-culture. Some may feel that I am trying to depreciate the Negro contribution. I am not. I just want to get the records straight.

The clue to the origin of the spirituals is found clearest in the Fasola hymn-books, first published in the early half of the nineteenth century, and still in use amongst thousands of "poor white" tenant farmers in the upland country of the Carolinas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas and Eastern Texas. These hymn-books are full of tunes which set the pattern, music and words, for what we nowadays call Negro spirituals, a pattern that was evolved a full generation before the Negroes took up this kind of songs to any extent.

Why are they called Fasola? The answer goes back a long way in history. In mediæval times the common notes of the diatonic scale were called: "ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si." By Elizabethan times this

[1] *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, edited with an introduction by James Weldon Johnson (New York, The Viking Press, 1925).

had boiled down to "fa, sol, la," with an occasional "mi" thrown in. So the scale was now sung: "fa, sol, la, fa, sol, la, mi, fa." And so it is still taught and practised among the Fasola folk, the religious "poor white" tenant-farmer families in the Southern uplands.

While America had remained a British colony, her music came from the mother-country. But in the mid-eighteenth century the American people had their hearts set on revolution. A spirit of native patriotism was firing the country, and along with the spread of independent political feeling came a surge of independent American songs. A patriotic Boston tanner's apprentice, William Billings, who started by scribbling tunes on cowhides with chalk, had democratic ideas about music. He felt that all Americans should be given a chance to learn music, and not British music, but real American music, especially religious music. He and his comrades helped to promote the country singing schools, which Nat. D. Gould, in his *History of Sacred Music in America*, has said were "music's Declaration of Independence." The singing-school masters were itinerants who went round the country districts teaching the settlers. The school was generally held in the village tavern. The settlers brought their own candles, stuck in an apple or a turnip—brass candlesticks were held to be aristocratic and therefore anti-democratic. The classes lasted for several weeks. The music taught was "fa sol la" music. Young and old took part, beating time with their right hands and lining the songs out just as the Fasola folk do to-day. At the end of the period the village would have a congregation who could read at least simple hymns in harmony, note by note (and, make no mistake about it, often they could do much more; many of the hymns in the Fasola books are of a complexity which is not short of astonishing).[1]

The singing-school masters had to work fast. They had but a few weeks to teach the rudiments of musical theory to a not very literate class of backwoodsmen. So they made up their own simplified musical theory. Some of them taught by "shapenotes"—

[1] Billings' own "fuguing tunes," for instance, were written in a very complicated style of free polyphony (having little to do with the fugue-form, by the way). Billings' own description of these tunes gives some idea of what they were like. He describes them as "Fuguing pieces . . . more than twenty times as powerful as the old slow tunes. Each part striving for mastery and victory. The audience entertained and delighted, their minds surprisingly agitated and extremely fluctuated, sometimes declaring for one part and sometimes for another. Now the solemn bass demands their attention; next the manly tenor, now the lofty counter, now the volatile treble. Now here, now there, now here again! O ecstatic! Rush on, you sons of harmony!"

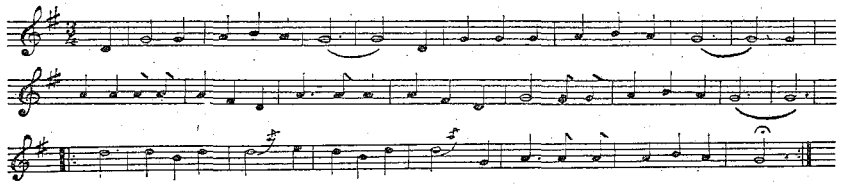
that is, instead of the notes having the usual oval heads, the head of each individual note was differently shaped, so that, for instance, "fa" might be a triangle, "sol" an oval, "la" a square, and "mi" a diamond. (That was called "four-shape" notation; there was a "seven-shape" system, too.)

The itinerant song-teachers had things their own way in the early days. Singing-schools and shapenotes were in vogue all over the wide open spaces and in the towns as well. But as the cities grew and comparatively urban settlers began to arrive from Europe in great number, a "better" music came in and the shapenoters moved out. Except in the upland South.[1] Economic prosperity, new European musical influences, the growth of cities, hardly affected the poor-class mountain Southerners. With them the singing-school influence stayed. It stayed in the way in which Fasola singing was performed. It stayed in the shapenotes in which the Fasola hymn-books are still being printed (so that many thousands of Americans can only read shapenote music; they are cut off from ordinary musical culture; they are a "tonal lost tribe"; but they learn even complicated shapenote music early on. In the great drought of 1930, at the Sacred Harp Singing Convention held at Mineral Wells, Texas, one of the song leaders was six-year-old Loraine Miles, of whom her father said, "She's never bin to school, don' even know her ABC's, but she kin read notes like fun").

The big shapenote hymn-books (some of them over 500 pages long) still have the old fancy names like *Sacred Harp, Social Harp, Hesperian Harp, Timbrel of Zion.* They are a repository of early American religious folk music. Some of the songs you find in them are the complex "fuguing tunes" of Billings and his friends, some are ordinary hymn-book hymns, and some are straightforward secular ballads, close relatives of the kind of ballads once current in England and southern Scotland. Some are well-known folktunes with new religious words, and some are entirely new songs of a distinctly folk character in tune and text, but not based on any identifiable model. In the main, the Fasola hymns come into three classes, easiest distinguished as *religious ballads, folk hymns,* and *spirituals.*

[1] I specify *upland* South because the tidewater sections of the South were not influenced by shapenote music. The lowland South was the country of the big planter and Negro-owner. Their music was foreign-influenced, urban, or imported from the cities of the north-east. As George Pullen Jackson says in *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1933), "shapenote song is not lowland song."

By *religious ballads* is meant longish narrative songs, rather like certain English carols. Such a ballad is *Little Moses,* which is still current in the Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains, and which is given here as taken down from the recorded singing of the Carter family, of the Clinch Mountain country in Western Virginia:



Away in Egypt away, some ladies was takin' their play,
And Pharaoh's little darter crep' down to the water
To bathe in the cool of the day.
Before it was dark, she opened the ark,
And found little Moses was there.
Before it was dark, she opened the ark,
And found little Moses was there.

Away by the river so red, the infant was lonely and sad,
She took him in pity and thought him so pretty,
And it made little Moses so glad.
She called him her own, her beautiful son,
And sent fer a nurse that was near.

Away by the river so red, little Moses the servant of God,
While in him confided, the sea was divided
As upward he lifted his rod.
The Jews safely crossed, while old Pharaoh's host
Was drowned in the waters and lost

Ballads like these did not originate with any organised religion. They were most often made up at home in the same circumstances as any other kind of ballads. But the *folk hymns* were bound up specially with Protestant evangelism, and in particular with the Baptists. The business of singing religious songs to folksongs is an old one. By all accounts, St. Adhelm, the seventh-century Bishop of Malmesbury, used to do this with success. And in Shakespeare's

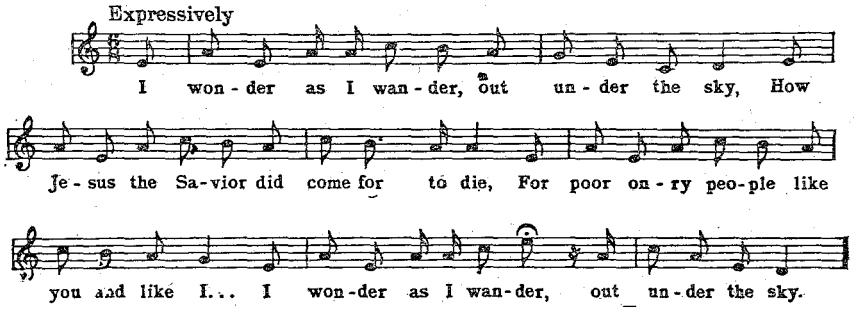
time people sang *John come kiss me now* as a hymn, with only the slightest alteration in the text. Later the Primitive Methodists had music committees whose job it was to go among the people and collect attractive tunes to be used as hymns. The whole process was extended in America for political reasons; for the singing schoolmasters, in their democratic zeal, were only too anxious to throw out the hymn tunes they associated with the hated British authority and to substitute "native American tunes." The tunes they fell back on were even more British than the hymn tunes they wanted to get rid of, for these "native American tunes" were mostly English, Scottish or Irish folk tunes current in the American countryside. It was the Baptists who were busiest at this. The Methodists had been highly organised from the start, and though they had early on encouraged the exploitation of folk tunes, the kind of hymns they sang was strictly regulated.[1] In contrast, the Baptist movement grew up pretty well without central authority. Baptists could make up their own hymns as they pleased and no Church governors checked them for it. So in the early Baptist hymn-books there are scores of folky hymns; but in the early Methodist books there are but few. (This is something that applies especially to the words of the hymns.) Later, however, during the Great Revival, when it was seen what a howling success the Baptist "wild chants" were, the Methodists took them up with a will.

It was the Baptists who were the leading sect among the pioneers following Daniel Boone (himself a Baptist) through the Cumberland Gap into the upland regions of Kentucky and Tennessee, the real hill-billy country and the cradle of white American folksong. Up in the hills, the circuit-riding preachers would brave hunger, thirst, wild animals and wilder Indians, as they went their rounds. A four-weeks' circuit would be between four and five hundred miles round. Old-time Bible-thumpers like William Burke[2] and Peter Massey, the Weeping Prophet, have described the long, lonely rides through the wilderness, the unchanging diet of deer and buffalo meat, the desolate ridges where the Indians would cry behind the rocks like children in distress to decoy the preacher from his path. It was the circuit-riders who made up most of the

[1] Following on the disciplining, in 1747, of William Darney, the great pedlar-preacher, for "giving out in the congregation hymns of in his own composing," it was forbidden for Methodists to print hymns before they had been approved by the Central Church Authorities.

[2] In Rev. James B. Finley's *Sketches of Western Methodism* (Cincinnati, 1855).

folk hymns. They would take the mountains, the trees, the rivers, the sky as their themes. They would string a few simple verses together and fit them to a tune—it might be an existing folktune or just an echo of a folktune style, but it would be something wild and lonely-sounding as often as not. Then at the next settlement the preacher would sing it over, with that high-pitched nasal tone that is a legacy from the old Puritans, and is still characteristic of hill-billy singers to this day. The well-known *Poor Wayfarin' Stranger* is an example of this kind of song, and so is *I Wonder as I Wander:*



I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die,
For poor on'ry people, like you and like I,
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

If Jesus had wanted for any old thing,
For a star from the sky or a bird on the wing,
Or all o' God's angels in heaven to sing
He sure could-a had it, 'case he was the King.

During the period from about 1797 to 1805 a religious revival swept up and down the western frontier like a prairie fire. It blazed fiercest in Kentucky and Tennessee, but its effects spread everywhere. What touched it off is not clear—partly perhaps the devastating loneliness and nervousness of frontier life and the lack of any emotional outlet, partly frustration because for the Southern mountain people the forces of Nature were always a bit too much, partly the lack of any religious control; or perhaps there were other reasons. Whatever it was, the great wave of religious hysteria

Chorus: *By and by we will go and see him,*
By and by we will go and see him,
By and by we will go and see him,
Way over in the Promised Land.

Where O where are the Hebrew children?
They went up in a fiery furnace.

Where O where is the bad boy Absalom?
He went up on the spear of Joab.

Where O where is poor old Daniel?
Where O where is poor old Daniel?
Where O where is poor old Daniel?
Way over in the Promised Land.
He went up in a den of lions,
He went up in a den of lions,
He went up in a den of lions,
Way over in the Promised Land.

Chorus: *By and by we will go and see him,*
By and by we will go and see him,
By and by we will go and see him,
Way over in the Promised Land.

It is easy to see how hypnotic this sort of thing can be if it goes on long enough. Sometimes the form would be even simpler; it would be just one short phrase sung over and over until it filled the stanza, like:

Death, ain't you got no shame?
Death, ain't you got no shame?
Death, ain't you got no shame?
Death, ain't you got no shame?

Or, for that matter, "*He'll be comin' round the mountain when He comes.*"

What often happened was that the revivalists would take a hymn-book hymn like Watts's—

Am I soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause
Or blush to speak his name?

and they would make of it something like:

Am I a soldier of the cross,
Am I a soldier of the cross,
Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?

And shall I fear to own his cause,
And shall I fear to own his cause,
And shall I fear to own his cause,
A follower of the Lamb?

A modern revival song-book, *The Ham-Ramsay Revival Hymns*, published in Chattanooga, Tenn., contains a song ("words and music by Robert Matthews, copyright, 1915, by Wm. J. Ramsay") which illustrates the old repetitive method even better than the old songs themselves. It begins:

My religion's not depending on the weather, Lord,
Let it rain.

Chorus: *I'm glad we're all here together, Lord,*
Let it rain, Lord, let it rain, Lord.
Let it rain.

In the next four stanzas, *praying*, *singing*, *blessing* and *coming* are substituted for *religion*, and *His* for *my* in the last two stanzas, so you have a complete hymn of 145 words with only six verbal variations. Some say Mr. Ham has had some local rain-producing success with this hymn during drought times in Tennessee.[1]

Compilations of this kind of text, usually without music, but sometimes with shapenote tunes, appeared by the score during the great camp-meeting time which last from 1795 to the 1830's. The songs were called *Spiritual Songs*. Their name was not shortened to *spirituals* until many years later. Their trotting gait, their peculiar modality, their formal structure and the kind of voice in which they were usually sung has left a deep mark on American folk music, especially the music of the South and the West—the music, for instance, of the cowboys and the hill-billies. Indeed, it is almost true to say that all white American folksong which does

[1] Newman I. White, *American Negro Folksongs* (Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 52.

not derive from British folksong, derives from the camp-meeting songs.

This kind of song then came into being at the end of the eighteenth century. There is not much evidence of the Negroes taking it up till thirty or forty years later. Before then, the characteristic Negro type of song was something very different—a long, endless chant, with single solo lines of irregular length overlapping with a short choral refrain, sung without any break-up into stanzas or choruses. Sometimes if the solo line was short, the refrain would become almost continuous, giving the effect of an undertone out of which the leader's voice would rise. One such song begins:

Ole man Satan (Glory hallelujah)
I think I ought to know you (Glory hallelujah)
Sit youself in de corner (Glory hallelujah)
Rub you face in de ashes (Glory hallelujah)
You call yourself my Jesus (Glory hallelujah)
I think I ought to know you (Glory hallelujah)
I know you by you red eye (Glory hallelujah)
I know you by you cow horn (Glory hallelujah)
Ole man Satan (Glory hallelujah).[1]

It can go on like that for hours.

Because there was a repetitive pattern to these chants and to the spirituals as well, some people think that shows the spirituals to be African in form. It doesn't, of course. All sorts of people have used repetitive patterns in verse—the Veddahs, the Assyrians, the Navahoes, and the English too. It is doubtful if the white revivalists had Africa in mind when they evolved the spiritual form. And the same with the tunes; just because a lot of them are pentatonic it does not necessarily mean they are African-style tunes. They might as easily be Scotch- or Irish-style; and in fact they are.[2]

The upland South, the centre of the white spirituals, was also the centre of the domestic slave traffic. For years the slave-owners resisted the attempts of Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian

[1] R. W. Gordon, "Negro Chants," in *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (May 8th, 1927).

[2] In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Scotch and Irish were 23 per cent. of the white population of Virginia and Kentucky, 31 per cent. of North Carolina and Tennessee, 45 per cent. of Georgia, and 50 per cent of South Carolina. So it is not surprising that, on G. P. Jackson's estimate, fifty-eight of the eighty tunes most commonly found in Fasola books (and therefore presumably most popular) are in the "Gaelic" gapped modes, hexatonic or pentatonic (twenty hexatonic, thirty-eight pentatonic).

preachers to convert the Negroes. Religion, they argued, ruined the slaves' morale. Ministers like Bishop Asbury and Lorenzo Dow had a certain success among the slaves, but by and large the opposition to religious education for Negroes was very heavy at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the 1830's however, with the anti-slavery movement spreading rapidly, and the slaves already beginning to talk of the "underground road to freedom," the planters were changing their minds. They began to feel that perhaps, after all, religion paid. After the slave insurrections of the 1820's and '30's, most of the slave states passed laws forbidding Negroes to preach, or at least insisting on the presence of white men at every Negro religious gathering. But they began to encourage the white ministers to work among the slaves, especially those ministers with whom they could come to some special arrangement. The kind of special arrangement is perhaps illustrated by the findings of a meeting of plantation owners and ministers called at Charleston, South Carolina, to consider this question of religious instruction for Negroes. The meeting recorded its conviction that, properly imparted, religion "helps production and discipline."[1]

Missionary activity among the Negroes was at its height during the period 1830–50. The kind of religion the Negroes took to was, of course, revivalism. As a relatively primitive-minded, emotional and bitterly-oppressed people, they found this extreme form of escape-religion very palatable. They adopted its methods of preaching and praying. They took over the shouting, the hand-clapping, the jerks, the barks, the dancing, the holy rolling, the speaking in tongues. And they took over the revival songs—the spirituals—along with the rest.

Many of the songs now famous as Negro spirituals were current long before the Negroes took to singing them. As long ago as 1927, the perspicacious English folksong expert, Miss Anne Gilchrist, had pointed out that the well-known spiritual *If there's Anybody Here like Weeping Mary* appears in the very first Primitive Methodist hymn-book to be published.[2] Others to be found in the

[1] *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, S.C., May* 13–15, 1845, *on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, etc. (Charleston S.C., 1845).

[2] "The Folk Element in Early Revival Hymns and Tunes," by Anne G. Gilchrist, *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, Vol. VIII, 1927–31, pp. 61 ff.
With words only, *Weeping Mary* is No. 51 in the Primitive Methodist *Small Book* (published *c.* 1823). It appears, with tune, in two shapenote books—as No. 103 in *Southern Harmony* (1835) and on p. 98 of *The Social Harp* (1852).

early white camp-meeting books include *The Old Ship of Zion, Keep a-inching Along, Roll Jordan Roll, Don't You get Weary, Good News the Chariot's a-Coming, You may bury Me in the East.* George Pullen Jackson, the greatest expert on white spirituals, has listed from the Fasola hymn-books some 114 songs which are the legitimate forebears of the same number of Negro spirituals. And besides these there are numerous other examples of early camp-meeting hymns which, while they do not precisely correspond to known Negro spirituals, nevertheless seem to be songs which the spirituals later echoed, such as the following, which is based on a familiar "cultured" hymn:

Farewell vain world, I'm going
To play on the golden harp.
My Saviour smiles, I'm going
To play on the golden harp.

To play on the golden harp,
To play on the golden harp,
I want to go where Jesus is
To play on the golden harp.

Or this one, which seems to have been made up entirely in the camp-meeting atmosphere (it is No. 489 in the *Sacred Harp*):

Our bondage it shall end
By and by.
Our bondage it shall end
By and by.
From Egypt's yoke set free,
Hail the glorious Jubilee,
And to Canaan we'll return
By and by.
And to Canaan we'll return
By and by.

Or this one, also from the *Sacred Harp* (No. 408):

They crucified the Saviour,
They crucified the Saviour,
They crucified the Saviour,
And nailed him to the cross.

He arose, he arose,
And ascended in the cloud.
O he arose, he arose,
And ascended in the cloud.

See Mary comes a-weeping, (3)
To see where He was laid.

He arose, etc.

So it seems that this is how it worked: the white revivalists began the spirituals at the end of the eighteenth century. For a time, from about 1830 for thirty years up to the Civil War, backwoods whites and slave Negroes sang the same body of revival songs—each of them had a few that were their own exclusive property, but mostly they sang the same songs as the other. Then, with the Civil War, the old white camp-meeting began to die out. Now there were new times and new ways and a new kind of gospel hymn. Only a relatively few people, mainly the Fasola folk of the Southern uplands, kept the white spirituals alive (just alive, but with their force spent). However, among the Negroes everywhere in the United States, the spirituals and the revival methods flourished. And since the majority of Negroes could not read printed texts or music, and since in the main their forms of religion—in the back country at least—were improvisatory, there was very little control over the hymns they sang, and they soon ran wild and so took on the divergent forms we have referred to earlier. The spirituals got broken up. Bits of the words and of the tunes were tacked on to other spirituals to which they had not belonged before. The rhythms were hotted up. Certain elements were taken over from the old Negro chants—certain choral devices (for instance, the overlapping) which are pretty surely African in origin,[1] and which give the spirituals in their authentic state a wildness you would never guess at if all the spirituals you know are on the Robeson or Marian Anderson records (I do not say this to run them down; both of them are very fine singers, but they are concert singers not folk singers, while the spirituals are folksongs not concert songs; it is the old trouble). It was not only the forms of the spirituals that were already in the

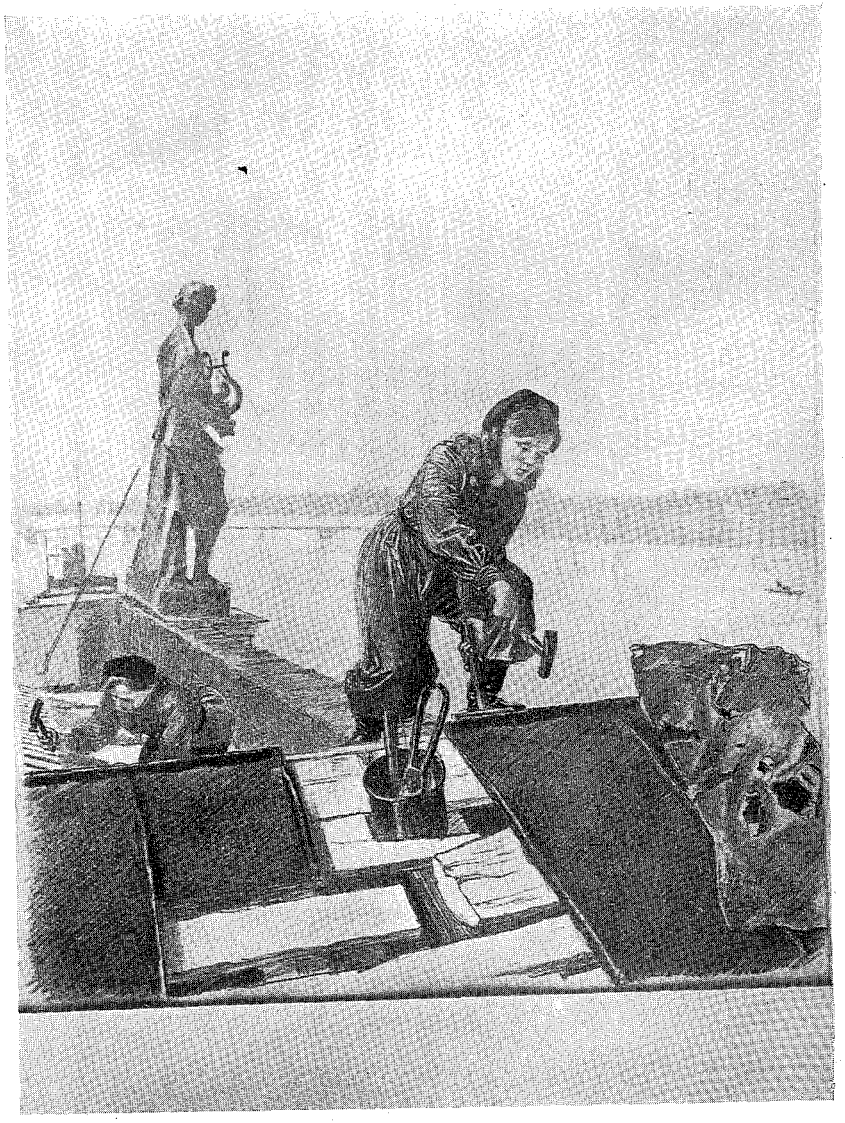
[1] This "overlapping" is not peculiarly African, of course. It occurred, for instance, in the English sea shanties. But in the case of the spirituals, it most likely survives as a legacy from Africa.

camp meeting hymns. The content was there, too. The conception of slavery that is so striking in the Negro songs, this singing of bonds and shackles, of deliverance from Egypt, of crossing the Jordan, as well as all the bright imagery of Heaven, of glittering robes and golden harps, of wings, crowns and new shoes, was present too in the old white songs, and often it was expressed in just the same words as the Negroes used. The Negroes were an oppressed people, but the spiritual-singing whites were an oppressed people, too. The big planters had taken the pick of the southlands. The mountain country that was left was hard country to make a living in. Even as pioneers they were falling into the "poor white" class, the Tobacco Road already stretched before them, and if their condition was more tolerable than that of the negro you would never guess it from their songs of release and escape. Naturally, the Negro took up this kind of imagery with open arms. For him, it had a special and direct meaning that it had not for the white man. The Negro slave was never in any doubt as to what the spirituals meant to him.

The Negroes are the best of assimilators. What they borrow they pay back with ample interest. There is no doubt that when they took over the spirituals and started to make up their own songs on the established pattern, they brought special qualities to bear which made of these songs something more than they had been before. They heightened the poetry, loosened up the metrical patterns, put more piquancy into the rhythms and sometimes more surprises into the intervals between one note and the next, and they brought to songs of this kind the benefits of their own startling choral technique and of their special throaty kind of voice production, which often seems to inject an extra shot of emotion not there when a white singer sings in his more poker-faced nasal tone (I am speaking here of folk singers and not concert singers, of course).

"A trumpet sounds widdin-a mah soul" sings the Negro. That trumpet first sounded with a white man's accent, back in the days when he was fighting for American independence and for what he conceived as freedom of worship. But, it cannot be gainsaid, the Negro has long since taken that trumpet for his own. And he has blown it so well that it still echoes from Mobile, Alabama, to Moscow and beyond.

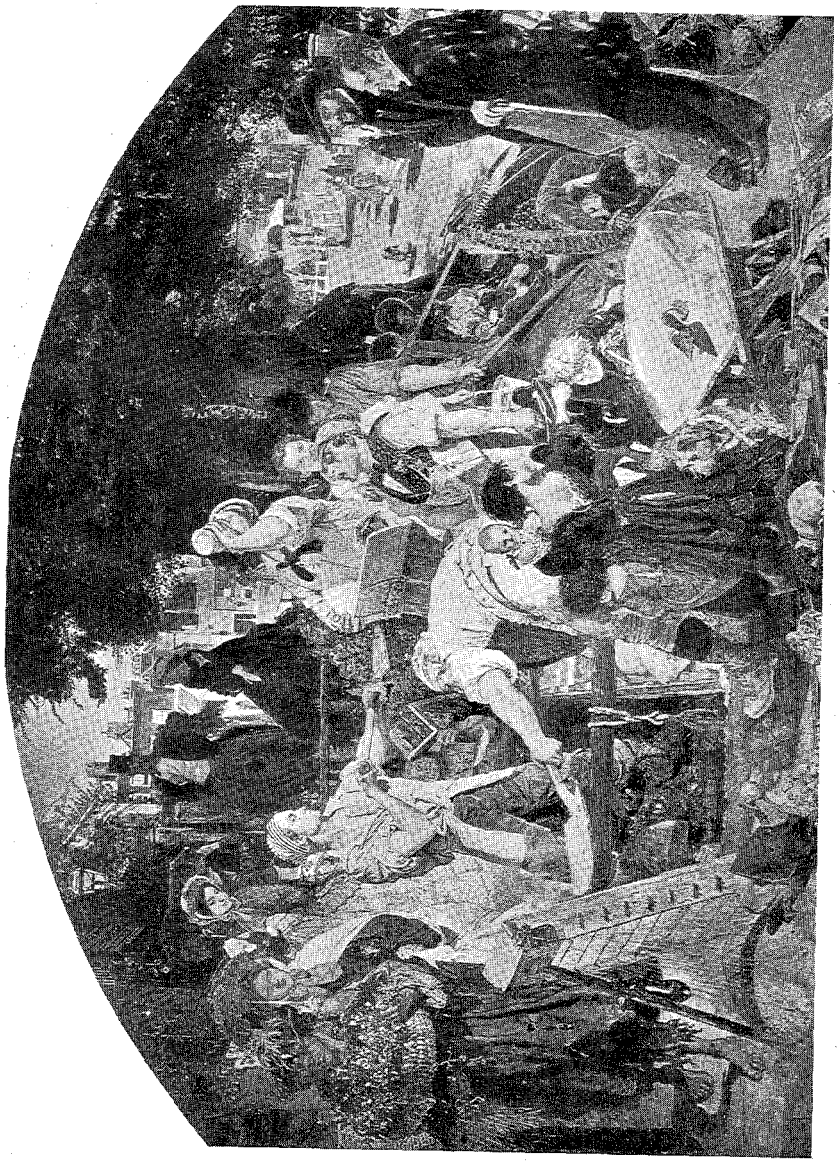
A. L. Lloyd.



On the roof of the Winter Palace, Leningrad, 1944
ALEXEI PAKHOMOV

The Blockade is Lifted
ALEXEI PAKHOMOV, 1944

FORD MADOX BROWN



Work
FORD MADOX BROWN

Russian Art at the Academy

CRITICS of Soviet art often claim that "socialist realism," far from being a revolutionary advance beyond the "formalism" of modern art as we know it in western Europe, is, in fact, a regression to the sentimental naturalism of Victorian painting. Curiously enough, they use this as an argument for disparaging Soviet art, while at the same time applauding le Corbusier's introduction of Victorian imitation-rococo furniture into his most recent interiors and admiring engravings of Frith's *Railway Station* in sophisticated Chelsea or Hampstead drawing-rooms. Victorian gothic buildings and even the chaotic sprawl of our industrial cities are revealing unexpected charms to our most sensitive students of architecture, while Mr. Sitwell has extended the range of his enthusiasm beyond the baroque art of the seventeenth and eighteenth to the narrative paintings of the nineteenth century. One would have thought, therefore, that any affinity that may exist between Victorian and Soviet art should have increased the attraction of the latter to our critics and that they should, in justice, applaud the Soviet artists for anticipating what is so evidently a shift of æsthetic feeling in the West.

The disparagement of Soviet art on the grounds of its alleged backwardness is so much the more surprising, since the study of affinities and influence is a favourite preoccupation of modern art historians. It has become the fashion to interpret the development of the baroque style in terms of mediæval gothic art, or nineteenth century painting in terms of the classical and baroque styles of the preceding era. Indeed, the French vanguard painters of the mid-nineteenth century themselves fought their battles under the rival banners of the "*Rubénistes*" and "*Poussinistes*." Would any critic dare to accuse Picasso of reactionary leanings because at various stages of his development he chose, consciously, to paint now in a classical, now in a primitive idiom?

The problem of deciding what is rogressive and what reactionary in art is evidently more complex than those critics imagine who habitually divorce the appreciation of art from the study of its development. Nor can it ever be solved if the discussion is confined exclusively to the *forms* of art.

Surveying the growth and decline of the great styles of the past,

one finds, generally speaking, that new styles arise at times when great changes are also taking place in practical life. The new conditions give rise to new attitudes to reality and these, in turn, crave for expression in art. To express the new content, new forms are required which are more or less incompatible with the previously existing style and which consequently develop into a new one. The new style reaches maturity when it is completely adequate to express the new attitudes which caused the breach in the continuity of art. But maturity is rarely reached overnight, or even in a single generation. There is usually a long preliminary period during which the artists are striving for an ever more perfect expression of the content that inspires them. During such periods, in other words, the form of art is not yet adequate to its content.

The moment of maturity, on the other hand, has often been extremely short. Once the content of a style is adequately expressed, the urge for expression is relaxed, and the artists' interest is increasingly diverted to purely formal experiments.

These changes in the relative importance of content in art reflect a corresponding development in the practical influence of the attitude expressed. During the preliminary phase the new outlook is struggling to assert itself against older conventions; at the point of maturity its influence rules supreme; in the final phase it has itself become conservative and is struggling to maintain its hold against newer attitudes which are, in turn, striving for recognition.

At great turning points in the history of art, when one cycle is drawing to its close and another is about to begin, the situation is therefore generally as follows: the field is still dominated by the declining style, which is marked by extreme sophistication, variety of technique and refinement of form, but its content has lost all significance; on the other hand, the pioneers of the emerging style are impatient of "formalism" and primarily concerned to propagate a new and vital content.

There can be little doubt that we are living in such a situation to-day. The flight from content has been a striking feature of the so-called modern movement in art. Ever since the 1870's artists have been increasingly loth to express any attitude to reality at all in their work, and they have deliberately chosen the most trivial objects, such as a chair or a couple of apples, as the neutral bases for their exciting researches into the formal relations of textures, plastic shapes and colours.

Soviet art is admittedly, and to the *bourgeois* critic often painfully, emphatic in its affirmation of a new faith. But why should it present its new faith in forms which to the same critic appear old-fashioned?

It is as well to remember that in discussing the emergence of Soviet art we are not concerned with a relatively minor change, such as that from impressionism to post-impressionism which was merely a change from one phase to the next within the same cycle. What we are facing is a break between two major cycles, a break as profound as that between ancient and mediæval art.

To the educated Roman of the early Christian era the paintings with which the persecuted Christians decorated their secret burial places in the catacombs must have appeared crude and amateurish, and for a long time the whole of the late classical and early Christian era was looked upon as a period of decline in art. Yet even the earliest and crudest paintings in the catacombs were inspired by a new content which did not find adequate expression until centuries later in the sumptuous mosaics of Ravenna or Constantinople. Moreover, that new content, and the spiritual and symbolic art which was required to express it, was wholly incompatible with the sensuous naturalism of the classical style. The classical form was therefore a barrier to the expression of the new Christian spirit. On the other hand, the new form required had yet to be evolved. To progress, art had thus to revert to an earlier phase, temporarily sacrificing many achievements of the classical style. But from that level it progressed step by step to the full glory of mediæval art.

It would appear, therefore, first, that the greater the opposition in *spirit* between two successive styles of art, the more radically will the artists of the new style also have to break with the *formal* conventions of their immediate predecessors. But, secondly, this break does not imply a total rejection of the past, for, on the contrary, in creating new forms of expression the rising generation of artists invariably derive much help from earlier phases in art in which they discover hitherto neglected elements sympathetic to their own aims. In a less violent form this applies also to the transition between successive phases within the same style, when there is no fundamental break in content. It is, indeed, a general rule of artistic development which has often been noted by critics under such headings as "the grandfather law" or "the problem of generations."

Are there, then, elements in Victorian life which might account for the apparent affinity between Victorian and Soviet painting? Undoubtedly there are such elements, and it is significant that they are precisely those features of the Victorian outlook which the intellectuals of the now declining generation in the West, including many socialists, have persistently tended to neglect or ridicule. They are what the Victorians had in mind when they affirmed their faith in *Progress*. Soviet citizens share the Victorian belief in science and education. They can sympathise, too, with the pride of a generation whose boundless energy transformed the face of Britain, that pride which speaks so eloquently from Samuel Smiles' *Lives of the Engineers*. There was, moreover, a sturdy democratic streak in this side of the Victorian outlook. It is very evident in Smiles' repeated assertion that the greatest inventions of the industrial revolution originated in the workshop, rather than in the academic study, and in the bias which made him choose the pithead-engineman George Stephenson as his hero, rather than the brilliant and accomplished royalist *emigré*, Brunel. Finally, what most concerned writers and artists in Victorian Britain, as in the Soviet Union, was the impact of the new technique, and of the social conditions resulting from that technique, on the individual human being. The new man, creator and creature of the new industry, his feelings and beliefs, struggles and achievements, occupy the centre of the stage. Hence the "sentimental" element noted by our critics both in Victorian and Soviet art.

In pointing out this formal similarity, our critics rarely, however, stop to enquire what kind of emotion is depicted. That is a pity, for as soon as one turns to the content of this "sentimentality," the parallel between Victorian and Soviet art ceases abruptly and the overwhelming contrast between them, the new element that makes Soviet art unprecedented in history, becomes apparent. The following examples will serve to explain this.

To facilitate comparison the two Victorian paintings are chosen which are, perhaps, closest to Soviet art in spirit as well as in form, Ford Madox Brown's well-known pictures *The Last of England* (painted 1852–5, Birmingham Art Gallery, replica in Tate Gallery) and *Work* (painted 1852–68, Manchester Art Gallery). They are contrasted with two lithographs included in the collection of Soviet Graphic Art shown early this year at the Academy and now touring the country, Alexy Pakhomov's *The Blockade is Lifted* and *On the Roof of the Winter Palace* (both drawn in Leningrad in 1944).

Both in *The Last of England* and in Pakhomov's *The Blockade is Lifted* the figures are ranged in the very forefront of the picture (almost, one might say, in front of the picture plane), they are facing the spectator and gazing with a fixed expression into the distance behind him. This manner of composition enables the artist to concentrate on what he is most concerned to show, the specific interplay of emotions in the mind of each of his characters. Both artists have done this in a wholly anecdotal manner. In the contemporary Russian no less than in the Victorian picture one is led quite naturally by the varied expressions depicted to reconstruct the individual life story of each separate character. Take, for example, the girl with her arm in a sling, to the right in Pakhomov's lithograph, in whose face pride and elation are tempered with sadness. Surely she is a wounded defender of Leningrad who cannot forget the loved ones she has lost even while she rejoices at her city's liberation. If such a treatment of subject matter in a painting seems unbearably sentimental and "literary" to the sophisticated Western art lover, is it not partly because in his general attitude to life cynicism has replaced a capacity for genuine feeling?

Be that as it may, it is evident that both Victorian and Soviet art differ from modern Western painting in their naïve and spontaneous affirmation of human sentiment. All these points of similarity are, however, confined to general features, and as soon as one proceeds from the abstract to the concrete and examines the *kind* of emotion depicted, one discovers the overwhelming contrast between Victorian and Soviet art.

In *The Last of England* the emigrant and his young wife gaze with an expression of mingled bitterness and love at the receding shores of their native land, because they are seeking among strangers what was denied them at home, a life worthy of human beings.

In Pakhomov's Soviet workers pride and elation transcend all grief, because the star shells which brighten the Leningrad sky on victory night are pledges that the common people will continue their task of building the new life in their own country.

More subtle, but no less profound, is the contrast between Ford Madox Brown's and Pakhomov's interpretation of *Work*. Both artists depict construction workers at their job in a city street. As one looks at Brown's workers digging up the road and laying the pavement one feels that their toil is the foundation on which the whole of society rests. But they remain strangers whose ways of life and thought and speech differ from ours. We do not belong to

them, and we see them through the eyes of the intellectuals (portraits of Carlyle and F. D. Maurice) who are watching them at work.

The impression conveyed by the Soviet lithograph is quite different. We note with interest that his workers are women. But what is most significant is that they are right on top of the world. We see them from a point of view, high above the level of the street, which could not possibly be occupied by an idle looker-on, but only by one of their mates on the job. Hence we are identified with them. We belong to them and they to us. And we share their pride in their skill and their eagerness to get on with the job, which is also our job.

This feeling of pride and elation, this self-confidence of ordinary working people who have mastered their own destiny, is the underlying content of all the works in the Soviet exhibition, whether they are portraits or landscapes, battle scenes or views of bomb-scarred buildings, historical illustrations or scenes from daily life. It is as new in the history of art as the reality which it reflects is in the history of mankind.

If we now return to the relationship between content and form in these Soviet works, we may readily admit that, to our Western eyes at least, the form still seems inadequate to this marvellous new content of socialism. Nevertheless, it is as well to realise that our judgment is necessarily tinged with idealism, for to us socialism is still no more than a goal and a dream. But in the Soviet Union socialism is no longer an abstract idea. It is the concrete reality manifested in the lives and thoughts and feelings of millions of human beings. And it is real to those human beings, because it affects each of them personally, not only through its heroic achievements, but also quite concretely in their most elementary needs and relationships. This is important, because it was precisely in these simple needs and relationships that the frustration of the old way of life was most crushingly felt by those same human beings. Hence it is here that the liberating breath of socialism is most immediately experienced by all, and it is not surprising that at this stage of its development Soviet art should lay great stress on simple human emotions.

At this point the abstract discussion of the relationship between content and form ceases to be fruitful. To understand the problem, we must approach closer to the reality before us by adding as our third factor the actual human beings for whom this art is produced

and whose living experience of socialism it expresses. If these human beings—the overwhelming majority of the working people—were starved and frustrated in their most elementary human needs before the Revolution, they were even more starved in their cultural needs. Painting, in particular, was wholly inaccessible to them. Now for the first time this whole realm of expression is thrown open to them, and they are entering into it with enthusiasm. But they can only express their feelings in a form which they can understand. Even if modern formalism were compatible with a socialist content, its extreme sophistication and refinement would be as alien to the majority of Soviet citizens, as it is to the majority of people, whatever their class, in the capitalist world. Western formalism would therefore be as great a barrier to the expression of socialism in Soviet art at this stage of its development, as the sensuous classical style was to the expression of Christianity in the early Christian era.

We must conclude, therefore, that the present form of pictorial narrative in Soviet art corresponds to the present level of appreciation among the majority of Soviet people and to its content, the concrete reality of socialism as experienced by them.

Soviet art is only at the beginning of its development, just as Soviet society is still in the stage of socialism. But the Soviet people are fully conscious of their aim of communism and approaching towards it step by step. Full scope for the free development of every human being and of all human faculties is an integral part of that aim. It is the great achievement of the present stage in the development of Soviet art that the people as a whole are eagerly claiming the right to enjoy all forms of art. We may be certain that their level of appreciation and the form of Soviet art will develop step by step with its content, the living reality of Soviet life.

F. D. KLINGENDER.

The Modern Quarterly

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