

reality of their intellectual concepts will affect the course of history⁽⁴⁾. 'Timon of Athens' did not sway capitalism from its course, but it helped to ignite the mind of Marx; Blake's 'Songs' did not end human exploitation, but may have influenced the treatment of children in industry. Moreover, only casuistry could argue that Shakespeare or Blake were "reflecting" the future interests of the working-class. They were the tongues which—within the limitations of their time—spoke for **humanity**.

This is the source of Marx and Engels' humanism, which glows through all their writings and sustained them in their heroic intellectual discipline. It springs from anguish at man's self-divided, self-defeating history. "Everything civilization brings forth is double-edged, double-tongued, divided against itself, contradictory." (Engels). But throughout history, man, the undivided conscious agent, is emergent. It is not the same "man" at any point in history, though there are elements of human experience—before death and old age, birth, sexual experience—little influenced by class environment, and in this soil the arts take their root. But there is no quintessential "human nature," "no abstraction inherent in each separate individual," in all times and all societies. Rather, as history unfolds, as men make their own nature, there is a constantly developing **human potential**, which the false consciousness and distorted relations of class society deny full realisation. Hence Marx and Engels' constant reference to the powers "slumbering within" men; we know these powers to be present, from outstanding individuals, from periods of history in which creative energies or special aptitudes spring forth, almost without warning. Hence their repeated forecast of a "really human morality," "purely human sentiments," relations between men as opposed to relations between things. Hence their confidence that socialism—the abolition of classes—made possible the assertion of man's humanity, of his potential nature, of that which is specifically human in man: victim no longer of nature or of himself, but a conscious moral agent. "Man is the sole animal capable of working his way out of the merely animal state—his normal state is one appropriate to his consciousness, **one to be created by himself.**" ("Dialects of Nature.")

It is an axiom of some philosophy to-day that one cannot derive an "ought" from an "is", a moral imperative from a statement of fact. But from where else are moral concepts derived than from the "is" of man? Men's actions spring from the kind of people they are; they are what they are as a result of their environment and their ideas, including their moral ideas; judgments made on their actions are made by other, different, people. But men in

(4) Cf. Engels to Bloch: "political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas . . . exercise their influence upon the historical struggles and in many-cases preponderate in determining their form."

class society are divided against themselves. They would like to have peace, but they get war; and so on. The quarrel between man's potential and his actual social existence expresses itself in frustrations, neuroses, moral corruption, if suffered passively. "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence," wrote Blake. In his youth he imagines himself adventurous, heroic, a passionate lover; he ends up reading the "News of the World" and watching Liberace on ITV. But if met actively, rebelliously, this quarrel is expressed in moral idealism, aspirations for a changed social existence, which gives rise to purposive social action⁽⁵⁾ Hence—as, again, Marx and Engels repeatedly asserted—moral judgments cannot be derived from abstract precepts and commandments, but only from real men and women, their suffering or well-being, frustrations and aspirations. Such judgments are bound to congeal into precepts, some of limited validity, and attaining towards a "universal" validity in class-less society. But the precept "Love One Another" did not prevent world war between Christian nations: and the precept "Interests of the Working Class" did not prevent tens of thousands of working people from being caught up in the great purge. What is important, in class society, is to judge **the men behind the precepts**, and the effect of their conduct upon other men. What does one judge **with**? One judges as a moral being: one responds with one's moral consciousness, itself the product of environment, of culture, and of agency. This is to say that moral judgments are never **easy**; because they are not abstractions, but are concerned with real men and women, they are as difficult as life. Nor is this relativism; man's moral consciousness has evolved in as real a sense as his intellectual consciousness. This consciousness comes to the point of expression, above all, in the direct and concrete perception of the artist; responding to the real quality of the life about him, evaluating this beside past culture, ordering his responses into forms which operate upon men, change their attitudes and their moral being in their turn. Thus the insights of Williams Morris, his discoveries about man's potential moral nature, were not icing on the Marxist gingerbread, but were complementary to the discoveries of Marx. Thus the Stalinist ideology, which reduces the moral consciousness to class relativism, or to Pavlovian behaviourism, forgets the creative spark without which man would not be man. By inhibiting the expression, at all levels of society, of this moral consciousness, Stalinism leads men to the denial of their own nature. The "end" of Communism is not a "political" end, but a human end; or rather, the end of man's transition from the animal, the beginning of man, the assertion of his full humanity. As such it is an economic, intellectual, **and** moral end; the conscious fight for moral principle must enter into every "political" decision; a moral end can only be

(5) I have argued this in my "William Morris," esp. pp.827-841.

attained by moral means. But this cannot be envisaged as taking place solely within the structure of "monolithic" party. The political leader may not have the gifts of the artist; the artist will make a, poor political tactician. We must think, less in terms of principles, than in terms of social process. Stalinism will not be checked by electing poets to the Central Committee of the CPSU. The poet (let us say) must respond to the feelings of people, write poems which make them aware of their aspirations, change their attitudes, and thus colour the political conduct of the people. Such processes as these, side by side with institutions and legal codes, are guarantees of the liberties and moral health of a people. It is not without significance that the worst frenzies of the purge came after the deaths of Gorki and Mayakovsky. It is no accident that Stalinism reserved its special hatred for the artist. A Krushev Constitution will indicate the end of Stalinism no more than did the Stalin Constitution. One Dudintsev and the response among the people to his work is a more potent sign.

Man's moral being cannot be sold into slavery to political expediency. The revolt against Stalinism is a revolt of the human conscience against this warped and militant philistinism. It is to be expected that it is through the conscience of the artist that this first finds expression. Thus Tibor Dery:

"As a writer my main concern is man. My criticism begins when I see man unhappy, especially when I see men and women suffer unnecessarily . . . They [the Hungarian C.P. leaders] build and function on suspicion and distrust. They underestimate the people's sense of honour and its moral force; its capacity to think and to create."

In a thousand ways real life contradicts the empty exhortations of "Pravda": "rotten elements" are seen to be men of integrity and courage, "enemies of the working class" to be honest students and working people, the paternal party functionary to be an ambitious, egotistical prig. Those pressures for conformity, in an exhausted, post-revolutionary, largely peasant society—symbolised in the appalling declension from Makarenko's early vibrant "Road to Life" to his later, 'Victorian,' "Book for Parents" — and expressed in reactionary tendencies in education, social life and sexual morality—are beginning to break up. The fundamental moral consciousness of the people is unimpaired; the aspirations from which the socialist movement sprang grow stronger, not weaker. The relations of men in production are distorted by bureaucracy, but they do not conceal the potentials of socialist democracy. In Moscow and Leningrad the students and young people have found their rulers out. They have been given the jam of culture, in row upon row of 'classics', and it has turned to ashes in their mouths. They can bring Aeschylus and Tolstoy into criticism of Krushev, the clown who sits on history's steeple. They are turning to their own living writers, and the writers are turning

to them, seeking a relationship no longer impeded by the monolithic party. Direct lines of communication are being laid. Thus Vasek Kana, the Czech writer, declared:

"The factory workers are my closest friends. I was born amongst them, I have remained loyal to them, and above all it is before them that I wish to ease my conscience. Did I help them when they needed my help? Did I protect them against those bureaucrats who sat round a green table and ordered them to produce absurd norms? Did I defend them when their criticisms brought down moral and material reprisals upon them? . . . Did I condemn a system of leadership based more often than not on lack of trust in the people? . . . Did I publicly condemn the self-styled 'leading cadres' who behaved like lordlings? Did I stand up against those self-styled 'organisers' who organised our life in such a manner that one could no longer live?"

The people are beginning to heal themselves, and no amount of talk of "demagogy" and "revisionism" can halt the process, which will show itself in changed attitudes, changed relationships, changed responses, above all in changed men.

Stalinist ideology—this partisan consciousness, of a revolutionary elite, born in conditions of indescribable hardship, encumbered by mechanistic errors to which Lenin contributed—arises from and perpetuates the class-attitudes of hatred, and brings, in turn, hatred and suspicion into its own midst. Engels had confidence in "that morality which contains the maximum of durable elements . . . the one which, in the present, represents the overthrow of the present, represents the future: that is, the proletariat." ("Anti-Duhring"). The best features of the labour movement in his time, with its international outlook, its assertion of the brotherhood of man, its emphasis upon the dignity of labour, its pursuit of knowledge and culture, justified this confidence. "It has quickened and given life to feelings of a broader sympathy and brotherly trust, has increased the intelligence, elevated the moral tone, and brightened the life of all who, having regard for themselves and love for their fellows . . . have thrown in their lot in the battle of labour against capital." (Gasworkers' Address of 1889.) Such a morality, rooted in the strong social ties of the pit, the union, common industrial struggles, should lead on to the outlook of "socialised humanity." But such a morality contains also the attitudes of hatred to the enemy, utter repudiation from human fellowship of the blackleg or scab, vigilance against the agent or collaborator. Stalinism neglected the first group of attitudes, and exalted the second. Thus George Hardy, a British veteran of many bitter struggles, records in his memoirs a speech delivered in Shanghai in 1951:

"As an old 'un I took the liberty . . . of reminding my hearers that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. 'The enemies,' I said, 'have not given up. They still exist in Shanghai and must be rooted out.' This brought the audience to their feet, shouting slogans and raising their right hands."

Vigilance is necessary, and certainly in China, with Chiang-Kai-Shek and the U.S. Fleet off the mainland. But the constant heightened emphasis on vigilance, upon "ruthlessly smashing," "stamping out," etc., all opposition, can—without effective institutional safeguards and freedoms—be used as a dangerous instrument of power to silence criticism, as Chinese leaders now admit. Tom Mann, on his many international missions, did not speak this language of "rooting out," "smashing," and "ruthlessness." He trusted the working people to display a morality superior to that of their oppressors. He — and others of his generation — were not afraid to speak, not only of the virtues of militancy, but also of fellowship, brotherhood, and even of love. After half a century of butchery, fascism, the betrayals of 1926 and 1931, this last word raises an immediate and cynical reaction even in Britain; but men have made this word also in their history, and there is no other which we can use. Socialism is the expression of man's need for his fellow men, his undivided social being, and hence it must find expression in love, even when attained only through the throes of class hatred and conflict. In the humanism of Marx's own writings there is an ultimate compassion, within which the partisan passions are contained. As he declared, in his Preface to "Capital":

"Since I understand the development of the economic structure of society to be a natural process, I should be the last to hold the individual responsible for conditions whose creature he himself is, socially speaking, however much he may raise himself above them subjectively."

This is not to deny all moral criteria; for men have a region of moral agency, all the same. Nor can the compassion which flows from understanding have much influence upon action in certain historical contingencies — in war, confronted with fascism, in extreme industrial conflict — when men **must** be partisan. Nevertheless, the methods of violence inescapable in such contingencies must never be glorified; the Christian precept, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do," must re-assert itself whenever and to the degree that contingencies allow. And the judgment on such "contingencies" is not a political judgment, but a moral judgment also. The political criminal (the fascist thug, the agent, the AVO torturer) must be tried for his criminality, not for his class origins or political affiliations. Those whose anti-social behaviour constitutes a danger to their fellow men must be re-educated, not left to rot in camps. Wrong ideas must be fought with right ideas, not by liquidating the men who hold them. Such attitudes of compassion did indeed find their expression in the early years of the Russian revolution; they find their expression in China today. This understanding that socialists work to liberate all humanity from the stunting antagonisms of class never left Marx or Engels' minds. I have before me the unpublished draft of the principles

of the North of England Socialist Federation, annotated in Engels' hand. The original (by J. L. Mahon) reads: the Federation "aims at abolishing the Capitalist and Landlord class, and forming the workers of society into a Co-operative Commonwealth." But Engels amends it as follows: "aims at abolishing the Capitalist and Landlord class, as well as the wage-working class, and forming **all** members of society into a Co-operative Commonwealth." (My emphasis). So slight a change, but so significant today! Socialist humanism places real people once again at the centre of its aspiration. It remembers the precept of Timon: "Men are born to do benefits." And what else is the "economic base" of socialism but men doing benefits to each other, and thereby enriching themselves? Stalinism seeks to freeze the "dialectic" into an orthodox, enforced collectivism. But social existence in the Soviet Union, people's new feelings and aspirations, conflict with this orthodoxy. New men and women are arising who seek to create a society, not of stagnation, but where the false dialectic of class is replaced by the human quarrel between the actual and the potential, between the boundless aspirations of life and the necessary limitations *at* the particular, the concrete, the personal. They seek to make men whole.

CONTEMPT FOR THE PEOPLE

Always life is more unexpected, arbitrary, contra-dictory, than the thoughts of the philosopher who abstracts and makes conceptual patterns, or the art of the poet who responds and organises his responses. But insofar as man is an agent, an "educator," he changes himself according to his thoughts and values; he tries to make his own history according to the laws of logic and the laws of beauty. If his concepts are false, do not correspond to social reality, he will cause himself suffering; hence Marx's insistence that theory finds its final test in action (a precept which demonstrates incontestably the total corruption of Stalinist ideology). But also, if he fails to fashion coherent concepts at all, he abandons his own creative agency; he becomes a simple pragmatist, who muddles along in response to one social contingency after another. This is also likely to bring suffering onto his head.

This fashioning of concepts, this disposition to act by their laws, is not something which is carried on in society just by thinkers and poets, not something which is done for the rest of society by "intellectuals." We take examples from such people because it is in their activities—the systematised cultural disciplines within which they are engaged—that this human process (being—thinking and responding—becoming) finds its clearest point of expression. But every man is an intellectual and moral being. And here we come to a third distinctive feature of Stalinist ideology. Men, Marx

held, develop their own nature in their labour, and in their relations with each other in the social act of labour:

"Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway."

Initiation, regulation and control demand intellectual and moral agency. Men must understand the seasons, plan their crops, store their seed, enter into relations with each other in the sowing and the harvest. Man's actions are human actions: and, also, "his own wants" are not purely animal wants, but human needs, physical, moral and intellectual. He needs clothes for warmth, and also for adornment; he needs shelter, but also "room to turn round in," privacy, etc. In this resides the dignity of human labour, which Marx explicitly dissociated from "those primitive instinctive forms of labour that remind us of the mere animal":

"We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality." (Capital, I, iii, VII).

At root the Stalinist does not recognise this central fact. When he reads that men "set in motion" their heads, he conjures up a picture of men butting their heads against trees, or jerking them about as they lift weights. He conceives of the "economic base" as made up of things—ploughs, spinning jennies, shipyards—to which men are appended, and which they affect only by technical innovations. Stalin finds it necessary to remind his readers that:

"the development and improvement of the instruments of production was effected by men who were related to production, and not independently of men; and, consequently, the change and development of the instruments of production was accompanied by a change and development of men, as the most important element of the productive forces . . ."

But this grudging recognition of the agency—in a technological sense—of "the most important element of the productive forces" is sternly qualified:

"The rise of new productive forces . . . takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man." ("Dialectical & Historical Materialism").

Stalin is led to this ridiculous conclusion by confusing the development of new productive forces (which is certainly the result of conscious, purposive action) with the compulsive social relations

which arise involuntarily from this development. That is, Crompton and Watt and ten thousand others engage in deliberate and conscious activity; but they do not consciously will or foresee the train of social consequences which will flow from the changes they effect. But the Stalinist forgets that the "economic base" is a fiction descriptive not of men's physical-economic activities alone, but of their moral and intellectual being as well. Production, distribution and consumption are not only digging, carrying, and eating, but are also planning, organising and enjoying. Imaginative and intellectual faculties are not confined to a "superstructure" and erected upon a "base" of things (including men-things); they are implicit in the creative act of labour which makes man man.

From this flows that feature of Stalinist ideology which can best be described as anti-democratic, inherently bureaucratic, alternately paternalist or despotic towards the people. To understand the social environment within which this false idea took root we must turn to the experts on post-revolutionary Soviet society. It arises, surely, in part from the outlook of a revolutionary elite, desperately aware of its historical mission and almost impossible tasks, operating within a society without long democratic traditions or experience of democratic institutions, and with a large part of the people indifferent or actively hostile to its ideas. In this context we see the elite's self-identification with the "superstructure" operating upon a material base of economic (but not moral, intellectual) needs or discontents. Hence the fetishism of heavy industry, and neglect of consumer needs; hence the bureaucratic administration of industry, the central planning of economic life so minute that in Poland (for example) even the number of cucumbers to be pickled was included in the Five Year Plan. The desperate backwardness of Russia, the compelling need to force the pace of industrialisation, created the climate within which these practices and ideas grew up; but they led to the ultimate contradiction of a socialist economy which, instead of releasing the economic, the creative, initiatives of men, inhibits them and cramps them, and therefore slows down its own economic growth. Hence that whole tissue of bureaucraticism revealed so dramatically in the Polish 8th Plenum:

"The working-class was not master in its workshops, in its name control was exercised by the representatives of the state—a bureaucracy often indifferent to the needs of the masses. The needs of the masses, their standard of living, did not determine our economic planning—but, on the contrary, they were determined by plans, which often, at the expense of the masses, were based on wrong assumptions. This is why in spite of great successes in construction, the working-class is so exasperated and disillusioned." (Arthur Starewicz, "The Polish Road," p. 36).

But hence also a whole constellation of political attitudes, elitist,

paternal, and anti-democratic, in Stalinist ideology. Hence the tone of Stalinist propaganda, throughout the world: the addressing of political demands almost exclusively to economic discontents, the belittling of the common sense, moral idealism, and political judgment of working people. Hence the ridiculous structure and strategy of the British C.P. which within the heart of an advanced political democracy, where above all it is the minds and consciences of the people which must be won for socialism, cannot help but foster within itself an elitist outlook. Despite all resolutions for building the "mass party", the masses refuse to be politically convinced by the most self-sacrificing of economic actions alone. The mind of the people lies open; but the Communist stubbornly addresses himself to the "economic base." The working man asks moral questions: the Communist only hands him a rent petition. Despite all the talk of "faith in the people," despite all the exaltation of the "instincts" of the working-class (as men-things, economic base), Stalinism conceals a colossal contempt, a vast all-embracing attitude of patronage, towards working men and women. This is the political expression of Stalinism: its veiled hostility to democratic initiatives in every form. Man is an appendage to the "instruments of production": the creative man at the heart of labour, from whom all instruments of production, all politics, all institutions flow, has escaped from the categories of Stalinist ideology.

QUESTIONS OF THEORY

The ideology of Stalinism, then, has three distinctive features: anti-intellectualism, moral nihilism, and the denial of the creative agency of human labour, and thus of the value of the individual as an agent in society. This is not the same thing as saying that Stalinism is "Marxism with three mistakes"; at a certain point—related to the growth of the Russian bureaucracy, the Third International, and Stalin's own influence—dogmas and partisan class attitudes which had been present in different degrees in the working-class movement crystallised into a **systematised** ideology, held together within a false conceptual framework. Although proclaimedly materialist, it partook of some of the characteristics of religion. Its symbol is the Lenin mausoleum. Its supreme ideologist was Stalin himself: and it found institutional expression in the CPSU and in the practices of "democratic centralism" in other CPs. Its most systematic exposition is to be found, perhaps, in Stalin's "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" (1938): its institutional justification was provided by the "Short History of the CPSU (B)".

But the ideology of Stalinism cannot be laid at Stalin's door alone. Several of its features can be traced to ambiguities

in the thought of Marx and, even more, to mechanistic fallacies in Lenin's writings. Marx used the word "reflection" in two quite distinct contexts. First, as a statement of the materialist standpoint: sense-impressions "reflect" external material reality which exists independently of human consciousness. Second, as an observation upon the way in which men's ideas and institutions have been determined by their "social being" in their history. But the second observation does not follow from the first premise. It is derived from the study of changing society, whose premises "are men, not in, any fantastic isolation or definition, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions." Because a sense-impression may be described (metaphorically) as a "reflection" of material reality, it by no means follows that human culture is a passive mirror-reflection of social reality. Whenever Marx and Engels discussed the processes of social change they made it clear that this was not so. But (because scientific research had only begun to open up such questions) they tended to leap the gap between one and the other, and to enquire very little into the problem of **how** men's ideas were formed, and wherein lay their field of agency. The interaction between social environment and conscious agency (being—thinking—becoming) was central to their thought, and it was the neglect of agency which Marx saw as the weakness of mechanical materialism:

"The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism ... is that the object, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the **object or contemplation** but not as **human sensuous activity, practice**, not subjectively." (First Thesis on Feuerbach).

This gap, between the raw material of experience and the processes of human culture, has increasingly been filled in during the past hundred years, by research into psychology, language, semantics, the sociology of culture, the nature of the arts, etc. Whereas Engels stated that "materialism must assume a new aspect with every new great discovery," Marxism in general has failed to take account of these advances, and—since the time of Lenin—has degenerated into ideology. For this, the uncritical acceptance of Lenin's "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" must take some share of responsibility. Lenin's inspired political genius was not matched by an equal genius in the field of philosophy. In this work (now sanctified by Stalinism as a "basic text") his concern with the first premise of materialism led him into a number of fallacies. Among these (1) the repeated lumping together of ideas, consciousness, thought, and sensations as "reflections" of material reality. (But a sense-impression, which animals share with men, is not the same thing as an idea, which is the product of exceedingly complex cultural processes peculiar to men). (2) The repeated statement, in an emotive manner, that material reality

is "primary" and "consciousness, thought, sensation" is "secondary," "derivative." (Partially true: but we must guard against the emotional under-tones that therefore thought is less important than material reality. Man is a conscious being, not an animal being with a "derivative" consciousness). (3) Lenin slipped over from Marx's observation "social being determines social consciousness" to the quite different (and untrue) statement that "social consciousness reflects social being." (4) From this, he slipped over to the grotesque conclusion that "social being is independent of the social consciousness of humanity." (How can conscious human beings, whose consciousness is employed in every act of labour, exist independently of their consciousness?) (5) From this it was a small step to envisaging consciousness as a clumsy process of **adaptation** to independently-existing "social being." "The necessity of nature is primary, and human will and mind secondary. The latter must necessarily and inevitably adapt themselves to the former." (S.W. 11, p.248). "The highest task of humanity is to comprehend the objective logic of economic evolution . . . so that it may be possible to adapt to it one's social consciousness . . . in as definite, clear and critical a fashion as possible." (p. 376).

Thus the concept of human **agency**, of the "educators and the educated," became lost in a determinism where the role of consciousness was to adapt itself to "the objective logic of economic evolution." Human consciousness might thus be described as a form of innate behaviour pattern set in motion by economic stimuli, and with a very limited agency in making men conscious of their own innate adaptiveness. Such a pattern might be built within an electronic brain. Stalin's references to the "organising, mobilising and transforming role" of ideas are always framed within such a context of more or less efficient responses to stimuli. Hence Marx's common-sense view that man's freedom is enlarged by each enlargement of knowledge ("Freedom . . . consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature which is founded on knowledge of natural necessity," Engels.) is transformed into the mystique of man's freedom consisting in his recognising and serving "the objective logic of economic evolution": his "freedom" becomes slavery to "necessity." Thus from one fallacy we slip to another: a passive "reflection" cannot initiate, plan, make revolutions; Lenin, absorbed in philosophical nuances, forgot that Marx and Engels held that social being determined social consciousness, not because of any automatic "reflection," but because in class society the compulsive nature of social relations gives rise to a conflict of wills, giving rise in turn to social changes which no-one wills. In forgetting this he removed the cause of social change from the agency of men to the agency of economic necessity. But this led on (in Stalin) simply to a new form of dualism, in which

man's consciousness is no more than the projection of a "soul"¹ within matter, a "dialectic" within the instruments of production, the source of all change.

In a healthy socialist environment these fallacies would soon have been sifted out from the rich harvest of Lenin's political thought. But in fact the fallacies were seized upon by Stalin, systematised, and built into the framework of his thought. In "Dialectical & Historical Materialism" all sense of human agency, all understanding of the "educators and the educated," has disappeared.

"If nature being, the material world, is primary, and mind, thought, secondary, derivative; if the material world represents objective reality existing independently of the mind of men, while the mind is a reflection of this objective reality, it follows that the material life of society, its being, is also primary, and its spiritual life secondary, derivative, and that the material life of society is an objective reality existing independently of the will of men, while the spiritual life of society is a reflection of this objective reality . . ."

The very mode of thought is idealist and mechanistic. Historical materialism is "the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life" (instead of the study of reality giving rise to, &c); it is the "application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society" (that is, the principles are imposed on the phenomena). The understanding of process ("our ideas of movement") is reduced to a vile physico-economic automatism:

"Hence the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of 'outstanding individuals', not on the dictates of 'reason', 'universal morals,' etc., but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws"—

as if such "laws" of "society" exist independently of man's rational and moral being. But the whole structure of thought is corrupt. Stalin, trained in a Greek orthodox seminary, was known as a "strong Marxist": and he had, indeed, an inexorable logic in leading from false premises to false conclusions. The honest Stalinist does not repudiate Stalin; he opens Stalin's works, is enmeshed in his logic, believes it, and then looks up and cannot understand the world. Surely Stalin's ideas are right: there must have been slips, 'mistakes' in his practice? Let the reader return again to this work, and when amidst the blind automatism of productive forces, ask himself suddenly, "yes, but where are **men**? Where is the man that Marx described, using his head and his hands in his labour?"

"Such is the dependence of the development of the relations of production on the development of the productive forces of society, and primarily, on the development of the instruments of production, the dependence by virtue of which the changes and development of the productive forces sooner or later lead to corresponding changes and development of the relations of production."

THE KRUSCHEV ERA

The institutional form—democratic centralism—has already been much discussed and well analysed.⁽⁶⁾ Independent of argu-

ments as to the validity of this or that type of organisation to particular contexts, we should view the C.P.S.U. and in varying degrees other C.P.s as institutions adapted to the needs of an ideological orthodoxy. It is in the nature of an orthodoxy, that inhibits the emergence of unorthodox ideas, that it must have a source of infallibility, of revealed dogma, as the Catholic Church has its Pope. That is, someone must give the sign for change, someone must move on, or the institution will cease to respond to changing circumstances at all. If there is a lurch, or someone on the lower rung moves first, everything may be thrown into disorder, as after the Krushev speech (Togliatti, Thorez, etc.) Thus the cult of the personality arose from the ideology of Stalinism, and not vice versa. So Party functions, Congresses, etc., assumed the form of devotional exercises, reaching their dizzy zenith in Stalin's reply to the debate at the 17th Congress (1934):

"Comrades, the debate at this Congress has revealed complete unity of opinion among our Party leaders on all questions of Party policy, one can say. As you know, no objections whatever have been raised against the report. Hence, it has been revealed that there is extraordinary ideological-political and organisational solidarity in the ranks of our Party. (Applause). The question arises: Is there any need, after this, for a speech in reply to the debate? I think there is no need for it. Permit me therefore to refrain from making a speech in reply. (Ovation. All the delegates rise to their feet. Loud cheers. A chorus of cheers: 'Long Live Stalin!' The delegates, all standing, sing the 'Internationale,' after which the ovation is resumed. Shouts of 'Cheers for Stalin!' Long live Stalin!' Long live the C.C.!)"

It is unfortunate that despite such unity it proved necessary that so many of these delegates should have to be shot. But it was through the denial of the role of individuals as agents in history, as initiators in the Party, that one individual took all of history as his role.

But false thinking on this scale repeatedly fails to produce results. The "social-fascists" turn out, after all, to be anti-fascists; Britain, after all, does not join hands with Germany in an anti-Communist crusade. Hence the constant "abrupt changes" in line. Stalin was not only an ideologist: he was also an extremely capable organiser and man of action, as his war leadership proved: indeed, in total war against the vilest expression of capitalism in **history**, ideology and reality were brought into a deceptive unity. But with the end of the war ideology no longer connected with real life. "The Stalinist oscillates between the

(6) See Ken Alexander in "The Reasoner," No. 1: G. D. H. Cole and others

axiom and 'realpolitik': dogmatism and opportunism. When the axioms cease to produce results, a 'mistake' is 'recognised.'" But the cornucopia from which 'mistakes' flow in such abundance is never recognised. With Stalin's death the ideology sustained a tremendous blow. It is still intact, although infallibility attaches to an institution and not a man: the apex of the orthodoxy is now the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. But since Stalin's death we have seen an almost manic oscillation between attempts to shore the dogma up, and concessions to reality. Krushev is not a jolly pragmatist, doing what he thinks best by his own haphazard lights; he is the opportunist side of the Stalinist moon. The world is changing around him, and he does not understand why. He roars at Gomulka at the airport, and makes it up in Moscow. He denounces Stalin, and declares himself a Stalinist. He issues a statement on past 'mistakes' in relations between socialist countries, and smashes the Hungarian rising before the ink is dry. Such actions precede the end of a dogma; but a dogma in its last days is also unpredictable, ill-tempered, dangerous. "We are not saints," declares Krushev. That the world knows, but it indicates an advance in self-consciousness all the same. For Stalin believed in his own sainthood. Stalin viewed himself as the High Priest of historical necessity: Krushev is too bothered patching up the holes to think sustainedly at all.

The world is changing because socialist people have changed. All this that I have described—the follies of thought and the corruptions of practice—were carried forward **in the name of Communism**. Stalinism has never been the same thing as the world Communist movement. The corruptions have enmeshed only those in the upper ranks of the inner bureaucracy. Stalinism has killed Communist thinkers, artists, and leaders of the working people," but it has never denied Communism. The precepts of Communism—in rigid and fragmentary forms—have been taught to children in school; voiced in dull lifeless novels; committed to memory by the rank-and-file party member. The false consciousness was always encroaching: but it was always resisted by the people's traditions, their experiences in life. In those countries where the great purge could not reach, there has been constant conflict within the communist movements between forces of health and corruption. Without the pressures of the OGPU and frame-ups, nothing could prevent practical experience, the humanist traditions of the socialist movement, the creative ideas of Marx and Engels, from resisting the spreading orthodoxy; only the inner party bureaucracies, nourished on Stalinist texts and involved in the network of international deception, became true ideologists. But even from among these the pragmatic heretics — Gomulka, Tito, etc. — have constantly been thrown up. And in the Soviet Union new men and women have come on the scene. Where

ideology, false consciousness, reigns, "the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary." The instruments of production in the Soviet Union are socialised. The bureaucracy is not a class, but is parasitic upon that society. Despite its parasitism, the wave of human energy unleashed by the first socialist revolution has multiplied the wealth of society, and vastly enlarged the cultural horizons of the people; schools, books, concerts, technical institutes, art galleries — all these have multiplied also. The false consciousness of Stalinism now makes the bureaucracy — confronted by these enormous human energies — increasingly less capable of performing its function in planning and developing the national economy. On the one hand, economic and social frustrations develop; on the other, men and women struggle for a true, socialist consciousness, and seek to give it political expression. Throughout the Soviet Union people — and especially young people — are sick to the point of nausea with the mumbo-jumbo of "Pravda" and of "Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism." The "correct formulations" and ideological fatuities are contradicted by their living experience, and this gives rise to demands for common sense, decency, and humanity, such as find expression in Dudintsev's "Not By Bread Alone." Throughout the international communist movement a similar ferment is in progress. The outcome in the Soviet Union cannot be forecast. Under certain circumstances, the revolt might take the form of a limited political revolution. It must certainly give rise to changed institutions and patterns of social life. This, however, can be said with certainty. One thing only today holds Stalinism in power in the Soviet Union — the fear of war with the West. International relaxation following upon Geneva brought with it internal concession, the return of more prisoners from the camps, the Krushchev speech, the Polish events of October, the Hungarian revolution. Stalinism, 'bringing precept to fact, identifying all opposition to itself as 'counter-revolutionary,' crushed the Hungarian revolt. But it could not crush the contradictions which gave rise to it. The Hydrogen Bomb, the soundly-based fear of aggression from American imperialism (which every day announces new advanced bases for atomic missiles) strengthens the bureaucratic and military caste, gives to them their *raison d'être*, gives colour to Stalinist ideology, and at the same time weakens and confuses the fight against Stalinist ideology both in the Soviet Union and outside. The dismantling of Stalinism will not be assisted simply by swelling the chorus of anti-Stalinist abuse. We must understand—and explain—the true character of Stalinism, the new face of Soviet Society immanent within it. We must do what we can to dismantle the Hydrogen Bomb.

MEN VERSUS THINGS

So back once again to our parochial island. If this analysis is true, then the commonly-found attitudes of British working people to the Soviet Union — that it is "going the right way," but has no democracy, "you can't speak your mind," and so on—have been more healthy than the uncritical allegiance of British-Communists. But this is not the whole truth. The rest lies in this. The Soviet Union is a socialist country, although this is not yet expressed in institutions, political conduct, or public morality. Out of storm, out of error, from a revolution that leapt a chasm of social development and encompassed a people without democratic traditions, there grew this ideology which has contorted the features of socialist man. But those features are human features; they are our features also; we see in them our own future. Hence the British Stalinist who accepts the contortions as "correct" and who distorts his own face into an imitative scowl: "There is no such thing as Marxism without the Communist Party." Hence the Communist who becomes enmeshed in Stalinist ideology simply because he dare not look at those features as they really are, he must idealise them—if he looked, he would lose hope for humanity. Hence also a certain spiritual despair, a paralysis of will, a lack of direction, in the British labour movement; it has seen the Gorgon's head and has lost the desire to move on.

Is it inevitable that the new society must be torn out of the old, with a partisan ideology such as Stalinism? It might be argued that the Bolsheviks would never have held power in Russia, in circumstances of inconceivable difficulty, if they had not strengthened the steel of endurance and summoned emotional energies by developing to their extreme point the partisan attitudes of the proletarian elite. But because Stalinism is the ideology of a proletarian elite in such a context, it does not at all follow that the inevitably partial and partisan outlooks of other working class movements will give birth to new ideologies. False ideas there are bound to be during the transitional stage which Marx called the dictatorship of the proletariat. But if we learn the lesson of Stalinism, they need not grow into a self-perpetuating system of falsities. There might be some danger, in certain conditions and countries—and if the fall of the Soviet bureaucracy is long delayed—of the Trotskyist ideology taking root and, if victorious, leading on to similar distortions and confusions. Trotskyism is also a self-consistent ideology, being at root an "anti-Stalinism" (just as there were once anti-Popes), arising from the same context as Stalinism, opposing the Stalinist bureaucracy but carrying over into opposition the same false conceptual framework and attitudes—the same economic behaviourism, cult of the elite, moral nihilism. Hence the same desperate expectation of economic crisis, denunciation

of movements — in the colonies or in the West — which find expression through constitutional forms, attacks upon the world-wide movement for co-existence. The best, most fruitful, ideas of Trotskyism — emphasis upon economic democracy and direct forms of political democracy — are expressed in fetishistic form: "worker's councils" and "Soviets" must be imposed as the only orthodoxy. But Britain teems with Soviets. We have a General Soviet of the T.U.C. and trades Soviets in every town: peace soviets and national Soviets of women, elected parish, urban district and borough Soviets. Granted that these organisations must be transformed; but it is the people behind, or within, the institutions whom we must change.

The most striking thing about the British labour movement is that it cannot be said to have either a false consciousness or a true one: it has a hotch-potch, of capitalist ideas, humanitarian aspirations, working-class attitudes. We are a protestant people, distrustful of system-building; we have not suffered under an ideological orthodoxy, backed by the power of the state, for several hundred years. Our Labour movement, is guided, in the main, by pragmatism: which is not an ideology but a kind of fragmentary, piecemeal, fitful, true consciousness; it sees problems clearly, but not their relationship to each other. Therefore it tends to accept, or half-accept, a framework of capitalist ideas (the sanctity of NATO and the US alliance, the inevitability of the wages-prices-spiral, etc.) but to fight hard for certain principles and interests within it. It can at times see some problems very well, but cannot see how they arose, nor anticipate how they will change.

This pragmatism which, in a wry way, Engels admired, has served the British people a great deal better than most Marxists have been prepared to admit. Pragmatism combined with parochialism have served it least well in international affairs; and far more often than not they have served the colonial peoples very badly indeed. And yet even in international questions, Marxists tend to overstate the case; we should not forget that the British people played their part—with high and conscious, morale—in turning the tide of fascism in Europe.

I am not dismayed, as some seem to be, by the refusal of a slump to develop. We should address ourselves as socialists to the context and people we find about us, and it is high time to get away from the idea that our views will only prevail, and the working-class seize power, through a final cataclysmic confrontation of classes, preceded by economic ruin. It is true that Marx expected some such outcome; but, on the other hand, he hailed the 10 Hour Bill as "the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class" (Address to W.M.I.A., 1864). Engels also encouraged the new unions to fight for the

Legal Eight Hour Day and employ the machinery of State in the interests of the people; we have followed this road to the present day. The ferment of 1945 resulted in such victories for "the political economy of the working class," that the capitalist class was almost fought to a standstill and held prisoner within its own state machinery. The British working class finds itself in its present position not because we have the "oldest and most cunning capitalist class in the world," but because the capitalist class could not stop it. It has got no further because, being pragmatic and hostile to theory it does not know and feel its own strength, it has no sense of direction or revolutionary perspective, it tends to fall into moral lethargy, it accepts leaders with capitalist ideas. In Britain the new society is not—as in Russia—to be torn prematurely from the old, but is in many, features formed within the old. I don't mean that we live in some half-way society, some "mutation" of capitalist society, some "late capitalist" phase which is almost socialism. We live in a capitalist society, there is no need for qualification. The ethos of capitalism is the same, the drive for profit is the same, the tendency towards war against backward peoples is the same, the debasement of cultural values into commodities, the elevation of property above men, the putting of things (bases on Cyprus, higher profits, etc.) before human beings — all these are the same: but between the Americans and the H Bomb abroad, and the constant, stubborn, determined pragmatic pressure of the people at home, our capitalist ruling-class is hemmed in and cannot act as it would. Hemmed in, it could become dangerous, just as dying dogmatism is dangerous: Suez was a symptom: in the past few years irrationalism, religiosity, anti-humanist and vicious ideologies have been gaining ground among our middle-class. But the British capitalist class cannot do as it likes; however cunning, it has not got much left to give away, except the essential economic and political seats of its power. The working people of Britain could end capitalism tomorrow, if they summoned up the courage and made up their minds to do it. If they have lost the will, is it not just because there is full employment; it is also because, over thirty years, their hopes — and the hopes of many in the professional classes — in Russia have kept falling through. Working people in Britain still feel the social relations of capitalist society to be oppressive; but not so oppressive that they are willing to risk giving allegiance to a "Vanguard" which will establish a "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." They are better suited as they are; but remaining as they are leaves them as proletarians with bourgeois aspirations, exploited acquisitive men.

The militant philistinism of Stalinism is matched by our own muted and sterile philistinism. The new thinkers have little to offer. Man is the victim of the Dollar Gap, the wages-prices

spiral; his aspirations must be fitted to his pocket. They feel, uneasily, that something is missing: Thus Mr. Crosland:

"We need not **only** higher exports and old-age pensions, but more open-air cafes, brighter and gayer streets at night, later closing hours for public houses, more local repertory theatres, better and more hospitable hoteliers and restaurateurs, brighter and cleaner eating-houses, more local river-side cafes, more pleasure-gardens on the Battersea model, more murals and pictures in public places, better designs for furniture and pottery and women's clothes, statues in the centre of new housing-estates, better designed street-lamps and telephone kiosks, and so on." ("The Future of Socialism").

Yes, we want some of these things; but let us look a little more closely. Look first at the slapdash writing and the sensibility revealed: "open air cafes . . . public houses . . . hoteliers and restaurateurs . . . eating-houses . . . riverside cafes"; the American tourist's dream. It is nice for an M.P. to slip out of the House for a full meal in a pleasure-garden; but are we sure this is what socialists mean by the "full life"? This is a bit more middle-class life all round; there is no sense of a socialist community; re-designed street lamps and kiosks but not factories and cities. And then it is a list of things: it tells us nothing about people — the values of the men and women eating the food, walking under the lights, wearing the clothes; the quality of the plays, the murals, the statues. Meanwhile we are warned from many sources of the cultural and human pollution of the mass media of commercialism:

"Inhibited now from ensuring the 'degradation' of the masses economically, the logical processes of competitive commerce, favoured from without by the whole climate of the time and from within assisted by, the lack of direction, the doubts and uncertainty before their freedom of working-people themselves . . . are ensuring that working-people are culturally robbed . . . The constant pressure . . . becomes a new and stronger form of subjection; this subjection promises to be stronger than the old because the chains of cultural subordination are both easier to wear and harder to strike away than those of economic subordination."

Thus Mr. Hoggart ("The Uses of Literacy," p.200): and he concludes — addressing the working-class movement: "If the active minority continue to allow themselves too exclusively to think of immediate political and economic objectives, the pass will be sold, culturally, behind their backs." (p.264). To which we may surely add this? Men do not want only the list of things which Mr. Crosland offers; they want also to change themselves as men. However fitfully and ineffectively, they want other and greater things: they want to stop killing one another: they want to stop this pollution of their spiritual life which runs through society as the rivers carried their sewage and refuse through our nineteenth-century industrial towns: side by side with their direct economic interests, they would like to "do benefits" to each other. Socialist humanism, East and West, is seeking to make apparent

these aspirations, and to show the way to their fulfillment. Mr. Kruschew also promises the people more things: they ask for justice and reason, and he promises more automation. Like Mr. Crosland, talk of the full life makes him think of food: he is interested in brightening factory canteens. But creative men, their initiatives freed from slavery to profit or to bureaucracy, will soon enough see to their cafes and canteens. Philistinism, East or West, offers things but cannot satisfy men, because men are intellectual and moral beings. The ideologies of capitalism and Stalinism are both forms of "self-alienation": men stumble in their minds and lose themselves in abstractions: capitalism sees human labour as a commodity and the satisfaction of his "needs" as the production and distribution of commodities: Stalinism sees labour as an economic-physical act in satisfying economic-physical needs. Socialist humanism declares: liberate men from slavery to things, to the pursuit of profit or servitude to "economic necessity." Liberate man, as a creative being — and he will create, not only new values, but things in super-abundance.

This case now has a greater significance, both terrible and hopeful. Philistinism and blind class interests have evolved the biggest Thing of all, a Thing to end all things. Today man and this thing face each other. This thing is there because both capitalism and Stalinism have reduced human being to things, commodities or appendages to machines. But now men must look to something else — not a thing at all, but to the reason "and conscience of man. Without that creative being, his hands outstretched against the bomb, humanity must fail and Marx's forgotten alternative be fulfilled: "the mutual ruin of the contending classes." And so throughout the world, men and women are growing angry at this culmination of four decades of war, gas chambers, concentration camps, napalm, political hypocrisy and arguments of expediency; the threat of this final thing is impelling into a new awareness man's own self-consciousness, his knowledge of his own undivided humanity. As Lysistrata cried out, "We are all Greeks!" so now humanity cries out, "We are all men!" And the barbarians who press against our frontiers are the blind clashing of interests and the arid abstractions which steal us from ourselves. The bomb must be dismantled; but in dismantling it, men will summon up energies which will open the way to their inheritance. The bomb is like an image of man's whole predicament: it bears within it death and life, total destruction or human mastery over human history. Only if men by their own human agency can master this thing will Marx's optimism be confirmed, and "human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain."