

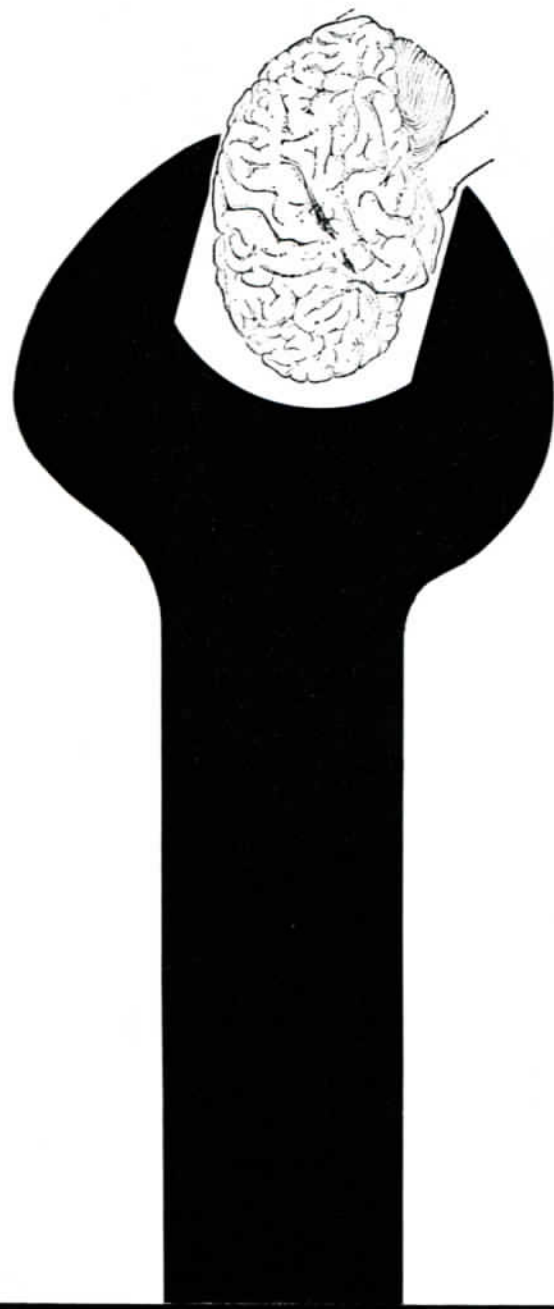
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# Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

**Brian Simon**

Intelligence, Race, Class  
and Education



Contents also include:

Editorial Comments

Discussion contributions on—

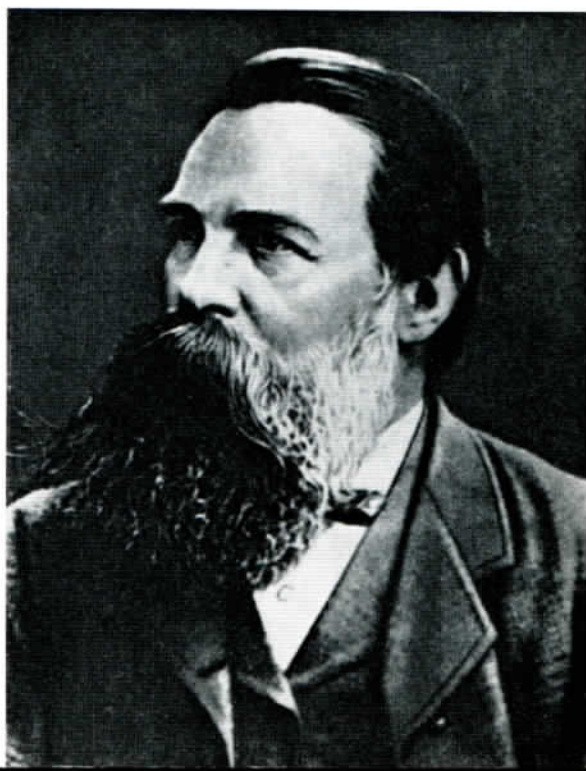
Socialist Democracy by Tony Gilbert

Why Did it Happen? by Jean Feldmar

Socialism, Democracy and the One-Party System  
(Part Two completed) by Monty Johnstone

**John Smethurst,  
Edmund and Ruth Frow**

F. Engels and the English  
Working Class in  
Manchester, 1842-1844



# MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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# Editorial Comments

THIS YEAR'S TUC and Labour Party Conferences marked a big advance of the Left in the Labour movement—especially in the trade unions.

As a result of unremitting united activity between Communists, Labour Party members and other militants, many trade unions—above all the two largest and most powerful ones, the TGWU and the AEFU—have now militant, progressive leaderships, and these dominated both conferences both in the speeches made by Jack Jones, Hugh Scanlon and others, and in the weight of their massive votes behind progressive resolutions or in opposition to reactionary ones.

Gone indeed are the days when William Carron operated "Carron's Law" at such conferences or when Arthur Deakin imposed his right wing will on the TGWU delegations to these meetings. It is no longer the case that the right wing leaders of the Labour Party are provided with a regular certain and overwhelming trade union vote for their policies. The "bloc vote", like everything else apparently, is subject to dialectical change.

The TUC and Labour Party Conference both expressed the powerful and bitter determination of the whole Labour movement to fight to the utmost to defeat the Tory attack on trade union rights—now codified and made public. What the Labour movement would not take from a Labour Government, it will certainly not accept from the Tories.

On Incomes Policy, on mergers and monopolies, on the position of old-age pensioners, on the Common Market, on Vietnam, above all on the determination of the Labour movement to make a future Labour Government base its policies on Labour Party Conference decisions, there were notable Left victories or very significant near misses.

## SOCIALIST IDEAS

Of course it is too soon to pronounce funeral orations over the right wing. They are still firmly entrenched both in the leadership of the Labour Party and the TUC and the whole strength of the movement will now be required to compel the real im-

plementation of the excellent resolutions which were carried. But these two meetings were most heartening auguries that given unity between the Communists and the Left in the Labour Party and trade unions, the right wing can be defeated and the Labour movement, freed from the force which has obstructed its advance for far too long, can go forward towards its socialist goal.

For the advance of the Left does not mean simply a more militant, determined fight for the every-day needs of the working people absolutely decisive though this is. It means that higher and more fundamental aims are set. The problems posed by the scientific technological revolution, those faced by the workers in the fight against the big monopolies today, can only be solved by ending capitalism and building Socialism.

More and more the Left advance in the trade unions must be reflected in a Left advance politically, and this demands more propaganda for the ideas of Marxism, more participation in the actual political battle to win Socialism, more recognition by them of the key role of the Communist Party in the fight for Socialism.

## SPECIALISATION IN SOVIET HIGHER EDUCATION

A very real question and a very profound one was posed recently by Academician Spartak Belyayev, Rector of Novosibirsk State University in an interview with *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. He was discussing problems of training specialists for industry at Soviet higher educational establishments.

The aims of education, he argued, and particularly higher education, cannot be viewed in isolation from the trends of scientific and technological progress. Two of these trends are specially relevant. And at first sight they seem contradictory:

"The first is the intensive development in depth of branches of science and technology and the amount of specialist information required for work in industry—information which is growing like an avalanche.

"This means either that the period of time devoted to education must be increased (and that is quite unacceptable) or else specialists must be trained for

still narrower fields. As a matter of fact, our higher educational establishments have so far followed the second of these paths."

Everyone recognises today, Academician Belyayev continued, that there is a danger in narrowing the field of specialists to an extreme degree. And this is a response to the second trend of the scientific and technological problem which is leading to the overlapping, intertwining and integration of different sciences:

"If the overlapping of physics, biology and chemistry has already become an accepted fact, today we can also speak about common problems of the engineering sciences on the one hand, and psychology, sociology, aesthetics and even biology on the other."

Asked what in his opinion, should be the general educational approach in the colleges, Academician Belyayev again stressed the need for broadening the approach.

"It is necessary to extend and deepen the general fundamental training. Today 'pure science' is becoming a direct productive force. Many technical trends grow out of branches of fundamental sciences—physics, mathematics and chemistry. The boundaries between 'pure' and applied sciences are becoming increasingly blurred. In these conditions, a broad and profound training in physics and mathematics helps to make an engineer better able to cope, more quick-thinking and independent on the turbulent sea of specialised information."

Academician Belyayev went on to discuss measures taken or under consideration in the Soviet Union in connection with the training of specialists, and we recommend our readers to study these in *Soviet News*.<sup>1</sup>

But the problems raised by Spartak Belyayev—the contradiction between the need for ever greater specialisation to acquire the ever-extending information in every field of knowledge, on the one hand, and the overlapping, intertwining, ever-developing interrelation between every field of science, on the other, is one of the most profound problems of our period which should exercise the minds of Marxists everywhere.

#### PROBLEMS OF SOCIALISM TODAY

Lawrence and Wishart have published in paperback three works by Santiago Carillo, general secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, whose writings have not hitherto been known to English readers.<sup>2</sup> The Communist Party of Spain, a mass party existing in illegality but with the closest

ties with all the democratic forces of Spain from factory workers to broad sections of the Catholic Church, has many achievements to its credit of which many of us in Britain have been unaware. Carillo, its general secretary, is one of the outstanding contemporary leaders and theoreticians of the world communist movement.

Drawing on the mass experiences of the movement in Spain, and expounding the broad policies for the overthrow of the Franco dictatorship, Carillo with brilliant clarity and originality develops new themes of profound significance for the entire world revolutionary movement—the problems of "the alliance of labour and culture", of the youth, of the "national strike" as a new form of mass struggle, of new paths in the advance to power, of the inter-relations of socialist states, and of "pluralism", the co-operation of a variety of political parties and trends in the advance to and achievement and administration of socialism. He demands of socialists and communists "the ending of paralysing taboos" on full discussion; an "open-minded and searching attitude, an effort to come to grips with new factors and new forces".

The whole British left can gain knowledge, stimulus and clarification from these writings.

#### FUTURE ARTICLES AND DISCUSSIONS

We must apologise to the authors whose articles and discussion contributions, for lack of space, we have been obliged to hold over from month to month. The list of "forthcoming articles" on the inside front cover shows only part of what we have in hand and what we have been promised.

But having apologised, we must add that the increasing number of contributions received is a good sign, a sign of rising interest.

There has been a tendency for the circulation of *Marxism Today*, which held firm in recent years, to rise during 1970. All the extra issues which we printed of the October issue (on the 50th Anniversary of the CPGB) have been taken up. Please note that, again through lack of space, we were obliged to hold over from that issue an article by Peter Kerrigan on "The Communist Party in the Industrial Struggle", and this will definitely appear in the December issue.

Now on the Discussions. At the last meeting of the Editorial Board it was decided

<sup>1</sup> Issue of September 22, 1970. See also *Soviet Weekly* of October 31, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> *Problems of Socialism Today*, by Santiago Carillo. 208 pp. Lawrence & Wishart, London. 75p. (15s.).

(Continued on page 356.)



# Intelligence, Race, Class and Education

Brian Simon<sup>1</sup>

*Late in 1969 the Cultural Committee held a two day conference on Marxism and Science. One day was devoted to a discussion of Intelligence Testing in the light of the thesis put forward by Arthur Jensen, a professor of psychology in the United States. Teachers, scientists (in the fields of genetics and neurophysiology) and others were present.*

*The paper which follows is based on this discussion. We hope that readers interested in the questions raised in this article will take the discussion further.*

In the summer of this year, Arthur Jensen, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, visited this country. He addressed two meetings at Cambridge, one organised by the Brain Research Association, the other by the Cambridge Society for Social Responsibility in Science—both, incidentally, of recent foundation.<sup>2</sup> He was invited specifically to explain and discuss his very controversial views as to the nature and distribution of human intelligence, views which had aroused a furore in the United States and had immediate repercussions here. Briefly, Jensen appeared to argue that, owing to genetical endowment, blacks in the United States are innately less intelligent than whites, and also that working-class whites are less intelligent than upper and middle class whites. Jensen claimed that his evidence—derived from psychometry (mental measurement, or intelligence testing)—indicated overwhelmingly that both racial and class differences are inherited, and so impervious to change by way of social or educational policies.

We may note first, that this is a revival, and extension, of old arguments derived from psychometry which have been exposed in practice and discredited in this country. We may then go on to examine the circumstances in which an old contention has been refurbished, what have been the reactions of scientists in related fields, and how the controversy affects us all.

## Intelligence Testing and Education in Britain

It is now twenty years or more since Marxists in this country were forced to make a detailed, critical, analysis of this specific branch of psychology

and the uses to which it is put. Conclusions derived from intelligence testing, carried out on a mass scale, provided an apparently scientific foundation for social, and in particular, educational policies of an extremely reactionary nature which militated against the working class. The rationale—or justification—for the rigid divisions in education, which have only recently begun to be broken down, rested fundamentally on assumed “laws” about the distribution of intelligence derived from psychometry.

In the period immediately following World War II, despite the existence of a government, committed by a series of Labour Party Conference resolutions, to comprehensive secondary education, a divided (or bipartite) system was firmly established, with the 11 plus examination as the means of selection for the restricted number of grammar schools which monopolised the road to higher education. An essential ingredient of this were mental tests. At the same time rigid streaming in primary schools became widespread, so that a child's whole future could be, and in most cases was, determined by his stream placement (into A, B or C stream) at the age of 7 or even earlier.

This procedure was justified on the grounds that children differ markedly in intelligence and that education must take account of the fact. It was held that intelligence is an innate quality of mind, genetically determined—i.e. not open to modification by education—and that it can be accurately measured by a specially constructed test. It was also held that, in every population—whatever the differences in social and educational background and the changes in social living that may take place—there is always a given (small) proportion of highly intelligent people at one end of the scale and an equivalent proportion of very dull people at the other; the majority of the population is strung out between these two extremes, tailing off through

<sup>1</sup> Brian Simon is Professor of Education at Leicester University and a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party.

<sup>2</sup> The latter is a branch of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, formed at a meeting at the Royal Society in April 1969.

the moderately clever at one end and the moderately stupid at the other to the two end points of genius and idiocy. (This pattern follows what statisticians call "the normal curve of distribution".) Finally, it was held, and widely believed, that intelligence test results prove conclusively that working-class children are, on average, born less intelligent than middle and upper-class children.

Intelligence testing not only provided the rationale for streaming and selection but also the practical means whereby children were allocated to different types of school (grammar-modern) and to different streams within the school. Theory and practice reinforced each other, therefore, in maintaining a divided and segregated system of education; one which, like the society it served, offered opportunities and rewards to an elitist minority while relegating the vast majority to an inferior form of education. This last was "appropriate" to the mass of working-class children, assumed to lack the "intelligence" required for abstract (conceptual) thought and so to be incapable of significant intellectual achievement.

For a considerable time this "system"—in fact a self-justificatory one—appeared impregnable. The theoretical framework had been developed and firmed up in the 1920's and '30's, particularly under the influence of Cyril Burt who advised successive official committees on the psychological considerations which should underlie the development of the state system of education (the Hadow Reports of 1926 and 1931, the Spens Report of 1938). These ideas still informed official thinking when the 1944 Act was drafted and were in due course put into practice when it was implemented, playing the key ideological role in preventing the general introduction of comprehensive schooling. Once the divided system was established, with intelligence testing as an integral part, it became possible to assert that this was the only right and proper system.

To make a fundamental critical analysis of the theory and practice of intelligence testing was indispensable. It is not easy now to recall the atmosphere of those days—how unquestioningly these ideas were accepted by the vast majority of educationists as well as psychologists, whatever their social outlook or political standpoint. Teachers had been brought up in these beliefs, embodied almost as a dogma in text-books—though some, finding through their own experience that children's intellectual powers could be stimulated and developed, remained sceptical. The critique of intelligence testing, its theory, technology and educational outcome, could at that time only be undertaken from an independent standpoint, geared to seek out and challenge the basic, unstated

assumptions of intelligence testing embedded in its technology.

Marxism is such a standpoint. And it was in Marxist journals that criticism of the fundamentals of intelligence testing—criticism now very widely accepted—first began in 1949.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1950 the Communist Party organised an open conference on intelligence testing and its effect on the schools, and in 1952, at a public conference on the secondary modern school, the problems of 11 plus and streaming in junior schools were sharply raised, particularly by parents. This implied straightforward rejection of the view that the public must passively accept expert guidance, in favour of a challenge to the experts in a socially responsible way. The collective discussion on teaching and selection during this period was summed up, and presented in popular form, in my *Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School* (1953).

### The Breakdown of the "System"

Since that time there have been many developments, in both the practice and theory of education. The 11 plus has been discredited, comprehensive schooling is becoming established, streaming has been abandoned in many primary schools and is beginning to be superseded in some secondary schools. Although the old ideas still persist and have their defenders, as we shall see, in general both educationists and psychologists now have a positive attitude to the promotion of human learning and the "educability" of children.

In 1957 a working party of the British Psychological Society, comprising most of the leading educational psychologists in the country, produced a report acknowledging a growing revolt against what were beginning to appear as sweeping and doctrinaire theories, as well as mounting public objection to the whole business of selection.<sup>4</sup> This specifically referred to criticisms by Marxists (labelled as "left-wing" critics) and stated "we accept some of their arguments, and will attempt to supply reasoned answers to others". In the outcome the report specifically condemned streaming in the primary school and early selection. For, in the light of research results which undermined the former position, it had to be conceded that tests could not now be said to measure an innate quality of mind—and this, in effect, removed the

<sup>3</sup> B. Simon, "The Theory and Practice of Intelligence Testing", *Communist Review*, October 1949; and "Science and Pseudo-Science in Psychology", *Education Bulletin*, October 1949; Joan Simon, "Mental Testing", *Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1, winter 1949-50; Max Morris, "Intelligence Testing and the Class System of Education", *Modern Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Spring 1951.

<sup>4</sup> P. E. Vernon (ed.), *Secondary School Selection: a British Psychological Society Enquiry* (1957).

justification for the segregated school system.<sup>5</sup> Teachers also helped materially to force this change of front, insofar as many were proving beyond dispute that children classified on test results as of low intelligence could, with effective teaching and high expectations on the part of their teachers, reach a level of achievement well beyond the limits of their potentialities as predicted by intelligence test theory.

There has, then, been a substantial revision of earlier theories and the view that intelligence is largely fixed at birth (or better, perhaps, conception) finds relatively little support today. The more widely accepted standpoint is summarised in the Newsom report, an official document published in 1963:

"Intellectual talent is not a fixed quantity with which we have to work but a variable that can be modified by social policy and educational approaches . . . the kind of intelligence that is measured by the tests so far applied is largely an acquired characteristic".

In other words, how a child develops intellectually depends on his life experiences, both at school and at home—in a given neighbourhood with given conditions of housing, health and so on. The corollary is to be found in a recommendation of the Plowden Report on junior schooling (1967), that there should be a policy of "positive discrimination", i.e. one which directs additional funds and aid to sub-standard schools in sub-standard areas. All this amounts to a recognition in practice of the decisive role of education in development, and a consequent recognition that more education should be provided for those at a disadvantage rather than less education on the grounds that they are backward—which was, effectively, the advice of the "intelligence-testers".

It is always mistaken to suppose that victories are absolute in conditions of continuing class conflict, particularly in ideological matters. Given the basic economic and social conditions of class society, there will always be a recrudescence of conflicting ideas in changing forms. That "intelligence" testing was so effectively exposed was largely owing to the fact that, by the 1960's, it was becoming increasingly clear that economic and technological needs dictate a move away from the wastage of ability inherent in a selective school system. The urgent need to raise the educational level was pressed by several official reports, notably the Crowther Report (1958) and the Robbins

Report (1963). In most European countries, not merely England, secondary education is being opened up on non-selective lines.

Nonetheless, to provide a full education for the majority inevitably implies encroachment on what has for centuries been regarded as a minority privilege and this provokes reaction. Parallel with the Tory policy to maintain at all costs the private sector of education, and so far as possible selective grammar schools within the state system, there has been an ideological counter-offensive (accorded immense publicity) in the two Black Papers on education (1968, 1969). These were directed to criticising current trends in educational advance—not only comprehensive schools and non-streaming, but new methods of teaching. It is relevant to note that no scientists figure among the academics contributing to these very non-academic documents, but two psychometrists, both deeply committed to intelligence testing, figure prominently—Professors Burt and H. J. Eysenck.

#### The American Scene and Arthur Jensen's Paper

Meanwhile there have been developments in the United States where class oppression takes its most vicious form in racial suppression of the blacks, extending to gross educational deprivation. Here there has not been an elitist school system on the English model but a much more open one. But there has been a growing tendency for black children to become segregated in separate schools in downtown areas in the North, to parallel open segregation in the deep South. With the development of the civil rights movement and the black power movement, it has been on the desegregation of schools that official policy has concentrated. In conjunction with this policy, only gradually being enforced, the Federal government has invested large sums of money on "compensatory" educational programmes in the cities, of which "Operation Headstart" is perhaps best known here. These are geared to provide special, concentrated, teaching for children from sub-standard areas, intended to enable them to start school on more equal terms with others. Leading psychologists and educationists have also been working out new methods of teaching which are beginning to produce results and open up a whole new field of educational and psychological research, particularly in relation to stimulus in early childhood.<sup>6</sup>

It is in opposition to this development that the backlash in America has come. The relative lack of success of some rehabilitation programmes, hastily mounted on sketchy lines without adequate

<sup>5</sup> This report, which made important concessions but also contained a number of theoretical confusions, was assessed in some detail in "Secondary School Selection: A reply to the intelligence-testers", *Marxism Today*, January 1958.

<sup>6</sup> A good account of this movement, for the general reader is Maya Pines, *Revolution in Learning* (1969).

prior preparation, was an obvious point to be exploited. It was exploited by Arthur Jensen who, presenting an appropriately depressing picture of new programmes, went on to argue that the whole policy is mistaken; that failure is inevitable given the inferior intellectual equipment of blacks by comparison with whites. In the process he revives all the arguments that have ceased to carry weight in this country, capped by the hypothesis that "intelligence" tests indicate basic ethnic differences in the level of intelligence. Here it should be noted that to apply the theory and practice of testing in a racially diverse society such as the United States—where various ethnic groups which maintain an identity such as Puerto Ricans and Mexicans as well as blacks have been particularly exploited—is inevitably to add to a "class" interpretation of the distribution of measured intelligence, a "racial" interpretation. That is, if there is insistence that "intelligence" as measured by tests, can, and must, be seen as an inherited characteristic.

Early in 1969, Arthur Jensen's now celebrated paper—of 120 pages, the length of a small book—appeared in a relatively obscure academic journal, the *Harvard Educational Review*. It opens with the claim that the great majority of schemes for compensatory education, launched in different areas, have failed to achieve any improvement of significance. There is a simple reason for this. Social scientists who claim that, by changing the environment, people can be changed have misled the government. As a consequence resources have been wasted and a great deal of effort expended in a fruitless endeavour. A new approach is called for.

Jensen's "new" approach is to reiterate old and discredited views deriving from mass "intelligence" testing, notably the view that heredity determines the level of intelligence. At least 80 per cent of the variance in intelligence is due to heredity, he argues (in common with Cyril Burt), only 20 per cent to environmental factors. The probability is that, just as lower class whites are inferior (in terms of measured intelligence) to middle and upper class whites, so blacks are innately inferior to whites, by reason of an inferior genetic make up.

There are, Jensen suggested, (and here his theory is similar to that propagated in practice in our bipartite educational system until quite recently) two types or "levels" of intelligence. Level I corresponds to the ability for "associative learning", i.e. simple rote learning, power of recall etc. Level II corresponds to the ability to grasp concepts, solve problems, in short, to *think* (or actively manipulate the materials of thought). He postulates that these two levels are, as a result of genetic factors, distributed differentially among the population "as a function of social class". Education should be

differentiated accordingly. For the working class (as a *class*, individual variation is allowed for as is customary) the appropriate education is one based on rote, or associative learning (where input—output). This, of course, covers the vast majority of blacks. For the middle and upper classes, alone capable of conceptual thinking, education should be designed to build on and develop this capacity.

This is the essence of an immensely long article, in which Jensen specifically sets out to rehabilitate the hereditarian theory of intelligence in terms not only of class but "race". To do this involves him in a detailed defence of the techniques of mental measurement developed over the last three or four decades, as well as in a survey and reinterpretation of the vast amount of data collected over this period, primarily in the US and Britain. Jensen, not himself a geneticist, also uses arguments from genetics (especially population genetics) where these seem to support his general approach.

The article is serious, closely reasoned, and in parts highly technical and abstruse. It can, therefore, easily be mistaken for the disinterested scientific enquiry it purports to be. But the entire argument depends on the techniques, the closed world, of psychometry—a specialised offshoot of psychology resting on some very definite assumptions. And these techniques, as has long since been demonstrated, specifically exclude the concept of *development* of human abilities, and so inevitably lead to the writing off of those who start at a disadvantage. Hence the rationale—or apparent scientific basis—Jensen's arguments provide for discriminatory educational practice, in a country which has not lived through the operation, decline and supersession of the II plus.

Inevitably Jensen's main conclusions were widely reported—as if they were scientific findings, rather than hypotheses which he was advancing for examination and discussion, as he had insisted. Their practical (or political) significance immediately became clear when his standpoint was quoted in the South in lawsuits against integration in the schools. In the light of this, it could now be argued that it would be right and proper to have all-black "remedial" schools (for "backward" children) and admit blacks to white schools only if they passed standardised tests; i.e. segregation, far from being abolished, should be streamlined on "scientific" grounds.

The article was publicly discussed all over the States, by politicians as well as scientists and those professionally engaged in education. The two subsequent numbers of the *Harvard Educational Review* were filled with articles and correspondence, primarily in protest but also in support, and Jensen replied to some of the criticisms raised. To this



we may turn later, after considering reactions here and Jensen's meetings with scientists in Britain.

### Jensen's Thesis Reaches Britain

The Jensen thesis almost immediately made the front pages in Britain, though usually as controversial rather than as an exposition of the latest scientific knowledge. Thus following up the question in February 1970, the *Sunday Times* ran two full page articles, in successive issues, on "Race, Class and Brains", sub-headed "Brian Silcock investigates an explosive scientific controversy".

But the first serious discussion of the thesis took place in the May, 1969 issues of the *New Scientist*, a popular but informed weekly journal. Introducing the discussion, the editorial referred to the "storm of protest and invective" which greeted Jensen's thesis in the States, noting the implication that "he has struck political dynamite". It went on to link the matter with current social and educational issues in this country:

"Dr. Arthur Jensen's claim that US Negroes are less intelligent than their white countrymen. Haringey Education Committee's decision to distribute immigrant children on the supposition that they are less intelligent than British pupils, and recent pronouncements by Lord Snow and others, have all focussed attention on the emotive subject of intelligence and 'race'."

To the *New Scientist* it was clear that, in the resultant controversy, "science, politics and prejudice have become inextricably mixed".<sup>7</sup>

In the discussion in the journal, Professors Burt and Eysenck, inevitably, made contributions. Both are well known for their support of the out-right hereditarian thesis, now a minority view. Both, though critical on minor aspects, supported Jensen's standpoint, though Burt drew the line at the question of race, as has long been customary here, saying that he does not believe there are important ethnic differences. By contrast, Eysenck, in two emotionally charged contributions, underlined ethnic differences, asserting that Jensen, and others, who have brought this matter "from under the carpet where it had been swept" have done "a great service to humanity". Eysenck also stressed the educational implications of Jensen's theory, in terms of the necessity for streaming and selection. Subsequently, in *Black Paper Two*

(October 1969) he and Burt both figured—in what turned out to be a more strident and irrational publication than the first—joined by another psychologist, Richard Lynn, who expressed even more openly reactionary views with less cogency.

The underlying assumption of the hereditarians outlined in this *Black Paper* is a simple one, echoing one of Jensen's key contentions. In the course of history, the mass of the people have lost all their "intelligent" individuals to the upper classes as a consequence of social mobility, leaving a muddy sediment at the base amidst which only the occasional pearl is still to be found by careful probing. Thus Burt observes the "obvious" fact that:

"bright children from the poorer classes forge their way upward, and duller children from the higher class drift downward. Class differences thus become inevitable in any civilised society. The use of intelligence tests was intended, not to pick out the dull or defectives, but to reveal ability in cases where it would otherwise have remained unnoticed".

Richard Lynn elaborates on the point. One of the most serious suppressions of truth by "progressives" is their assertion:

"that it is the fault of society that slum dwellers are impoverished and their children do badly in school. To the young red guards, it follows that society is unjust and must be overthrown. They do not realise that slum dwellers are caused principally by low innate intelligence and poor family upbringing, and that the real social challenge is posed by this".

H. J. Eysenck caps the conclusion with the argument that compensatory policies for the deprived can do no good (here he draws on Jensen), but only harm insofar as "with limited resources available for all of education, special help to some means less education for others", notably those selected by I.Q. tests as the innately superior in intellect.<sup>8</sup> This is the unspoken assumption underlying what has been a far greater expenditure on grammar schools than on modern schools, the kind of policy the Newsom Report directly challenged.

The Jensen article has also been discussed, more seriously and moderately, in educational and psychological journals, as well as the popular press. It may be noted that all this coincided with a revival of what might be called "biologism"—or moves to interpret the activity of human beings in society in terms of animal behaviour or biological urges. Such were Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape*, and C. D. Darlington's, *The Evolution of Man in Society* which attempts to rewrite history in terms of the key role of genetics. The latter—given the full treatment not only in the daily and

<sup>7</sup> *New Scientist*, 1 May 1969. C. P. Snow is referred to in relation to certain statements he made on Jewish intellectual and artistic achievement, which he attributed to genetic endowment, when on a visit to the States early in 1969. These seemed to lend support to Jensen's thesis, though Snow added that he wished Jensen had been "a little more careful".

<sup>8</sup> *Black Paper Two*, pp. 20, 30, 37-38.

weekly press but in a serious historical journal, *Past and Present*—was critically scrutinised in the *New Statesman* by Robert Young, who found it a "trap for the unwary". Darlington claims to have made major corrections to the historical record on the basis of scientific evidence which leads him to conclude that "the processes by which human societies evolve are . . . in principle the same as those working at a pre-human stage of evolution".

The theory of intelligence fits into this general picture as an attempt to ascribe human development largely to biological factors, if not primarily to the inheritance of key mental powers.

### The C.S.S.R.S. meeting

The climax came in July this year when Jensen visited England to address meetings at Cambridge. These were widely reported, in particular an open meeting arranged by the C.S.S.R.S. which has since published the proceedings. These cover Jensen's address and the ensuing critique by experts from various related disciplines.<sup>10</sup>

The meeting was specifically arranged because of the social and political implications of Jensen's thesis, loudly canvassed by reactionaries, and the failure to report scientific objections to his arguments. As the C.S.S.R.S. put it:

"The segregationists of the southern United States, the Powellite element of the Tory party, and the more-means-worse authors of the Black Paper on Education have all used the scientific evidence of Professor Jensen's article to bolster their political aims. In contrast to their uncritical acceptance and that of the popular press, Professor Jensen's views have not received much support among his fellow scientists. Many eminent psychologists, geneticists and educationalists have been provoked to produce rebuttals and protests, but, as is usual, these have been accorded far less publicity than the original article".

All the contributions to the discussion—from essentially allied disciplines—were highly critical. For genetics, Professor Hirsch (a behaviour geneticist from Indiana, USA) spoke of the extraordinary complexity of genetical differences and their assessment, since each individual is now estimated to possess 100,000 genes. His conclusions are: (i) that there is no evidence to suggest "a linear hierarchy of inferior and superior races", (ii) that heritability estimates in the study of man "turns out to be a piece of 'knowledge' that is both deceptive and trivial", and (iii) that no general statement can be made about "the assignment of fixed proportions to the contributions of heredity and environment

either to the development of a single individual . . . or to the differences . . . among members of a population".

This line of argument (a direct refutation of the position taken by Burt and Eysenck) ties in with the criticism made by two distinguished geneticists in the earlier discussion in the *New Scientist*, Professors Auerbach and Beale, both Fellows of the Royal Society.<sup>11</sup> In their view the whole argument about racial differences in intelligence is scientifically meaningless—since this is a question it is altogether impossible to submit to scientific proof. Much of the evidence in fact brought forward is derived from work with identical twins, but this has no relevance whatsoever to a comparison of whites and blacks in the United States. A fully effective experiment to determine the degree to which genetically determined racial differences in "intelligence" exist would require "randomising" the environment, in order to exclude its effect. But "for human populations", they write, "even this way out of the dilemma is barred, or at least will be barred until all individuals from all races will be found in all schools, all professions, all of society: in fact until that state of desegregation has been reached that persons like Eysenck believe impossible because of the presumed genetic inferiority of the black race".

Returning to the point in a later contribution—which supports Hirsch as "excellently qualified for presenting the geneticist's point of view", Auerbach and Beale develop their criticism of Jensen at greater length, and underline again that twin studies in white populations (heavily depended upon by Jensen) "have been used freely, incorrectly and mischievously as evidence for the innate intellectual superiority of the white race over its coloured compatriots".<sup>12</sup> As mischievous, it may be added, are psychometrists' frequent claims to have "eliminated" environmental influences in their investigations—merely by statistical manipulation.<sup>13</sup>

Hirsch made another very relevant point at Cambridge. "High or low heritability", he says,

<sup>11</sup> *New Scientist*, May 29th, 1969.

<sup>12</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, July 31st, 1970.

<sup>13</sup> Thus P. E. Vernon, lending qualified support to Jensen, allows the influence of the environment but states that some ability differences still persist "even when environment is effectively eliminated" (*Times Educational Supplement*, September 11th, 1970). Since there has been no question of "randomising" the environment, nor indeed any form of experiment over and above applying tests, this simply means that psychometrists believe they have allowed for the factor "environment" through their statistical techniques. This is the only possible basis for highly questionable calculations of the relative influence of heredity and environment in determining "measured intelligence".

<sup>9</sup> *New Statesman*, September 26th, 1969.

<sup>10</sup> CSSRS Bulletin, available from Union Society, Bridge Street, Cambridge, 1s.

"tells us absolutely nothing about how a given individual might have developed under conditions different from those in which he actually did develop". The various possibilities open to any specific individual, due to variations in his life experiences, are "effectively unlimited". It is for this reason that the search for general laws of behaviour has been unfruitful—"the heritability of intelligence or of any other trait must be recognised as still another of those will-o'-the-wisp general laws". In the light of this Jensen's claims are unacceptable.

Liam Hudson, Professor of Educational Sciences at Edinburgh University, summarised the defect of Jensen's position. His ideological commitment has led him to make unjustified assumptions about the validity of Intelligence Tests (which "favour the obedient, conforming middle-class child"); he "systematically misrepresents published evidence", particularly in the field of genetics; and, despite constant appeals to the authority of science and "other humane virtues like democracy", his research "shows every sign of springing from, and contributing towards, a rising tide of racial and social tension in the society in which he works".

Hudson does not deny that the I.Q. can be a useful technical device. But "the belief that it can serve, by some magic, to define the limits of our intellectual capability is a myth; one that it has taken psychologists fifty years to sell to the general public, and to themselves—and will take them a further fifty years to buy back".

The importance, and social danger, of work of the nature of Jensen's, like "the importance of 'Powellism' in British politics", arises "from its appeal to more primitive aspects of human involvement: Us and Them, Black and White" etc. Hudson underlines that the insidiousness of the appeal matches the deviousness of an argument which ends by destroying what it professes to uphold:

"It plays on the human impulses of loyalty and snobbery; our need to think well of ourselves and poorly of our neighbours. Pursued naively, scientifically, it leads to the misuse of evidence, to heightened social tension and polarisation, and—rapidly—to the abdication of precisely that quality, intelligence, that it originally sought to illuminate".

As in the case of genetics, so also in neurophysiology, recent research puts the statistical speculations of psychometrists out of court. S. P. R. Rose, a neurobiologist, concentrated specifically on the environmental determinants of brain function. While certain basic brain mechanisms are clearly genetically specified, genetic differences within specific strains (e.g. rats, mice, human beings) "are much harder to demonstrate". On the other hand "environmental effects on the brain structure of individuals are profound and well documented".

In particular, malnutrition, occurring at the period of maximum brain growth "can result in permanent deficits in brain structure and the inter-relation of cells". These can create gross differences between individuals. Less extreme forms of deprivation may also result in deficits in the functioning of the brain. In relevant experiments with cats and rats certain forms of stimulation (or enriched experience) improve the structure and functioning of the brain cortex (and vice versa). Even quite brief exposure to novel or "learning" situations leads to "changes in the rates of production of certain key biochemical substances within the brain (e.g. RNA and proteins)", while concurrent changes take place in the degree of connectivity of the brain cells. All these studies lead to the conclusion that environmental effects "result in a series of well defined changes in brain structure and performance", i.e. it is not so much "the brain" a child inherits that matters but the processes it undergoes during his life as a result of experience and education.

Similar views have often been expressed by the distinguished Soviet psychologist A. R. Luria and his colleagues. They lead Rose—who points out that the claim as to the dominance of genetic factors "is not supported even by the statistics adduced by Jensen himself"—to conclude that what is crucial to any individual child's development is the provision of "adequate food, continuous love, affection and intellectual stimulation in its environments during the critical periods of development".

### The Present Stage

There is, then, a considerable difference between the situation in 1949—when Marxists first challenged the "intelligence" testers—and today. Not only has the battle for increased and improved educational opportunity for the majority begun to be won on the ground, with the transition to comprehensive schooling—which a Tory government may delay but cannot halt. There have also been important developments, in the biological sciences, in psychology (that is experimental psychology, as opposed to the statistical methods of psychometry), in sociology. From the new vantage points, scientists now often react strongly against a move to revive, and make large claims for, a methodology which cuts directly across current developments in allied fields.

It has always been a weakness of "intelligence" testing that it has no firm roots. The founding father of the whole method, it might be said, was Francis Galton, initiator of eugenics—that mode of thought which contributed much to fascist ideology. Psychometrists are not far wrong when they conclude—as does one in a recent textbook—that they "have done little more than validate and

systematise the flashes of insight" that Galton "that hereditary genius" (he was a nephew of Darwin) produced in the 1890's.<sup>14</sup> By the same token, they have remained isolated from advances in other scientific fields continually reproducing the ideas which they originally set out to justify.

Meanwhile there have been advances in neurophysiology (as some of the arguments quoted indicate). It has moved on from locating different centres in the brain (a form of research to which the "intelligence" testers could attempt to latch on) to investigating complex biochemical reactions which put such clumsy methods as "intelligence" testing—taken as a guide to fixed qualities of the brain transmitted by heredity—out of court. Similarly genetics has moved into new fields and geneticists also revolt against the rule of thumb interpretations whereby psychometrists attempt to uphold arguments about intelligence as transmitted by heredity and its distribution in whole populations.

But one of the penalties of rapid scientific advance is that specialisms tend to become highly technical, and sometimes to get out of touch, and this allows for the continuance of older branches of study which altogether fail to subsume new developments in knowledge. Deeply embedded in psychometry, for instance, are theoretical assumptions which could not now stand the light of day. Whereas in the physical and life sciences the road of advance is relatively clearly delineated, and to take it is also to overhaul former findings, this is not the case with less developed disciplines, least of all those whose key relations are with the social structure.

What has kept "intelligence" testing going is not that it is the best and only way of discovering more about the make up of the human mind, and continually comes up with new information—far from it. But it is a convenient and instrumental method of detecting the kind of people who may be most useful to industrial management (one of the main fields of application nowadays is in selection for such jobs in industry), and is also a convenient tool for controlling access to the higher ranges of the educational system. That it also has its uses, on a restricted scale, in clinical research and practice is not to be denied; indeed this is its proper place. By breaking out from this role into activities for which it is unsuited, it has exercised a decisive (and damaging) influence on social life. But that breakout resulted from immediate social and political pressures, e.g. in the educational field the need to find some unassailable means to select children given an intention to continue restricting secondary education anyway. Similarly in America today, the pressing need to find some unassailable

rationale for maintaining segregation, or more generally for white supremacy, has given a new and dangerous lease of life to an ideology which had all the appearance of being on the way out here.

Even in the exact sciences there is a danger that specialists, after a lifetime investigating their subject and some important advances, come to feel that they have all the right answers to the most general questions. Thus, in relation to C. D. Darlington's genetic interpretation of history, Robert Young cited the moral:

"A specialised scientist stares down his microscope for 40 years and does very good work. Towards the end of his career he asks himself about the wider meaning of it all. He racks back the focus knob on the microscope, tilts the instrument back, and looks about him through its eyepieces. He stares hard for a time, a marvellous gleam comes into his eyes, and he exclaims, 'I understand all!'"

Once the conviction has taken root, nothing will shake it, however much the resulting views cut across the findings of social scientists, and, in effect, represent a departure from rules he has normally followed in his own work. In place of the humility which is the mark of the scientists, always ready to make a new advance upsetting the old standpoint, there then appears arrogance and dogmatism and insistence on the absolute rightness of a standpoint and the blindness or ignorance of all who question it. By these marks the layman can recognise when something is wrong with supposedly scientific claims.

### The Nature of Intelligence Testing

It has been said that psychometry introduces basic assumptions which cannot now stand the light of day. In fact, the whole edifice of theory and practice rests on a single basic assumption—that human mental development, like the development of animals, can be explained in terms of the interaction of heredity and environment.

Why is this a false assumption? Because there is a key qualitative difference between the mode of life—and so the mode of experience or development—of human beings and animals, a point that hardly needs explaining to Marxists. But it has been usefully outlined by Soviet psychologists, when indicating how different is their approach to investigating children's mental development—and the problem of backwardness—from the approach associated with "intelligence" testing which has, until recently, dominated in the west. As A. N. Leontiev has written:<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> "Principles of Child Mental Development and the Problem of Intellectual Backwardness", trs. in *Educational Psychology in the USSR*, ed. B. and J. Simon (1963). A. N. Leontiev is head of the department of psychology, Moscow University.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Wiseman (ed.), *Intelligence and Ability: Selected Readings* (1967).



"What, then, is this experience that is exclusive to man alone? In the course of history, men, governed by the action of social laws, have developed higher characteristics of mind. Thousands of years of social history have produced more, in this connection, than millions of years of biological evolution. The achievements of mental development have been accumulated gradually, transmitted from generation to generation. This is the way they have been consolidated. Could they have been consolidated in the form of biological, hereditarily transmitted, changes? No; because the historical process is extremely rapid, always accelerating, and consequently the demands upon man's abilities made by the conditions of his life in society change rapidly, quite out of relation to the much slower tempo of biological fixation of experience".

How are human achievements consolidated and transmitted?

"In a particular form, namely, an exoteric, external form. This new form of accumulating phylogenetic (or, more precisely, social-historical) experience has arisen because man's specific form of activity is productive activity. This is the basic activity of people, their work".

Thus, by contrast with the development of animal species "whose achievements are consolidated in the form of changes in their biological organisation, in the development of their brains, the achievements of men's historical development are consolidated in the material objects, in the ideal phenomena (language, science) created by men. The point hardly needs to be argued."

This approach leads to an understanding that what requires investigation is the process "of mastery, of appropriation" by the human child of the achievements of development of preceding human generations, which are "embodied in the actual objects and phenomena they have created". In short, children learn in a social world surrounded by humanised objects, primarily with the aid of language. Moreover the child does not merely *adapt* to the social environment, "but takes it to himself, i.e. appropriates it" by learning to speak and other specifically human activities. This is the process "whereby there takes place in the child that which is achieved in animals by the action of heredity; the transmission to the *individual* of the achievements of the development of the *species*".

It is clear, then, that the key to human development is not heredity but *education*. The primary task becomes to discover what forms of education best further acquisition by the child of the human heritage. From this task "intelligence" testing inevitably deflects attention insofar as it specifically rules out the role of education as described. Instead it recognises only "heredity" and the vague generalised category "environment" (subsuming a

whole variety of active and passive influences) as determining factors. If two children in similar "environmental" conditions (crudely distinguished) show different mental attributes, then an attempt is made to measure *internal* differences—i.e. the supposed quality of "intelligence"—and there is virtually no other course than to attribute this to heredity, because of the initial assumption. This is a false assumption and to remove it brings the whole structure of "intelligence" testing—and the foreseeable arguments derived from it—to the ground.

The same mode of circular argument can be traced at every level of psychometry. When there is recourse to measuring mental differences by tests, labels are attached to the "factors" isolated statistically which reflect not experimental findings but the presuppositions with which the constructor of the test set out. Thus when a psychometrist constructs an "intelligence" test, he makes up questions which he *thinks* test what he *thinks* is intelligence. There is no other way of defining the factor labelled "intelligence" than in terms of the actual questions of which tests are made up. Professional psychologists operating in a given social and educational situation, necessarily produce tests which equate "intelligence" with—say—the kind of teaching provided in academically-oriented grammar schools for which their tests will serve as a selective instrument. Obviously such a concept of "intelligence" is socially-conditioned, and application of the criterion can only perpetuate existing educational practice, besides dividing up groups of children in relation to it.

Nor is this all. The whole process of constructing and validating tests reinforces the concepts built in at the outset. There is no space to go into the details here.<sup>16</sup> It must be enough to say that any new test must conform to the findings of previous tests to be "valid". If anyone constructed a test based on the culture of the blacks in the United States, a test which, when applied, enabled black children to score more highly than white, it would not be accepted as a "valid" test of intelligence on the grounds that the results fail to correlate highly with the results of a whole backlog of other intelligence tests applied over the years. So the whole process becomes self-perpetuating. Under the circumstances, the finding that working class children are more stupid than middle class children, blacks intellectually inferior by comparison with whites, is less a reflection on those measured than an illustration of the essential limitations of those who construct the instruments of measurement.

The point was made by M. P. M. Richard,

<sup>16</sup> I have discussed them at some length in *Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School* (1953), pp. 39-56.

a social psychologist, at the C.S.S.R.S. discussion. "Far from being 'objectively scientific' ", he says, "psychological testing involves making social and political judgements in the very process of test construction and validation". Test constructors "are middle class white academics, and, not surprisingly, the test items represent their values" and their motivation. "Why should a black slum child be interested in the white lady's questions about poets and presidents?"

What is of interest and importance is to find a means of breaking out from the situation in which the majority—of whatever colour—are penalised as a direct result of the adverse conditions under which their children develop by comparison with the minority. That they lack good homes and food, and are denied education or a wide range of experience, necessarily leads to low scores in tests geared to the outlook of those who live well and have a wide range of experience. There could be no cruder means of perpetuating the situation than to claim that the tests measure genetic differences—and then to argue that it is innate inferiority that produces the bad conditions of life in the first place. It is a very old argument—and, as John Stuart Mill once said, a very vulgar one.<sup>17</sup>

That it can persist, on the basis of research grounded on "intelligence" testing—which in turn is grounded on the false idea that the interaction of heredity and environment determine human development—is the result both of underlying social divisions, with their ideological accompaniment, and the high level of technicality at which the argument is conducted which veils the slenderness of the basic assumptions.

It needs, then, to be said—and understood all round—that an "intelligence" test tells us *nothing of any significance* about the actual development of the mental processes, or powers of thought and analysis, of any individual child. All it can do is to set out in order, or classify, a group of children according to their answers to a given set of questions administered at a particular point in time. The test gives no indication why a particular child achieved a particular result and no other—the very question to which the educationist requires an answer—but merely the flat fact, that he comes above or below other children. In short, testing is incapable of throwing light on how mental abilities operate and develop—and so spreads the idea that they are given and do not develop. Consideration of the crucial questions are thus *excluded* by the whole

apparatus of mental testing, in particular by what might be called its technology.

### The Positive Response

It is at this point that educationists and psychologists, faced with successful developments in school practice which severely dented the assumptions of mental testing, and desiring to further them, have stepped in.

In the USSR, where testing was abolished in 1936, A. R. Luria has well outlined the link up between new methods of investigating the learning process in children and new developments in neurophysiology:

"It is now generally accepted that in the process of mental development there takes place a profound qualitative reorganisation of human mental activity, and that the basic characteristic of this reorganisation is that elementary, direct activity is replaced by complex functional systems, formed on the basis of the child's communication with adults in the process of learning. These functional systems are of complex construction, and are developed with the close participation of language, which as the basic means of communication with people is simultaneously one of the basic tools in the formation of human mental activity and in the regulation of behaviour. It is through these complex forms of mental activity . . . that new features are acquired and begin to develop according to new laws which displace many of the laws which govern the formation of elementary conditioned reflexes in animals".<sup>18</sup>

Elsewhere this link is only beginning to be made now—the present controversy will further it. But psychologists and educationists in Britain and America have been progressively breaking free from the trammels of psychometric theory and practice.

In America, the work of J. McV. Hunt, Jerome Bruner, and others, has led to an entirely new appraisal of human potentialities and their realisation. Hunt's *Intelligence and Experience* (New York 1961) makes a devastating historical and critical analysis of the whole theory and approach of psychometry and has played an important part in enforcing revision or retraction. Milton Schwebel's *Who Can be Educated?* (New York 1968) also made an all-round analysis of the determinants of educability, leading to the complete rejection of the claims of psychometry. Both these authors

<sup>17</sup> The statement, from Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* is recalled in an examination of the whole issue by a French Marxist, Lucien Sève, *L'Ecole et la Nation*, May/June 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Luria's standpoint is easily available in a fascinating twin study—differing markedly from those designed to uphold psychometric theories—*Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child* (trs. and ed. J. Simon, 1959). This book has had a profound influence, both in the USA and Britain, figuring in most relevant bibliographies.

were attacked by Jensen, both have replied.<sup>19</sup> In Britain the work of many educational psychologists has taken a similar direction, an important paper being that by D. A. Pidgeon, "Intelligence testing and comprehensive education".<sup>20</sup> This whole movement implies a fundamental challenge to the techniques, and assumptions, of psychometry on which Jensen bases his entire case.

The issues are well summarised in an article by Professor Ben Morris of Bristol University, a psychologist who was for many years secretary of the National Foundation for Educational Research, a body once almost exclusively concerned with producing tests for 11 plus selection.<sup>21</sup> Morris stresses as a necessary task for educational psychology "a constant scrutiny of its presuppositions". Failure to do this "necessarily involves its offering itself purely as a technology, afraid or unconcerned to avow the presuppositions necessarily built into it through its intrinsic relations with educational thought"—and, it might be added, practice. "An example of such failure", he adds, "which is at the same time a grave warning, is close at hand", and the passage is worth quoting in full (the italics are mine):

"The psychology of mental measurement, through failure to scrutinise adequately its presuppositions, developed into a technology concerned with establishing and measuring the more or less fixed intellectual abilities with which it supposed children to be endowed at birth, irrespective of the cultural and educational milieu in which they developed. In this country the growth of this technology was nourished by convictions, having deep ideological roots, that education required rigid systems of classifying children in terms of such abilities. Because it appeared to achieve practical success in carrying out such classification educational psychology tended to become identified with the technology of mental measurement. *We are now witnessing the slow crumbling of this technology, and of its supporting ideology, as the presuppositions of both become exposed to radical criticism.*"

This was written in 1966. It is an argument to which Arthur Jensen would do well to pay attention, as has been heavily underlined by his critics in the States.

### The Reaction to Jensen in the United States

This brings us back to the criticisms of Jensen's article in the *Harvard Educational Review* where it appeared. Although he finds some support,

the majority of articles and correspondence in the succeeding two numbers of the journal are critical. This is particularly evident in the 50 pages of correspondence printed—there is no indication how much was received.

First place may be given to contributions from blacks and, not surprisingly, some were forcefully expressed. The Black Students Union of Harvard Graduate School, stating that "the question is, of course, far more political than scientific" protest strongly at the failure to consult black students or teachers before publication. The union "seriously doubts that the question of Jewish inferiority, Irish inferiority, or any other racist-inspired argument would have been thrust so arrogantly into prominence by the current Editorial Board". Demanding the right to respond to the article "at an appropriate time of our own choosing", the union also calls for safeguards against "the future printing of racist literature that is directed at maligning Black people in this country and/or abroad under the aegis of the Harvard Graduate School of Education".<sup>22</sup>

Roy Brown, from Chicago, quotes Jensen: "Heredity . . . plays some role in the heavy representation of Negroes in America's lower socio-economic groups". This "is unbelievable when one considers the fact that absolutely nothing is said about the extreme deprivation that blacks have endured—300 years of the cruellest slavery known to mankind: 100 years of barbaric servitude, murder, lynching, burning, and intimidation, superimposed with an arrogant, savage con game. There was literally no intention of treating blacks as human beings; but, rather, they were to be exploited and kept in servitude by any and all means, legal and illegal".

What blacks need, Brown concludes, "is not the white man's genes, but more and more of the spirit of rebellion against racism and injustice". A black neuropsychiatrist, says Jensen's main argument is simple: "Negroes are born stupid; its genetic; there's nothing you can do about it". But the article is confusing as an "elaborate assortment of truths, half-truths, falsehoods, exaggerations, faulty deductions and speculations". Pointing to the ideological presuppositions, he notes that the author "is hired by the University of California at Berkeley where rebellious, disorderly and disruptive black militants have incurred the wrath of Dr. Jensen's boss, the governor" (Reagan).

<sup>22</sup> The *Harvard Educational Review*, which apparently commissioned Jensen's article, is edited by a group of graduate students at Harvard, that is students working for higher degrees. "Editorial policy", it is stated, "does not reflect an official position of the Faculty of Education or any other Harvard faculty"—a disclaimer only published since the furore about Jensen's article.

<sup>19</sup> *Harvard Educational Review*, Nos. 2 and 3, 1969.

<sup>20</sup> In *Genetic and Environmental Factors in Human Ability*, ed. J. F. Meade and A. S. Parkes, (1966).

<sup>21</sup> Ben Morris, "The contribution of psychology to the study of education", in *The Study of Education*, ed. J. W. Tibble (1966).

But this is a carefully reasoned contribution, the only one (to my surprise) which analyses the nature of the most widely used intelligence test (the Wechsler Test) and its specific components, to illustrate how far questions are weighted against deprived (and primarily black) children. Among other telling points, it is noted that Jensen equates intelligence with vocational achievement—each finds his proper place—an underlying assumption of hereditarians as has been noted. “So we see that the prestige hierarchy of occupation is a reliable objective reality in our society”. Would Jensen, then, explain how “the Russian serfs of 100 years ago are the rulers of Russia today?”

Then there are reactions from two organisations concerned with the social implications of science. The New York Scientists’ Committee for Public Information (SPCI) notes that mischievous misuse of such an article “is inevitable in a society that rationalises the pervasive racism of its major institutions”. Though scientifically the paper is “perplexing”, the hypothesis may well be accepted as proven fact “and guide educational policy accordingly”. Leave aside many questionable arguments, the whole approach ignores the elementary rule of genetics, formulated by the distinguished (American) geneticist Dobzhansky: “Equal or unequal potentialities cannot be judged unless similar environments are provided. Hence, it is quite unreasonable to argue that we must first find that potentialities are equal and then provide similar environments. We must do the reverse”.

This is precisely the point made by British geneticists cited earlier, and by educationists.

An organisation to which leading psychologists belong, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) declares:

“As behavioural scientists, we believe that statements specifying the hereditary components of intelligence are unwarranted by the present state of scientific knowledge”.

Noting that such statements “may be seriously misinterpreted, particularly in their applications to social policy”, the society stress the “immeasurable burden” that racism and discrimination imposes on the blacks, as an obvious determinant of level of achievement. Tests in use, which are biased against blacks “to an unknown degree”, cannot be taken as accurate measurements of innate endowment. Jensen is charged, by implication, of insufficient care, failing to guard against over-generalisation of his conclusions and misunderstanding of the social relations of his work.

Many emphasise the latter point—the actual use to which the article has been put in current struggles on the racial issue. After the wide publicity, the main point of the thesis, itself half-digested, was widely canvassed by racists and reactionaries.

Even in Britain, National Front leaders frequently quoted Jensen at meetings in Haringey on the “banding” issue.<sup>23</sup>

These arguments, writes Martin Deutsch, a leading American psychologist who formerly worked with Jensen and is thoroughly familiar with all the data he used, point inescapably to the conclusion “that the central theme of the Jensen piece is a wholly anti-democratic eugenic position”. As one who has known Jensen many years, and collaborated with him on an SPSSI sponsored volume—*Social Class, Race and Psychological Development*, of which the orientation “was diametrically opposed to his current stated position”—Deutsch points out the destructive nature of this position and its “negative implications”. Jensen’s conclusions, unwarranted by the existing data, “reflect a consistent bias towards a racist hypothesis”. Finally, there is a direct challenge to Jensen to “summon the social courage necessary to repudiate the positions that have been taken in his name”. With this, he should re-examine his data and argument in the light of factors “with which apparently he was not familiar at the time he wrote the article”, in short, reconsider his entire thesis.<sup>24</sup>

There is no indication, in Jensen’s reply to the discussion, that he is considering any such course of action.

### The Importance of the Controversy

This, then, is the present stage of the controversy. It has been discussed here mainly from the angle of education, the vital angle, with which I am most familiar, but by no means the only one. There remains much more to be said about the reactions of scientists in allied fields, raising anew the whole question of the social function of science, the social responsibilities of scientists, the extent to which ideas extrinsic to the particular scientific matter in hand penetrate thinking, and so on. These questions have often been discussed but need fresh thought in relation to this particular manifestation of the problem.

For there can be no doubt about it, the questions now brought into the arena are matters about which the layman—working in the labour movement and concerned with educational advance no less than racial propaganda and the whole range of social and political life—needs to be clear.

There can, therefore, be no acceptance of the argument that this is a scientific controversy into which it is illegitimate to “import” social or political considerations. There is no question anyway of importation when the implications are clear to the

<sup>23</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, July 24th, 1970.

<sup>24</sup> *Harvard Educational Review*, Summer 1969, pp. 523-557.



average newspaper reporter who has helped precipitate them into the general arena. Moreover the way the "keep out" notice has been posted, by psychometrists, alone rules out respect for it. Thus Eysenck likened those who deny Jensen's thesis to the Aristotelian philosophers "who refused to look through Galileo's telescope". And then—claiming that a clear-cut demonstration had been given that individual differences in intelligence "are largely due to hereditary causes"—dismissed those who challenged this interpretation as characterised by "an ignorance alike of psychometric techniques of intelligence testing and biometric techniques of genetic analysis". It seems unreasonable "to discuss the problem or write about it, when one cannot tell the difference between epistasis and meiosis, reduce a Hesselberg matrix, or determine an Eigen-value".<sup>25</sup>

There is an arrogance about this attempt to "blind with expertise" (mounted before the Cambridge meeting relegated the argument) which is altogether out of tune with the scientist's approach, up to and including the mention of Jensen in the same breath as Galileo—though, as has been indicated, the theories he espouses have a good deal more in common with blind Aristotelianism, or ideas left over from an earlier epoch. It was in the heyday of British imperialism that Galton launched eugenics, from which "intelligence" testing directly derives.

Moreover, if psychometrists are so keen to keep the matter in expert hands, why did Eysenck—and Burt—lend open support to the Black Papers? Were these not directly political acts, openly intended to influence legislation, in that they were prefaced by a letter to MP's and freely distributed to every one? In the light of this, Burt's appeal in Black Paper Two for education to be kept out of politics is—at best—an example of basically confused thinking. Or, to look at it another way, this is the only route whereby hereditarian psychometrists, outflanked in their own field and in education, can look to regain lost support—a return to the old structure and methods of education in which their techniques were perpetually justified and indispensable.

In the present controversy, an old one relaunched in the light of Jensen's initiative in the particular current circumstances in the United States, psychometrists have been careful to avoid mention of their defeats in the recent past, and the resulting rejection of their approach in the educational system. Yet this provides an answer to the plea that "science" must be allowed to proceed under its own steam without interference. It was the

public revolt against 11 plus, the developments in the schools which led directly to rejection of selection techniques by administrators no longer able to defend them, that actively undermined psychometric doctrine and practice. And it was this, in turn, that forced psychometrists to modify a theory which was only beginning to be questioned internally. So much for independence from social conditions, never a mark of this particular branch of psychological investigation.

The next stage, in which the influence of scientists in allied fields will be of key importance, is likely to be a questioning of the very foundations of psychometry in order finally to eliminate wide-ranging speculations disguised as scientific evidence or findings.

Two aphorisms of Francis Bacon—that outright enemy of blind Aristotelianism in his own day—seem to fit the situation well.

"The axioms now in use, having been suggested by a scanty and manipulative experience and a few particulars of most general occurrence, are made for the most part just large enough to fit and take these in; and therefore it is no wonder if they do not lead to new particulars. And if some opposite instance, not observed or not known before, chance to come in the way, the axiom is rescued and preserved by some frivolous distinction; whereas the truer course would be to correct the axiom itself".

And

"The idols and false notions which are now in possession of the human understanding, and have taken deep root therein, not only so beset men's minds that truth can hardly find entrance, but even after entrance obtained, they will again in the very instauration of the sciences meet and trouble us, unless men being forewarned of the danger fortify themselves as far as may be against their assaults".

The March 1971 issue of  
**Marxism Today**  
will be a special issue on  
**CENTENARY of the  
PARIS COMMUNE**

<sup>25</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, December 12th, 1969.

150th Anniversary of  
Engels' Birth:

# Frederick Engels and the English Working Class Movement in Manchester, 1842-1844<sup>1</sup>

John Smethurst, Edmund and Ruth Frow

Young Frederick Engels was the eldest son of a second generation of textile entrepreneurs. His father formed a partnership with two brothers called Ermen and together they set up cotton spinning mills in Manchester and in Germany. The basis of their success was the superior English built machinery (to which they made several patented improvements) which was only beginning to be used in the late 1830's. The Engels' home was comparatively wealthy, comfortable and strictly religious.

When Frederick went to secondary school at Elberfeld at fourteen years of age he had to pass through the industrialised part of Barmen and he saw the factories where children from the age of six were sent to earn a miserable pittance. He also saw the appalling houses where the workers dragged out their short and unhealthy lives. These glimpses of a different life influenced his development.

At an early age he showed evidence of the independence of thought which later enabled him to work with Karl Marx on the economic and social problems of Capitalism. His father wrote to his mother that "in spite of severe punishment in the past, he does not seem to be learning implicit obedience even from the fear of chastisement."<sup>2</sup>

He left school without entering the University ostensibly to take a course of business training in his father's firm, but probably to develop his talents as a writer and poet. He had a strong desire to express himself in words and a gift for languages. When his father sent him to Bremen to further his business experience, he wrote freely and had articles accepted by the press of the time.

Once he escaped from the rigidity of his home life, Engels began to read widely and to formulate philosophical attitudes based on his disagreement with the strict religious outlook of his family and the way that he had seen industry being run. These thoughts naturally led to his questioning further aspects of life, including the organisation of the Prussian state in the interests of the landed Junkers. He found others of a similar outlook in the "Young Germany" movement where the philosophical ideas of Goethe and Hegel were discussed, together with the ideals of Saint-Simon. His ideas began to develop socialist leanings.

## Departure to Manchester

When he was twenty, Engels went to Berlin to do his year of military service. He continued to take an active part in the upsurge of philosophical discussion which centred around the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the first opposition newspaper allowed in Prussia. Karl Marx was the editor, but at that time he did not meet the young radical contributor who was struggling to formulate revolutionary theory. Engels then believed that Germany could achieve a socialist state by the peaceful transformation of society. He heard, while he was still in Berlin in 1842, that the workers in England had called a General Strike and decided that a golden opportunity to test his theoretical philosophical ideas was offered to him. He agreed to fall in with his father's wishes that he should continue his commercial education at the firm of Ermen and Engels in Eccles, near Manchester; and as soon as he was released from his military training, he left for England, in November 1842, to study the working-class movement at its storm centre.

The Manchester to which the eager twenty two year old revolutionary travelled, was not quite the ferment of activity that possibly he had hoped.

<sup>1</sup> For biographical details about Frederick Engels see: Gustav Mayer, *Frederick Engels* (1936). Mick Jenkins, *Frederick Engels in Manchester* (Manchester 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Nevertheless it certainly was a city of sharp contrasts and it had a large impoverished working population, which was ripe for change. By 1840, Manchester was the acknowledged "Cottonopolis". Alexis de Tocqueville had described it in 1835 as containing, "a few great capitalists, thousands of poor workmen and little middle class."<sup>3</sup> Six years later, the Reverend R. Parkinson who as Canon of Manchester Cathedral was in a key position to assess the changes taking place said, "there is no town in the world where the distance between rich and poor is so great, or the barriers between them so difficult to be crossed."<sup>4</sup> Frederick Engels set himself the task of crossing those barriers.

### Chartism

During the summer before he arrived in Manchester, there had been a demonstration of the sharpening class struggle. There was severe poverty and discontent in 1842. When the wages of the cotton operatives were cut, a strike began in Staleybridge on Monday, August 8th. In Manchester, huge meetings were held on Granby Row Fields and over five thousand workers marched from factories, mines and mills turning each of them out as they passed. So successful was the strike that one of the two delegates travelling to the Chartist Convention, Thomas Cooper, commented that from the train, "so soon as the City of Long Chimneys came in sight, and every chimney was beheld smokeless, Campbell's face changes, and with an oath he said, 'Not a single mill at work! something must come out of this, and something serious too!'"<sup>5</sup>

The Chartist movement<sup>6</sup> had begun in 1839 with demonstrations attended by thousands of people. It was a broad movement dominated by middle class Radicals. However, after the rising at Newport and the imprisonment of many of the local and national leaders, the middle class tended to leave the movement. It revived in 1840 with the formation of the National Charter Association at a meeting held in Manchester at the Griffin Inn, Great Ancoats Street. The Conference elected James Leech as President and John Campbell as Secretary. Although a resolution was passed at the Convention in

Manchester in August 1842 that, "We strongly approve the extension and continuance of the present struggle until the People's Charter becomes a legislative enactment",<sup>7</sup> the strike was defeated.

The organisation and leadership were weak and there were no strike funds or Strike Committee. Engels studied the strike and estimated that had "it been from the beginning an intentional, determined working-men's insurrection, it would surely have carried its points".<sup>8</sup>

### The Victoria Mill

When Engels arrived in Manchester his address is not known, but since he worked in the mill which the firm of Ermen and Engels had built on the waste land adjacent to the Manchester and Liverpool Railway line, it is more than possible that he lived in the same area. The mill was (and still is) called the 'Victoria Mills'.<sup>9</sup> Peter Ermen apparently found that the newly opened mill needed his close supervision, because he moved soon after it was built into a house in Gore Crescent. His brother, Godfrey lived in Irwell Cottage on Eccles New Road. Since Engels senior took great pains to place his son in a god-fearing household when he was in Bremen, it is quite likely that he asked either Peter or Godfrey Ermen to offer hospitality to young Frederick on his first visit so that his movements would be partially supervised. If that assumption is correct, he failed. Engels made contact with the workers as soon as he was able after his arrival and began that study of working class life that gave rise to the *Conditions of the Working-class in England* in 1844, which he wrote after his return to Germany.

The 'Victoria Mill' was out of Manchester in the parish of Eccles. It was built on a piece of land near the railway and the River Irwell. The Eccles New Road which ran from Cross Lane in Salford, through Weaste (the waste land) and on to Eccles Cross. A level crossing over the road was near the mill entrance. Before the Victoria Mill was built, the Ermen works had been in Salford in the vicinity of Blackfriars.

It is possible that Michael Burns, an Irish dyer, had worked for the firm and, when it moved to Weaste, continued in their employ. He lived in a small terraced house Number 18, Cotton Street<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Alexis De Tocqueville, *Journeys to England and Ireland* (1958 edition), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Richard Parkinson, *On the Present Condition of the Labouring Poor in Manchester, with Hints for Improving It* (1841), p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> *The Life of Thomas Cooper written by Himself* (1887), p. 206.

<sup>6</sup> For general histories covering the Chartist movement, reference can be made to: R. G. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement 1837-1854* (Newcastle 1892, 2nd ed.), reprinted Cass 1970; Mark Hovell, *The Chartist Movement* (Manchester 1918); Julius West, *A History of the Chartist Movement* (1920).

<sup>7</sup> *Trial of Fergus O'Connor, Esq. and 58 other Chartists on a Charge of Seditious Conspiracy*, Lancaster, March 1843.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, with an Introduction by E. J. Hobsbawm (Panther edition 1969), p. 258.

<sup>9</sup> John Smethurst, Ermen and Engels, *Marx Memorial Library Quarterly Bulletin*, No. 41, January-March 1967.

<sup>10</sup> Pigot and Son's *Directory of Manchester and Salford* (Manchester 1838 and 1843), p. 67.

which was parallel with Great Ancoats Street near New Cross, Manchester. To get to the mill he would walk about four miles through Manchester and Salford, a distance which today sounds excessive but was common at that time. As his family grew up and reached working age—at about ten years or even less, it is reasonable to assume that they too went to work at the Victoria Mills.

When Engels wrote about "The throstle room of the cotton mill at Manchester, in which I was employed"<sup>11</sup> it may have been the place where Michael Burns' two daughters, Mary and Lydia worked. Possibly the soft Irish brogue fell more easily on the ear of the young German than the Lancashire dialect of the majority of the operatives. How Frederick Engels met Mary Burns we do not know; but we do know that soon after his arrival in Manchester, they began exploring the working class districts and investigating the appalling conditions under which the workers were living, because the information they garnered was written into the 1844 book. Mary acted as guide and must have introduced Frederick to her friends and associates in the Irish National movement and also to the Chartists and Owenites.

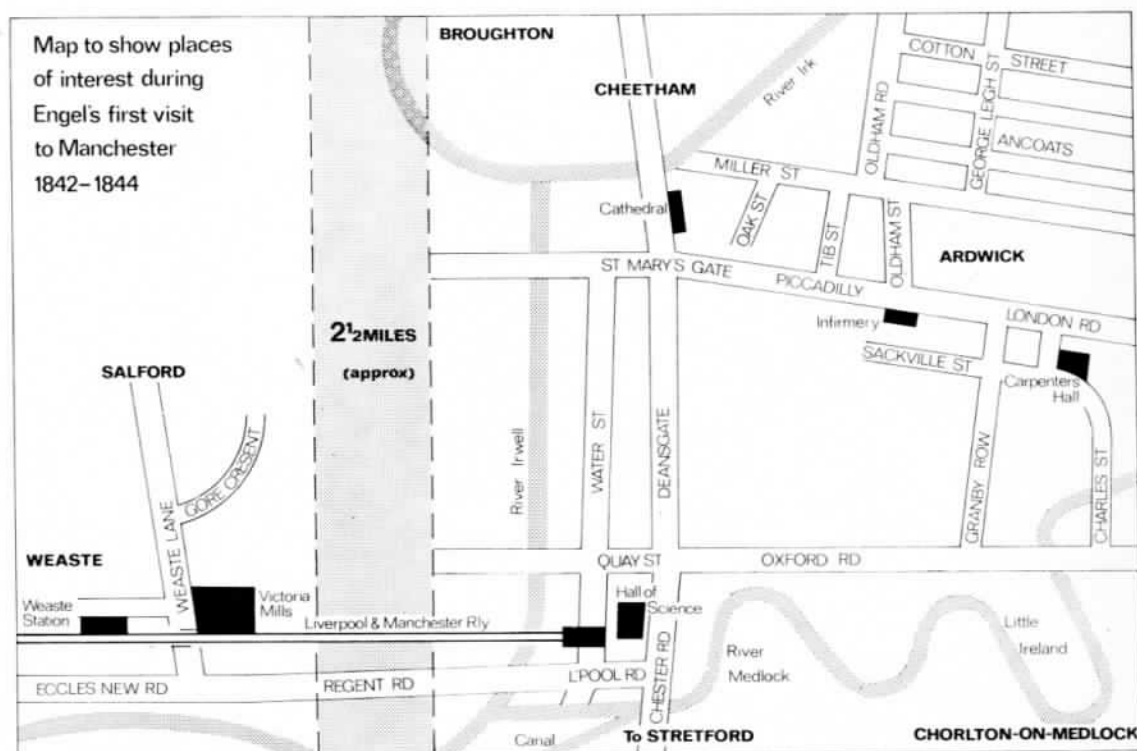
<sup>11</sup> Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

### The Burns' Sisters

While it could be assumed that Engels worked at the Victoria Mills to obtain an insight into the organisation of the business, he would have been unlikely to work each week the 69 hours<sup>12</sup> that would have bound Mary. She and her younger sister must have worked about twelve hours in the mill and then walked the four miles home into Manchester. At the time, Mary was nineteen and Lydia fifteen years of age. Their walk home took them over the River Irwell and probably along Water Street. They passed near the recently opened railway station in Liverpool Road, but their wage of ten shillings a week would hardly have run to a train journey. On rare occasions they may have taken the train to Weaste Lane Station which was close to the mill.

A slight deviation on their route would have taken them past the Owenite Hall of Science. There they could have enquired about the Sunday programme and decided whether to attend. They were unlikely to have been able to read the advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* each week, but

<sup>12</sup> David Chadwick, *On the Rate of Wages in 200 Trades and Branches of Labour in Manchester and Salford and the Manufacturing District of Lancashire* (1860) *passim*.





that may have been where Engels saw it. Whether Frederick and Mary met at the Hall of Science or whether Mary took him there as part of his social education is not known. But certainly they did attend lectures and discussions there and possibly that is where Engels met the leaders of the working class movement and formulated those views which he expressed so clearly in 1844.

### James Leach

One of the leaders of the Chartists whom he met was James Leach. Leach lived near to the Burns family in New Cross. He was a weaver by trade but like most handloom workers at that time found difficulty in earning enough by his weaving. He supplemented his income by keeping a small book-seller, newsagent and printing business in Oak Street.<sup>13</sup> He was Lancashire agent for the *Miners Advocate*, and was arrested after the General Strike in 1842 together with thirty six other Chartist leaders and Fergus O'Connor.

They were tried in March 1843 in Lancashire where Leach spoke in his own defence and exposed the terrible conditions under which the workers were living and asserted his right to agitate for the People's Charter.<sup>14</sup> He was not a fiery orator but according to Gammage, he was a man who, "In addressing a public meeting . . . was just as free and easy as in private conversation, but for fact and argument there were but a few of the speakers of that period who excelled him".<sup>15</sup> Possibly Engels went to hear Leach when he spoke in support of the Ten Hour Bill on 16th December 1843. The meeting was held in the Corn Exchange and the Chair was taken by John Fielden. Among the other speakers were Joseph Raynor Stephens and J. P. Cobbett.<sup>16</sup> That meeting was, of course, after Leach was released from prison. Although he was found guilty on a minor count, it was quashed on a technicality and he, together with the other Chartists, was released.

It is certain that Engels and Leach met frequently and discussed the 1842 strike. Engels must have felt ashamed that his father's partners should have inserted an advertisement in the *Manchester Guardian* on August 27th of 1842,<sup>17</sup> thanking

the Police for protecting the Victoria Mills from the strikers. It would thus appear that the Ermen and Engels workers did not go on strike although Nasmyth's factory at Eccles was turned out and about three hundred men went around the Patricroft neighbourhood of Eccles in groups of ten or twelve visiting the local factories.<sup>18</sup> Engels referred to Leach in the *Conditions of the Working Class* as "an honest, trustworthy, and capable man" known to him personally and "one of the recognised leaders of Chartism in Manchester".<sup>19</sup>

### The "Northern Star"

Engels was a regular reader of the *Northern Star* which he probably bought from Leach. In 1843, he journeyed to Leeds from Bradford where he may have been visiting George Weerth and called on George Julian Harney the *Northern Star* editor. Harney wrote that arising from that meeting he and Engels were friends for over half a century. He described him as, "A tall, handsome young man, with a countenance of almost boyish youthfulness, whose English, in spite of his German birth and education, was even then remarkable for its accuracy." They corresponded regularly over the years and Harney said that "like most short-sighted people, (Engels) wrote a very 'small hand'; but his calligraphy was very neat and clear. His letters were marvels of information, and he wrote an immense number in spite of his long hours of original composition or translation."<sup>20</sup> Engels' meeting with Harney was probably brought about by James Leach.

By 1843, young Frederick had seen sufficient of the English working class scene to realise that the way forward for the movement must be through a fusion of the ideas and forces of the mainly middle class Socialists with "theoretically the more backward and less developed",<sup>21</sup> genuinely proletarian Chartists. He sought to bring this about by introducing Continental Communism to the Chartists through the columns of the *Northern Star*. He wrote a column of comment on German affairs under the title of "our own correspondent" during the summer of 1844 and the autumn of 1845.<sup>22</sup>

Engels beg to add that these feelings are fully shared in by their people, to whom it is only due further to state, that they have without an exception exhibited the best disposition and conduct during the recent general turn out. Victoria Mills, 26th August, 1842".

<sup>13</sup> R. G. Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>14</sup> Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Aveling, *George Julian Harney: A Straggler of 1848*, *The Social Democrat*, No. 1, January 1897.

<sup>16</sup> Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>17</sup> In German, *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. II, pp. 558-584 (Berlin 1962).

<sup>18</sup> *Trial of Fergus O'Connor*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>19</sup> *Trial of Fergus O'Connor*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>20</sup> R. G. Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>21</sup> J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement (1830-1855)*, p. 276.

<sup>22</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, August 27th, 1842. (12 lines = 2 in. x 4 in. approx.) "Ermen and Engels beg to express their deep sense of obligation not only to the authorities, police and special constables, for the very efficient and prompt measures adopted and ready assistance given, to afford protection to their works, and the people in their employ during the late disturbances. Ermen and

### The Hall of Science

At the same time that Engels was trying to infuse an appreciation of theory into the Chartists he was also involved with the Socialists. On Sundays, when Mary Burns was free to go with him, they may have spent the day-time investigating the working-class districts of the City as he indicated in the *Conditions of the Working Class*, and then in the evening chosen between a meeting at the Chartist Carpenters' Hall or a lecture at the Hall of Science which had been built by the Owenite Socialists. The Chartists opened and closed their meetings with the singing of democratic hymns and their sermons were "political discourses on the justice of democracy and the necessity for obtaining the charter".<sup>23</sup> The Hall was near the district known as "Little Ireland" and it would be easy to spend the afternoon in the district and cross Oxford Road and walk up Charles Street to Carpenters' Hall for the evening meeting. It would then be a short walk of less than half an hour cutting through the back streets and crossing London Road and Great Ancoats Street to reach George Street and thence Cotton Street.

The Hall of Science was the opposite side of town near one of the bridges over the River Irwell into Salford. In 1839 the Salford Branch of the National Society of Rational Religionists had a Social Institution in Great George Street.<sup>24</sup> When their membership reached over four hundred,<sup>25</sup> they closed it down and built the Hall of Science in Campfield (the site of the Roman encampment in Manchester) at a cost of £7,000. The building was large and contained a lecture hall described by Foucher as "the finest and most spacious in town".<sup>26</sup> The activities of the Socialists included Sunday lectures, a day and Sunday school, oratorios, festivals, rural excursions and "cheap and innocent recreation for the working classes".

Their Sunday audiences were generally crowded and Engels was certainly among the crowd on many occasions. He wrote a vivid description of the scene for the benefit of the Swiss paper, *Schweizerischer Republikaner*.<sup>27</sup> He said that the lecturers, of whom John Watts<sup>28</sup> was the most frequent, spoke to the people in everyday language and

often jokes were made at the expense of the clergy and the Christian religion. The meetings took the form of a Church service with a choral and orchestral accompaniment. The songs were based on traditional hymn tunes set to communist texts. The lecturer walked onto a platform wearing his hat which he raised in greeting to the audience. He then took his coat off, sat down and delivered his lecture. In spite of the English humour, which Engels noted in the lectures, the audience may have occasionally lost interest because in one corner of the hall was a well stocked bookstall, and in the other a stall for the sale of oranges and other refreshments. On Sunday evenings there was often a tea-party where people of all ages and classes joined in discussion and ate their sandwiches. No doubt that would be where Engels and John Watts met and formed a friendship based on discussion and philosophical debate.

### Owenism in Manchester

Manchester was then the centre of Owenism outside London. Of the first six Social Missionaries appointed in 1838, three were from Manchester. Five years later the Hall of Science had become the thriving centre of progressive discussion and debate. Watts, who was partially crippled from an attack of paralysis at the age of five, had educated himself and become the assistant secretary and librarian at Coventry Mechanics Institute. He settled in Manchester in July 1841 where he took up a position as full time schoolmaster and lecturer at the Hall of Science. Although later in life he became disillusioned with Owenism and left the movement to play an active part in local Manchester affairs, at the time of Engels' introduction to the Owenites he was a leading and persuasive figure in it.

It was probably the discussions that young Frederick had with Watts that convinced him of the ignorance of the English in relation to their counterparts on the continent. In an effort to correct this failing he wrote two articles in *The New Moral World* called "The Advance of Social Reform in the Continent".<sup>29</sup> In the articles he pointed out that the advances on the continent would have to be made by the intellectuals whereas in England there was already a formed proletariat

<sup>23</sup> M. Leon Faucher, *Manchester in 1844* (1844), p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> G. D. H. Cole, *Attempts at General Union* (1953) pp. 154/155. James Wheeler, *Manchester* (1836), p. 388.

<sup>25</sup> J. F. C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (1969), p. 226.

<sup>26</sup> M. Leon Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>27</sup> In German, *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. I, p. 476 (Berlin 1962).

<sup>28</sup> For Watts see: *Dictionary of National Biography*, LX, p. 71; *Manchester Guardian*, 6th February, 1887; *Jubilee History Coventry Co-operative Society Ltd.*, (Coventry 1917), p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *The New Moral World* (November 4th 1843-February 3rd 1844).

Discussion School on the Middle East. IVOR MONTAGU will be the main speaker at MARX HOUSE, Clerkenwell Green. Sunday, 1st November, 10.00 a.m.-4.30 p.m. Organised by London District Committee, CP.

able to force progress. The discussions with Watts would have strengthened his interest in the dialectical method of thought. Watts was particularly interested at that time in the question of the existence of God. Engels was not so much interested in the outcome of the discussion as in Watts' idealistic approach to it.

From the bookstall at the Hall of Science, Engels may have obtained John Francis Bray's book "Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy"<sup>30</sup> and probably bought Watts' booklet *Facts and Figures of Political Economy: being a review of the Principles of Science, Separating the True From the False*. This was published by Abel Haywood in Manchester in 1842. It is interesting to compare Engels' *Outline of a Critique of Political Economy*<sup>31</sup>, published in the journal *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in Paris in 1844, with Watts' booklet and to see how the discussions between them must have helped form their opinions. Watt's work was a product of the Owenite thought of the 1840's while Engels made a significant contribution to theory which was later used and developed in collaboration with Marx. However Engels recognised, and many years later paid tribute to the work of Owen and his followers. He wrote that, "Every social movement, every real advance in England on behalf of the workers links itself on to the name of Robert Owen."<sup>32</sup>

### Engels on the Irish

One is tempted to wonder what Mary Burns was doing while Engels indulged in his philosophical arguments with John Watts. It is most unlikely that she had read deeply in the realms of philosophy; indeed it has been said that both she and Lydia were illiterate. Certainly when Engels married Lydia very late in life at a time when she was seriously ill and near to death, she signed the marriage register with a mark.<sup>33</sup> That could hardly be called conclusive evidence. Engels lived with Mary from the time that he returned to Manchester to fetch her in 1845 until her early death in 1863 at the age of forty. Possibly she was more than occupied in her activities in the Irish movement.

Engels referred to the Irish with the obvious

warmth of his association with the Burns sisters providing the glow. "What people" he said. "They haven't a penny to lose, more than half of them have not a shirt to their back, they are real proletarians and sans-culottes—and Irish besides—wild, ungovernable, fanatical Gaels. Nobody knows what the Irish are like unless he has seen them. If I had two hundred thousand Irish, I could overthrow the whole British monarchy."<sup>34</sup>

Engels quoted a figure of 40,000 Irish in Manchester at the time he wrote *The Conditions of The Working Class*. He said that "these people having grown up almost without civilisation, accustomed from youth to every sort of privation, rough, intemperate, and improvident, bring all their brutal habits with them among a class of the English population which has, in truth, little inducement to cultivate education and morality."<sup>35</sup> Cotton Street, where the Burns family was living in the early 1840's, was in the area where the Irish workers congregated. Across Oldham Road from Cotton Street was the district known as Irish Town.

Faucher described how the Irish would assemble by hundreds at the corner of Oldham Street and Ancoats Street. He said that they were "perpetually in a state of agitation" and so well organised "that, in the twinkling of an eye, one or two thousand can be collected at any given spot".<sup>36</sup>

Engels describes the appalling conditions in this area and the district known as Little Ireland which was off Oxford Road in the bend of the River Medlock. Mary Burns must have escorted the young German through these teeming districts. Probably she had friends or even relations living there whom she could visit. Mary and Frederick lived and worked together for nearly twenty years. When she died he wrote in a letter to Marx, "I cannot tell you how I feel, the poor girl loved me with her whole heart".<sup>37</sup> The fruit of their early companionship is found in the book that Engels wrote after he left Manchester in 1844. The information that he culled in his investigations with Mary and the extent of his knowledge of the conditions of the textile industry show how deeply the young German had involved himself in the working-class life of Manchester. Twenty years after the book was written, Marx said, "Re-reading your book has made me regretfully aware of our increasing age. How freshly and passionately, with what bold anticipations and no learned and scientific doubts the thing is still dealt with here!"<sup>38</sup>

<sup>30</sup> John Francis Bray, *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy or the Age of Might and the Age of Right* (1839), republished A. M. Kelly, New York, 1968. Plekhanov commented on Bray's book, "This book is remarkable, among other things, for the author displaying an inclination to abandon the idealistic outlook on history, so peculiar to all Utopian Socialists, and accept a materialist outlook . . ." G. Plekhanov, *Utopian Socialism of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 39.

<sup>31</sup> Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1959), Appendix, p. 175.

<sup>32</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1955), p. 364.

<sup>33</sup> Copy of Marriage Certificate, 1878, Parish of St. Mark, Regents Park (supplied by Mr. Andrew Rothstein).

<sup>34</sup> Gustav Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, Chapter "Irish Immigration", p. 28.

<sup>36</sup> M. Leon Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> In German, *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 30, p. 309 (Berlin 1964).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 342.

### Socialism and the Working Class

Fifty years after the publication of Engels' book and just over twenty years before the first Socialist state in the world was established, V. I. Lenin wrote:

"Engels got to know the proletariat in England, in the centre of English industry, Manchester . . . Here Engels not only sat in the factory office but wandered about the slums in which the workers were cooped up, and saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had been revealed before him about the condition of the British working class and carefully studied all the official documents he could lay his hands on . . . Even before Engels many people had described the sufferings of the proletariat and had pointed to the necessity of helping it.

"Engels was the first to say that the proletariat is not only a suffering class; that it is, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat that drives it irresistibly forward and compels it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat will help itself. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to realise that their only salvation lies in socialism. On the other hand, socialism becomes a force only when it becomes the aim of the political struggle of the working class. Such are the main ideas of Engels' book on the condition of the working class in England, ideas which have now been adopted by all thinking and fighting proletarians, but which at that time were entirely new." <sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, (Moscow 1960), pp. 22/23.

### Discussion Contributions on:

## Socialist Democracy

Tony Gilbert

One can begin by saying, as James Klugmann does (*Marxism Today*, May 1970), that no pure democracy can exist, and then as a result of a determination to lay the ghosts of the grave distortions of socialist democracy, and to be able to say "It won't happen here", to get as near as damn it to make a case for pure democracy.

As I have understood it, democracy is not a thing in itself. In the course of class struggle, the participants aim at extending their rights and limiting the rights of their opponents. For the capitalists, fascist measures appear as they become desperate to maintain and extend their rule. For Socialists, in Lenin's words "they cannot prepare for victory without an all round consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy". Among the participants divisions of interest appear which for our class can only be successfully resolved by adhering to Socialist principles.

### Socialist Laws

One example—the workers of a factory democratically decide that they will not accept black workers or will limit their numbers. Is that the end of the matter for us? We argue that the right to discriminate on colour should be made illegal, and every battle of this character makes us more

aware that the struggle for socialism involves a battle of ideas and the winning of people for socialist principles.

Can there be socialism in any country without socialist laws? If not, who would enforce those laws, or do we take it for granted that from the beginning all are imbued with Socialist principles?

It is difficult for me to understand what comrade Klugmann means by "the Trade Unions will have great responsibilities independent of the state". This can mean anything, including the right to enforce sectional interests which are in conflict with socialist laws. If James can envisage a socialist Britain without the full co-operation of the trade unions in order to uphold and enforce socialist laws, I cannot.

Divisions of interest must be resolved by arguing for and adhering to socialist principles. How great is our need to battle for such principles can be seen if we take a clear sighted look at the development of our Labour movement. The heroic struggles of our working class have won tremendous victories. Our battles for democratic rights took place while an Empire was being defended and extended. This took its toll in corrupting and confusing large sections of our people and we would be foolhardy to ignore its effect.



### Safeguards

We all know that in the main the spur to the discussions on socialist democracy were the disclosures at the 20th Congress and the events in Czechoslovakia. We cannot have the best of both worlds: to explain, but not to whitewash. To uphold the greatest advance made in the history of mankind—to defend socialism and stand shoulder to shoulder with the front line fighters against imperialism—and yet be critical of the errors made is no simple task. But, then, whoever claimed that our task was a simple one.

I don't believe that the answers can be found by stating that we have a clearer or purer view of socialist democracy than can be found in the Socialist world, that we can produce built-in safeguards that will guarantee no distortions. The safeguards lie in the hands and minds of the participants, and we must spell this out loud and clear. For the participants, the quality and ability of their leadership is of tremendous importance. Men of ability and courage can lack integrity, and humanity. I had the honour to serve in Spain—a young member, who, if he was to face the stress of battle and fascist prisons and develop as a Communist, needed and got the leadership of the Wally Tapsells and the Clive Bransons, but I got the other types as well.

That is life, and life is not always as one would like it. The involved are always wanting to know, even if they do not constantly proclaim it—"how do we know if we can trust you, that you mean what you say?", for they have had a bellyful of trade union and Labour leaders, who have promised much yet have climbed out of their struggles. No matter how noble our ideas on democracy, in my opinion they will cut little ice if they are not

accompanied by the constant development of political cadres in our Party and the Labour movement capable of understanding the issues, and testing the leadership. They will understand and appreciate far better our determination to strengthen them, than texts telling them how pure we are.

Perhaps I am, as some of my friends tell me, the type of comrade that cannot believe "anything but good of the Socialist world". I do not think so, but then who sees himself as others do? However I do not know of anything useful, nor any healthy relationship that has been built on negative aspects. I doubt if any Communist will deny that, at the height of the crimes against innocent people in the Soviet Union, that country had the only leadership that was rallying the people against fascism. There must have been thousands of Soviet Communists in factories and fields who were developing political cadres—their efforts helped to defeat fascism and bring about the 20th Congress.

Comrades, more able than myself, find it possible to offer fraternal advice to enrich these efforts. It is important however, to aid the Socialist world in the immediate struggles it is engaged in. Tremendous responsibilities for world peace rest on its shoulders. Reaction has made dangerous gains in recent years which are all too similar to the Thirties. In their every move, the imperialists have an enormous stake in anti-Sovietism. In all our discussions we must find the way of showing the positive role of the Socialist world and be as forthright as Johnny Gollan at the *Morning Star* Rally when he said:

*We will defend socialism and stand shoulder to shoulder with our socialist brothers in their struggle against imperialism.*

## Why Did It Happen?

Jean Feldmar

It is indeed time to try to understand why it happened. A beginning having been made by Maurice Dobb on the economic and more overtly political factors, it may be useful to follow this by considering the more subjective factors which made it possible for the trials to be accepted without protest.

The search for the scapegoat, or the witch, has for centuries been a popular pastime. It provides a simple answer to difficult questions. In our own time we have seen how politically ignorant people readily accept the Jews or the coloured immigrants as the explanation of social evils, and believe that World War 2 was "all due to one man".

Slingova in writing of the Czechs in the fifties<sup>1</sup> comments "their political experience being too slight for them to distinguish the true enemies from the imaginary, they were at the mercy of the lie mongers". Mme. Slansky quotes at length from press statements to the effect "We breathe more freely now that the traitors have been exposed", and her quotations from Party statements suggest that even the Central Committee accepted too readily the accusations against Slansky and others. This human weakness was exploited by those who wished to distract attention from failures of policy, and perhaps by some with more evil motives.

<sup>1</sup> *Marxism Today*, May 1969.

### Scapegoats

After the 20th Congress revelations the easily acceptable explanation was that everything that was wrong was due to Beria, Stalin, and a few other evil men. Thus the killers of the former scapegoats became the new scapegoats. They were already dead, and could be condemned and forgotten, so again "we breathe more freely". It is only in recent years that the full horror of the Stalin era has gradually been revealed. Mmes. Slansky and Slingova have told the story of the trials, and Eugenia Ginsberg, Solzhenitsyn and others have shown more of what it meant for ordinary people to live in this era, and how deeply the spy-hunt became embedded in society, and how destructive this was.

The arrest of one spy (real or imaginary) makes necessary the search for his associates, and for their associates, ad. inf. It is so easy then for the informer and the petty tale-teller to become the "good" citizen, while refusal to "co-operate" may be equated with anti-socialist activity. Once caught in this net there is no escape. Not only oneself is in danger, but one's family and friends. Families and friendships are destroyed, comradeship and solidarity are devalued, criticism and protest are impossible, new ideas are driven underground. Solzhenitsyn shows that the perpetrators of this process were themselves caught in their own net, for once embarked on the course to draw back is to become a traitor. Solzhenitsyn's (fictional) account<sup>2</sup> bears out Mme. Slingova's statement<sup>3</sup> "Pressures both external and internal had created a political system placing immense power in the hands of a few. The partnership of the security services with the top party leadership, and the servile role of the judiciary, were products of this system". The novel *The First Circle* exposes, with insight and compassion for the individuals, the development of an elite (including the top police) whose way of life was open to criticism, who feared criticism, and were in a position to suppress it forcibly.

The reason this piece of history is important today is that it poses the question at what point do the necessary measures for the defence of socialism against internal enemies become a fetter on socialist development, even a threat to its existence? How is this dilemma to be resolved? Marxists would expect to find clues in the study of recent history. It is therefore very disturbing to find in the USSR an apparent unwillingness to open discussion on the Stalin era. The Soviet Writers' Union has of course every right to publish what they think fit; and doubtless Solzhenitsyn

broke the rules and behaved rudely, but many people are tempted to do this when they feel strongly they have something to say and are prevented from saying it. What is disturbing is that this particular subject matter is, as far as I know, not being published.

### Freedom to Criticise

The motive for clamping down on discussion on such material is the fear that such writing discredits socialism, and aids its enemies. But surely nothing has so delighted the enemies of socialism as this suppression. Here again it seems that the attempt to prevent discredit itself brings discredit.

Marxists have always maintained that freedom to criticise is the life-blood of democracy. Does this apply only to capitalist society? We have argued in the past that in the early struggle to establish socialism some curtailment of this freedom is necessary, but that, eventually, the development of socialist society depends on the political education of the whole people to a point where all are capable of understanding and discussing all the issues and making a reasoned judgment. This cannot be achieved if important facts of history are suppressed or glossed over, so that the discussion even of domestic issues is hampered. How can it be that after fifty years of socialism, with its magnificent achievements and solid economic basis, the Soviet authorities apparently feel too insecure to allow even past errors of policy to be publicly discussed? Do we have to wait another fifty years?

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<sup>2</sup> *The First Circle*

<sup>3</sup> *Marxism Today* May 1969.

# Socialism, Democracy and the One-Party System

## Part Two Completed

Monty Johnstone

### The Aftermath of the War

Paradoxically enough, although it was the civil war which led to curtailments in the freedom of opposition parties in Soviet Russia, they were not finally suppressed there till after its conclusion. For Professor Schapiro, of the London School of Economics, this fact is conclusive refutation of Lenin when he "justified the eclipse of his socialist political opponents by an appeal to the argument of self-preservation." In 1921, Schapiro argues, "when wisdom, vision, compromise and moderation might have given Russia the beginnings of normal democratic development, he failed."<sup>135</sup>

Even a superficial glance at the situation in Russia in 1921 shows that, after seven ruinous years of war, conditions were the very antithesis of those in which even liberal bourgeois democratic theory could expect a "moderate" and "normal" democracy to operate. This "background of economic crisis" is succinctly described by Professor Schapiro's friend, Dr. George Katkov, of St. Antony's College, Oxford, as follows: "Agricultural and industrial production had dropped to a mere fraction of what it had been before the Revolution. Losses in human life had been enormous under the combined effect of war, starvation and epidemic. Transport was disorganised to an unheard of degree, and this in the winter of 1920-21 brought with it a critical fuel shortage in the larger cities. The production of oil had fallen to one third, of coal to one sixth, of cotton to one fifth, of flax to one sixth, of sugar-beet to one quarter and of cast iron to one twentieth of what it had been in 1916. The purchasing power of the Petrograd workers' pay packet was down to less than one tenth of what it had been before World War I. Under these conditions the depopulation of the towns was proceeding rapidly and on an enormous scale."<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> L. Schapiro, "The Russian Revolution: Some Neglected Aspects", in M. & L. Kochan, Ed., *Russian Themes* (Edinburgh/London, 1967), pp. 139, 142.

<sup>136</sup> G. Katkov, "The Kronstadt Rising", in D. Footman, Ed., *St. Antony's Papers*, No. 6, *Soviet Affairs*, No. 2 (London, 1959), p. 13. See, also, *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 343-4.

This alarming situation inevitably reflected itself in discontent and despair among all sections of the population. The demobilisation that followed the end of the Civil War, noted Lenin in March 1921, brought about "a new kind of war, which is summed up in the word 'banditism'—when tens and hundreds of thousands of demobilised soldiers, who are accustomed to the toils of war and regard it almost as their only trade, return, impoverished and ruined, and are unable to find work."<sup>137</sup> Peasant revolts were rife in the central and south eastern regions and in Siberia. In Tambov province in 1920-21 about 50,000 peasants, led by the Right S.R. Antonov, formed themselves into an anti-Soviet army that was joined by the remnants of the defeated White forces.<sup>138</sup> Among the hungry, exasperated workers dissatisfaction was reflected in a wave of strikes even in such former Bolshevik strongholds as the Putilov Works in Petrograd. Menshevik, S.R. and Anarchist speeches and leaflets, seeking to make political capital out of the economic grievances, made an impression on workers who had previously rejected these parties."<sup>139</sup>

### The Kronstadt Revolt

The culmination of this process came with the Kronstadt Mutiny of March 1921. The sailors (mainly of peasant origin) at this key island fortress protecting Petrograd, seized control of the base, arrested representatives of the fleet command and about three hundred Communists.<sup>140</sup> Associating themselves with the revolts in other parts of Russia, the mutineers proclaimed "the third revolution that will strike the last fetter from the working

<sup>137</sup> Report to Tenth Party Congress, *C.W.*, 32, p. 172.

<sup>138</sup> K. Gusev, *The Break-up of the Left S.R. Party* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 256-7. (In Russian.)

<sup>139</sup> A. Sliepkov, "The Kronstadt Rebellion", in W. Astrov, Ed., *An Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution*, Volume 2 (London, n.d.), pp. 554-5; F. Dan, *Two Years of Wandering* (Berlin, 1922), pp. 113-4 (In Russian); O. Anweiler, *Die Rätebewegung in Russland 1905-1921* (Leiden, 1958), p. 312.

<sup>140</sup> Katkov, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

masses."<sup>141</sup> In an "Appeal to Comrades Workers and Peasants" their Provisional Revolutionary Committee declared: "The Kronstadters have raised the banner of rebellion and are confident that tens of millions of workers and peasants will answer their call. . . . The Kronstadt explosion cannot fail to arouse the whole of Russia and first of all Petrograd. Comrades, arise for the struggle against the Communist autocracy!"<sup>142</sup>

Although there is no evidence that they were responsible for organising what was essentially a spontaneous outburst, the opposition parties, both capitalist and "socialist", wholeheartedly identified themselves with it.<sup>143</sup> In the tense drama being enacted on the Russian stage, whilst hostile foreign powers watched and waited in the wings, "self-preservation" was indeed the issue. The preservation not only of their own leadership but of the fundamental gains of two revolutions demanded that the Bolsheviks suppress the activities of parties that were now openly championing mutiny and revolt,<sup>144</sup> the outcome of which they would be powerless to control. As Isaac Deutscher argued, the Bolsheviks "could not accept it as a requirement of democracy" that they should allow the country to be plunged "into a new series of civil wars just as one series had been concluded."<sup>145</sup> The divided anti-Communist left had no realistic alternative to offer to pull Russia out of her terrible plight. Their negative exploitation of discontent could contribute only to weaken the country further and—though they obviously did not desire this—to pave the way for the return of extreme reaction. This was the lesson of the various ephemeral "socialist" and "democratic" anti-Communist governments of 1918, which were one after another supplanted by strong-arm military dictatorships.

The only basis for democracy to revive in famished, devastated Russia was to get the wheels of the economy turning again. In 1921 the Bolsheviks introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP),

with its concessions to private production and trade, in order to promote this recovery. They believed that it would be placed in jeopardy by the propaganda of the Mensheviks and the S.R.s, which could have turned a necessary retreat into a rout. "If you insist on expressing your political views publicly in the present circumstances, when our position is far more difficult than it was when the whiteguards were directly attacking us," Lenin told them in 1922, "then you will have only yourselves to blame if we treat you as the worst and most pernicious whiteguard elements."<sup>146</sup>

### The End of the Opposition Parties

In this period large scale arrests were made of Mensheviks, S.R.s and Anarchists, some of the best known of whom were permitted legally to emigrate. Most of their organisations were collapsing or being suppressed. However, certain Anarchist groups were allowed to go on propagating their ideas. Their news-sheets appeared till 1926.<sup>147</sup> The Anarchist "Voice of Labour" bookshops, which were not finally closed till 1929, brought out several volumes of writings by Bakunin and other Anarchists.<sup>148</sup> The Left S.R.s enjoyed for a while a bizarre, semi-legal status. In the summer of 1921, their official representative abroad, A. A. Shreyder, was issued with a Soviet passport and visa so that he could come to Moscow to report to the central leadership of his party . . . in the Butyrki prison. Having finished his consultations and delivered some public lectures, he packed his bags and returned perfectly legally to Berlin.<sup>149</sup> In 1922 individual Mensheviks, Anarchists, Poale-Zionists (this Zionist Socialist Party existing legally till the mid-20's) and others were still being elected to some Soviets, although their number was decreasing at every election, whilst those of "non-Party" delegates rose.<sup>150</sup> No decree was ever passed

<sup>141</sup> *Izvestia* of the (Kronstadt) Provisional Revolutionary Committee, No. 6, 8 March 1921, reprinted in *The Truth about Kronstadt* (Prague, 1921), pp. 83-4. (In Russian.)

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 9, 11 March 1921, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-1.

<sup>143</sup> See Lenin, *The Tax in Kind* (April, 1921), *C.W.*, 32, pp. 358-9. Also I. Mett, *The Kronstadt Commune* (Duplicated *Solidarity* pamphlet, Bromley, 1967), pp. 27-33, which reproduces Anarchist, Menshevik and S.R. statements on the mutiny.

<sup>144</sup> See, e.g. the resolution of the Tenth Council of the Right S.R.s in August 1921: "The question of the revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship of the Communist Party is placed on the order of the day as a cast-iron necessity." (*Revoliutsionnaya Rossiya*, No. 11, August 1922, quoted by Spirin, *op. cit.*, p. 390.)

<sup>145</sup> I. Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

<sup>146</sup> Political Report to the Eleventh Party Congress (March, 1922), *C.W.*, 33, pp. 281-3.

<sup>147</sup> V. Serge, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>148</sup> P. Avrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 244. See, also, R. Baldwin, *Liberty Under the Soviets* (New York, 1928), p. 144, who reports that at that time the Anarchists still had a bookshop on a main thoroughfare opposite the Moscow University.

<sup>149</sup> Spirin, *op. cit.*, pp. 398-9.

<sup>150</sup> Gimpelson, *op. cit.*, p. 30, gives a table showing the party breakdown at All-Russian Congresses till December 1922. A. Rothstein, Ed., *The Soviet Constitution* (London, 1923), p. 119, gives the figures for the Moscow Soviet where, between 1918 and 1922, the representation of the Mensheviks is shown to have dropped from 88 to 3, the S.R.s from 51 to 1 (a Left S.R.) and the Anarchists from 5 to 1, whilst the independents rose from 9 to 207.



making parties other than the Communists illegal.<sup>151</sup>

In the summer of 1922 the leaders of the Right S.R.s were tried and sentenced for conspiracy and participation in a number of counter-revolutionary uprisings and attacks on Soviet leaders.<sup>152</sup> It is noteworthy, as Professor E. H. Carr has pointed out, that "throughout the proceedings it was not alleged that the S.R. Party was itself an illegal institution: evidence was brought against the defendants of acts which under any system of government would have been criminal." The CEC decree, confirming and suspending the sentences, continued to imply, in his estimation, "its recognition as a legal party."<sup>153</sup>

Although severely battered, divided and reduced in size, with many of their members having joined the Bolsheviks, whilst others sat in jail, the opposition parties still continued to exercise some influence in the Soviet republic. The Twelfth Conference of the Bolshevik Party in 1922 found it necessary to devote a special resolution to them, which stressed: "The anti-Soviet parties and tendencies are not yet smashed."<sup>154</sup> It was necessary, it declared, to combat them ideologically, whilst, under the prevailing circumstances, not renouncing the use of repressive measures. The role of the latter should, however, "not be overestimated."<sup>155</sup> By the mid-1920's the last of the opposition parties had disappeared from the scene in the Soviet Union and existed only as émigré groups isolated from the Russian people.<sup>156</sup>

### Far Eastern Republic

Whilst a one-party system was coming into existence in Russia, there existed a Communist-led and inspired multi-party state in that part of the Soviet Far East not under Japanese occupation. This was the Far Eastern Republic, created in 1920 on Bolshevik initiative and acting as a buffer between Soviet Russia and Japan. With Lenin's

approval elections were held there to a Constituent (later National) Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage.<sup>157</sup> All political groups, including reactionaries, took part in them.

The elections resulted in a parliamentary majority for the Communists (91 seats) and their non-party peasant allies (180 seats), who together formed a government. They faced a parliamentary opposition, which included anti-Communist peasants (44 seats), S.R.s (18) and Mensheviks (13).<sup>158</sup> In April 1921 a constitution was adopted guaranteeing "the right to organise and maintain unions and societies", provided that a court had not ruled that they were pursuing aims punishable under the Republic's criminal code.<sup>159</sup> In November 1922, after Japanese troops had left the Far East, the National Assembly voted to enter the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.).<sup>160</sup>

### Party: State Relations

In the hard-pressed first years of Soviet power, it is not surprising that, as the ruling party, the Bolsheviks should "merge the Party and government leadership."<sup>161</sup> The political problems were accentuated by an acute shortage of loyal, capable and experienced administrators. However, already in March 1919, a resolution of the Eighth Party Congress insisted that "the Party strives to guide the activity of the Soviets, not to replace them."<sup>162</sup>

In his Political Report to the Eleventh Party Congress in April 1922, Lenin indicated that the relations between the Party and the government were "not what they ought to be." He personally was "greatly to blame" for letting matters that were properly the concern of the government be "dragged before the (Party's) Political Bureau." The former's prestige had to be raised.<sup>163</sup> The congress underlined in its resolutions the need for "a systematically observed demarcation" between Party and state apparatuses. The Party organisations

<sup>151</sup> Not till 1936 did the Communist Party's special position receive juridical expression—in Articles 126 (as "the vanguard of the working people" and "the leading nucleus of all organisations of the working people, both social and state") and 141 (where it is the only party named—alongside trade unions etc.—as having the right to put forward candidates in elections) of the new "Stalin Constitution".

<sup>152</sup> *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* (Berlin), No. 160, 10 August 1922, p. 1024.

<sup>153</sup> E. H. Carr, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-3.

<sup>154</sup> *Die Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion in Resolutionen*, Volume 4, p. 108.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 111-2.

<sup>156</sup> Spirin, *op. cit.*, pp. 392, 394, 399; E. H. Carr, *Socialism In One Country 1924-1926* (London, 1959), Volume 2, pp. 453-4.

<sup>157</sup> Lenin, *Answers to Questions by A. M. Krasnoshchokov* (July, 1920), *C.W.*, 42, p. 204.

<sup>158</sup> H. K. Norton, *The Far Eastern Republic* (London, 1923), pp. 152-5; *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* (1st. ed., Moscow, 1930), Volume 20, p. 219. (In Russian.)

<sup>159</sup> *The Constitution of the Far Eastern Republic* (Washington, n.d.—1921?), p. 4.

<sup>160</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow, 1968), Volume 3, Book 2, pp. 549-550. (In Russian.)

<sup>161</sup> Lenin, *Political Report to Tenth Party Congress*, *C.W.*, 32, p. 177.

<sup>162</sup> *K.P.S.U. in Resolutionen*, Volume 3, p. 63. Emphasis in original.

<sup>163</sup> *Political Report to Eleventh Party Congress* (March, 1922), *C.W.*, 33, pp. 306-7.

were enjoined to "refrain from issuing administrative directives" to Soviet bodies.<sup>164</sup>

### Special Historical Circumstances

As we have seen, many of Lenin's statements during the civil war and its aftermath bear a strong "authoritarian" imprint. Without trying to justify everything said and done,<sup>165</sup> there is little doubt that the Soviet state could not have survived without the use of repressive measures. This was recognised by the late Professor Laski, one-time Chairman of the Labour Party, who wrote: "To have admitted the classic freedom of opposition to elements which were prepared to wage civil war upon (the Russian Revolution's) aims, to have given them freedom of speech and association, would have presented the Revolution to its enemies; the history of the Weimar regime is sufficient proof of that."<sup>166</sup> The choice was not between using "democratic" or "dictatorial" methods of government. "The only alternative to Bolshevism", as the American bourgeois historian of the Russian Revolution, W. H. Chamberlin, has pointed out, "would not have been (the Right S.R. leader) Chernov, opening a Constituent Assembly, elected according to the most modern rules of equal suffrage and proportional representation, but a military dictator, a Kolchak or a Denikin, riding into Moscow on a white horse to the accompaniment of the clanging bells of the old capital's hundreds of churches."<sup>167</sup>

<sup>164</sup> *XI. S'ezd R.K.P. (b), Stenograficheskiy otchet* (Moscow, 1961), pp. 525, 553. These decisions were not contradicted by the statement in Lenin's last article that the "flexible amalgamation of a state institution with a Party institution", seen in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, would be appropriate "for our state apparatus as a whole". This is sometimes quoted out of context to imply that it refers to an overall amalgamation of Party and state institutions. (See, e.g. R. N. Carew Hunt, *The Theory and Practice of Communism*, Penguin, Ed., Harmondsworth, 1963, p. 192.) In these proposals, which are discussed below, Lenin in fact makes it quite clear that he is referring only to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, responsible for the control of all state institutions. ("Better Fewer, But Better", March, 1923, *C.W.*, 33, p. 496.)

<sup>165</sup> Lenin was the first to emphasise that mistakes were made under his leadership. (See, e.g. *C.W.*, 28, p. 169; *C.W.*, 32, p. 507). His colleague, Karl Radek, wrote: "When Lenin speaks of his mistakes, he hides nothing, he leads the workers into his own laboratory of thought." (K. Radek, "Lenin", in *Communist Review*, London, May, 1923, p. 23.) Note, also, Lenin's warning against taking him "at his angry words" uttered when he was very tired. (*C.W.*, 42, p. 252.)

<sup>166</sup> H. J. Laski, *Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London, 1944), pp. 66-7.

<sup>167</sup> W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution*

Again and again the opponents of Communism select material and quotations from this period to depict Lenin as the legitimate progenitor of Stalin's subsequent repressive rule. Similar statements are used by those in the world Communist movement who wish to condemn as "revisionist" and "anti-Leninist" those Communist Parties advocating a pluralistic Socialist democracy. They all ignore or play down the exceptional historical circumstances prevailing from 1918 to 1922, which forced the Bolsheviks to curtail the freedoms that prevailed during the first period of Soviet power and reluctantly to resort to forms of political repression quite contrary to their original intentions.

The Bolsheviks always stressed the *provisional* nature of such measures as the suppression of hostile bourgeois papers, which would be "removed by a special decree just as soon as normal conditions are re-established."<sup>168</sup> The Party Programme, adopted in March 1919, likewise indicated that "the forfeiture of political rights, and whatever limitations may be imposed upon freedom, are necessary only as temporary measures."<sup>169</sup>

### "A Severe Case of Childbirth"

Childbirth may be easy or difficult, wrote Lenin in 1918. The Russian Revolution, breaking out in a war and forced to maintain itself in the midst of a war, was "a particularly severe case."<sup>170</sup> The Russians "had to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in its harshest form" due to the "special conditions" which had given rise to "acute forms of struggle."<sup>171</sup> Other countries, he said in 1919, "will travel by a different, more humane road."<sup>172</sup> Russia had made "the first breach in the wall of world capitalism," he told the Communists of the Caucasus in 1921. They should take advantage of the more favourable international conditions. "Do not copy our tactics," he advised them, "but analyse the reasons for their particular features, the conditions that gave rise to them, and their results; go beyond the letter, and apply the spirit,

(University Library Paperback Ed., New York, 1965), Volume I, p. 371.

<sup>168</sup> Extract from Decree of Council of People's Commissars, (9 November, 1917), Bunyan and Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>169</sup> *Programme of the Communist Party of Russia*, in N. Bukharin & E. Preobrazhensky (London, 1924), p. 390.

<sup>170</sup> "Prophetic Words" (June, 1918), *C.W.*, 27, p. 498. Emphasis in original.

<sup>171</sup> Report to Moscow Workers' Meeting (November 1918), *C.W.*, 28, pp. 207-8.

<sup>172</sup> Report to Plenary Meeting of Moscow Soviet (April, 1919), *C.W.*, 29, p. 271.

the essence, and the lessons of the 1917-21 experience."<sup>173</sup>

In 1917 Lenin and the Bolsheviks took power, convinced that they were "on the eve of a world revolution."<sup>174</sup> They believed that they would be building a new society in association with developed industrial countries in the West, where Marx had found the main prerequisites for socialism. When the revolutionary upsurge in other countries died down or was crushed, the Soviet state found itself on its own, confronted with a world bourgeoisie "still very much stronger" than itself.<sup>175</sup> The measures dictated by this position of weakness can hardly be considered a model many decades later for Communist Parties which see "the superiority of the forces of socialism over those of imperialism . . . becoming ever more marked in the world arena."<sup>176</sup> They were taken, moreover, in a backward, beleaguered, war-weary peasant country. By 1921 its small working class, which had led the Revolution, was "largely declassed" and the dictatorship of the proletariat "would not work except through the Communist Party."<sup>177</sup> This was a thoroughly abnormal state of affairs. It reflected in an extreme form the general proposition that Lenin had advanced two years earlier: "In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain particulars from what it would be in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty bourgeois character of our country."<sup>178</sup>

Nothing could be more contrary to the whole spirit of Leninism than to make a virtue of a necessity by sanctifying measures which—though necessary for the survival of the newly-born Soviet infant in dire distress—were to leave it with reduced

powers of resistance to meet serious ailments that were to assail it from other quarters and disfigure it in later life.

### Lenin's Pluralism

Lenin was certainly no liberal democrat. He quoted approvingly the famous dictum pronounced by Plekhanov in 1903: "Salus revolutionis suprema lex". (The welfare of the revolution is the highest law.)<sup>179</sup> Yet even when forced to resort to the harshest methods against those combating or undermining the Revolution, Lenin continued to give expression to his deep-rooted democratic convictions and to display marked pluralistic tendencies. This was shown very clearly in the trade union controversy in the Party (1920-21). He emphatically rejected Trotsky's "administrative approach", which called for the incorporation of the trade unions into the state apparatus on the superficially plausible grounds that both represented the workers and that the trade unions could not logically be expected to defend the workers against their own state.<sup>180</sup> Lenin argued that it was "an abstraction" to talk of their having a workers' state. It was a "workers' state with bureaucratic distortions."<sup>181</sup> The workers' organisations had "to protect the workers from their state."<sup>182</sup> The trade unions no longer had to face the *class* economic struggle but the "non-class 'economic struggle', which means combating bureaucratic distortions of the Soviet apparatus, safeguarding the working people's material and spiritual interests in ways and means inaccessible to this apparatus, etc."<sup>183</sup>

When Lenin spoke of the trade unions as "transmission belts," it was in a very different sense from the one that it came to acquire in practice under Stalin as a means of conveying instructions from the Party leadership to the workers to carry out. Lenin had in mind a two-way process whereby the vanguard kept in close contact with the masses, able at all times to judge their mood, aspirations and thoughts and capable, in turn, of winning their confidence "by a comradely attitude and concern for their needs." One of the greatest dangers facing the Party was that it "might run too far ahead" and "fail to maintain firm contact with the whole army of labour."<sup>184</sup> The Communists

<sup>173</sup> To the Communists of the Caucasus (April, 1921), *C.W.*, 32, pp. 317-8.

<sup>174</sup> Lenin, "The Crisis Has Matured" (October, 1917), *C.W.*, 26, p. 74. Emphasis in original.

<sup>175</sup> Lenin, Letter to G. Myasnikov (August, 1921), *C.W.*, 32, p. 505. Lenin points to this fact to argue that in the prevailing circumstances the Soviet government could not permit freedom of the press ("the core and foundation of political organisation") as it would enable the international bourgeoisie to finance a hostile propaganda force in Russia ten times larger than that supporting Soviet power. In July 1919, however, he had challenged capitalist governments to "a contest" taking the form of a free exchange of pamphlets putting the case for their respective social and political systems. (Answers to American Journalist, *C.W.*, 29, p. 519.)

<sup>176</sup> 36 *Million Communists Say*. Statement of 81 Communist Parties. (London, 1960), p. 3.

<sup>177</sup> Lenin, Summing-Up Speech on C.C. Report (March, 1921), *C.W.*, 32, p. 199.

<sup>178</sup> "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (October, 1919), *C.W.*, 30, p. 108.

<sup>179</sup> Lenin, "Plekhanov on Terror" (January, 1918), *C.W.*, 42, p. 48.

<sup>180</sup> Lenin, *Once Again on the Trade Unions* (January, 1921), *C.W.*, 32, p. 97; *On the Trade Unions* (December, 1920), *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>181</sup> *The Party Crisis* (January, 1921), *ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>182</sup> *On the Trade Unions*, *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>183</sup> *Once Again on the Trade Unions*, *ibid.*, p. 100. Emphasis in original.

<sup>184</sup> Lenin, Draft Theses on Trade Unions (January, 1922), *C.W.*, 42, pp. 381-2.

were but "a drop in the ocean", he said. "We can administer only when we express correctly what the people are conscious of."<sup>185</sup>

### Checks on State Power

The Sixth Congress of Soviets in November 1918, consisting for the first time almost entirely (98.1 per cent) of Bolsheviks, took steps to limit the powers of the Cheka, as well as passing a resolution "On Revolutionary Legality." The latter demanded a strict observance of the laws and gave citizens the right to appeal against officials neglecting or violating their rights.<sup>186</sup>

Lenin's concern to provide checks on the central power of the state also found expression in the letters written as he lay ill at the end of 1922. He was anxious, in the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, about to be constituted, to give the non-Russian peoples "real defence against the genuine Russian Derzhimorda",<sup>187</sup> against "the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian, the chauvinist, in substance a rascal and lover of violence, as the typical Russian bureaucrat is." He felt himself "very guilty towards the workers of Russia for not having interfered energetically enough and sharply enough" against Stalin's proposal to incorporate the other Soviet republics into the R.S.F.S.R. This, he believed, would place the non-Russian peoples at a disadvantage in relation to the Russian state apparatus which "we took over from tsarism and just tarred a little with the Soviet brush."<sup>188</sup> (Less than a week previously, in his famous "Testament", he had expressed his concern at the "unlimited authority" concentrated in Stalin's hands. He suggested that the Party should "think about a way of removing Stalin" from the post of General Secretary, to which he had been elected earlier that year.<sup>189</sup>)

### "Totalitarianism" . . . and Popular Initiative

Quoting a statement of Lenin's in the summer of 1918 that "we must organise everything", Mr. Bertram D. Wolfe comments: "Thus to the authoritarian trend inherent in an infallible doctrine, possessed and interpreted by an infallible interpreter who ruled an infallible party, from above, infallibly,

Lenin added the further dream of an authoritarian doctrine and *apparatus* with the determination to 'organise everything, take everything into our hands'—and totalitarianism was born."<sup>190</sup>

It is necessary to look no further than the page from which our prominent American expert takes his quotation to see the downright dishonesty of his argument. Lenin was speaking here of "all the thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of workers and the working peasants", who had "set about building a new Socialist edifice with their own hands." In the towns, he said, the thing was "to organise the factories" and pay attention to the distribution system disrupted by the war. "The workers are learning to do this," he went on, "and are forming central organs of administration . . . the trade unions are becoming the embryos of administrative bodies for all industry. . . . We must organise everything, take everything into our own hands, keep a check on the kulaks and profiteers at every step. . . ." <sup>191</sup> The "we" clearly refers to the "hundreds of thousands" of working people—not to Mr. Wolfe's sinister totalitarian "*apparatus*"!

In this, as in so many other of Lenin's speeches and writings is reflected the "faith in the independent revolutionary activity of the masses" and in their "organising abilities"<sup>192</sup> that he had been emphasising since he first saw them roused to "fundamental historic creativeness" in the 1905 Revolution.<sup>193</sup> From the first days of Soviet power, Lenin had proclaimed: "Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical bureaucratic approach; living creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves."<sup>194</sup> In introducing workers' control over production the Bolsheviks "wanted to show that we recognise only one road—change from below." The workers needed to acquire more confidence in their own strength. "Age-old tradition has made them far too used to waiting for orders from above."<sup>195</sup>

The members of the government should be

<sup>185</sup> Political Report to Eleventh Party Congress (March, 1922), *C.W.*, 33, p. 304.

<sup>186</sup> Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Volume 1, pp. 170-1.

<sup>187</sup> A coarse, bullying police official in Gogol's *Inspector-General*.

<sup>188</sup> The Question of Nationalities or of "Autonomisation" (30 December, 1922), in V. I. Lenin, *Letter to Congress* etc., pp. 22-4. (The translation here is, in general, more accurate than in *C.W.*, 36, pp. 605-6.)

<sup>189</sup> Letter to Congress (24 December 1922), *C.W.*, 36, pp. 594, 596.

<sup>190</sup> B. D. Wolfe, "A Party of a New Type", in M. M. Drachkovitch & B. Lazitch, Ed., *The Comintern—Historical Highlights* (New York, 1966), p. 35.

<sup>191</sup> Report to the Fifth Congress of Soviets (July, 1918), *C.W.*, 27, p. 517.

<sup>192</sup> Lenin, *The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party* (March, 1906), *C.W.*, 10, p. 259.

<sup>193</sup> Lenin, "Social Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government", (April, 1905), *C.W.*, 8, p. 291.

<sup>194</sup> Reply to Question (November, 1917), *C.W.*, 26, pp. 467-9.

<sup>195</sup> Report to Third Congress of Soviets (January, 1918), *ibid*, pp. 467-9.



subject to "sharp criticism". They did "not claim to be infallible", he told the CEC.<sup>196</sup> Socialism could "not be implemented by a minority, by the Party."<sup>197</sup> The minds of tens of millions creating a new society would produce "something infinitely loftier than the greatest genius can foresee," he confidently declared.<sup>198</sup> So much for Lenin's "totalitarian" and "infallible" doctrine!

### Combating Bureaucracy

Lenin was particularly disappointed, in March 1919, to have to record that, as a result of the low cultural level of the Russian masses, "the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government by the working people", had in fact become "organs of government for the working people by the advanced section of the proletariat, but not by the working people as a whole."<sup>199</sup>

The section of the workers who were governing was "inordinately, incredibly small." This exceptionally difficult problem, reflecting traditional Russian backwardness, could only be solved by "prolonged education" and by special measures "to enlist the workers in government"<sup>200</sup>, as well as to "revive the Soviets."<sup>201</sup> Lenin had high hopes that the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, formed in February 1920, would play an important role here by gradually drawing all workers and peasants into "the struggle with bureaucratism and corruption in Soviet institutions." As Professor Carr points out, he never wavered in his belief in "direct democracy" as the antidote to the increasing concentration of authority that was taking place in the Soviet state.<sup>202</sup> When the W.P.I. did not prove equal to the task, Lenin proposed that it be reorganised and amalgamated with the Central Control Commission of the Party to form a new, independent, unified organisation for control over both Party and state institutions.<sup>203</sup> At the same

time he sought to involve the mass of non-party workers and peasants in purging the Party of "puffed up commissars" and "bureaucrats",<sup>204</sup> recognising that "we have a bureaucracy not only in state but also in Party institutions."<sup>205</sup>

Lenin himself, in the most difficult periods, would go to hear the grievances of the workers and peasants, considering it his "duty to listen to everything said in criticism of the government and its policy." At one such meeting in October 1920 he told the peasants present: "Give vent to all your reproaches; censure us ten times more severely—that is your right and your duty." At the same time he used these opportunities to tell "the unvarnished truth" about the country's position and to ask for co-operation against the counter-revolutionary forces.<sup>206</sup>

### Value of Free Discussion

Writing of the legalisation of the Mensheviks and S.R.s at the end of 1918 and beginning of 1919, Professor Schapiro grudgingly admits in his strongly anti-Soviet work, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy*: "To some slight extent the Communist concession was probably due to the remnants of faith in the value of free discussion which certain sections of the Communist Party retained for some years."<sup>207</sup> The same "faith" lay at the root of the CEC decree of November 1919 which gave representation with a consultative voice in the Congress of Soviets to "all parties that have taken a decision to mobilise their members for the defence of the Soviet Republic."<sup>208</sup> This enabled the leaders of parties like the Mensheviks and the S.R.s, none of whose candidates had secured election, publicly to speak and table resolutions in opposition

<sup>196</sup> Concluding Speech at CEC (November, 1917), *ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>197</sup> Report to Seventh Party Congress (March, 1918), *C.W.*, 27, p. 135.

<sup>198</sup> Concluding Speech at Third Congress of Soviets (January, 1918), *C.W.*, 26, p. 474.

<sup>199</sup> Report to Eighth Party Congress (March, 1918), *C.W.*, 29, p. 183. Emphasis in original. cf. Gordon Leff, in his extremely superficial book, *The Tyranny of Concepts: A Critique of Marxism* (London, 1960), p. 192: "Government for the people is still not government of the people. . . . To Lenin the distinction was meaningless!"

<sup>200</sup> Lenin, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-4.

<sup>201</sup> Letter to Myasnikov, *C.W.*, 32, p. 508.

<sup>202</sup> Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Volume I, pp. 226, 224.

<sup>203</sup> "How we Should Reorganise the W.P.I." (January, 1923), *C.W.*, 33, p. 482; "Better Fewer, But Better" (March, 1923), *ibid.*, pp. 490-6. Space does not permit a discussion in the present article of the efficacy of these proposals. Their intention is, however, clear enough.

<sup>204</sup> "Purging the Party" (September, 1921), *C.W.*, 33, pp. 39-40.

<sup>205</sup> Lenin, "Better Fewer, But Better", in V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy* (Moscow, 1964), Volume 45, p. 397. (This remark is toned down in the English translation in *C.W.*, 33, p. 494.)

<sup>206</sup> Concluding Remarks at Conference (October, 1920), *C.W.*, 31, pp. 334, 337-8.

<sup>207</sup> L. Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy* (London, 1956), p. 197. This statement contrasts strangely with the thesis put forward elsewhere by Professor Schapiro that Lenin's "promises" shortly before the October Revolution of allowing free discussion were an "exercise in demagoguery" that "no one except the more naive Party members could have taken . . . very seriously." (L. Schapiro, "Putting the Lid on Leninism", *op. cit.*, p. 181.) It was, in fact, Lenin in 1918-19 who favoured 'legalising' the Mensheviks and S.R.s against some opposition within his own party!

<sup>208</sup> *Sobranie Uzakoneniye*, 1919, No. 557, p. 597. The decree specifies nine parties apart from the Bolsheviks and adds "etc." at the end of the list.

to the government.<sup>209</sup> When asked what was the point of allowing such hostile declarations, he made it clear that it was very useful that these parties' policies should be brought to the public's notice and their implications scrutinised.<sup>210</sup> Lenin preferred to debate openly with them and to defeat their arguments with the force of logic rather than the logic of force.<sup>211</sup>

At the end of his life, when effectively a one-party

<sup>209</sup> This arrangement continued up till December 1922. At the Tenth Congress of Soviets held then, there were, however, only five representatives of other parties present: 2 Poale-Zion, 1 Anarchist and 1 Caucasian Social-Federalist. (Gimpelson, *op. cit.*, p. 30.)

<sup>210</sup> Reply to Debate (December, 1920), *C.W.*, 31, p. 519.

<sup>211</sup> See A. Mikoyan in *Labour Monthly*, March 1970, pp. 131-3, for an account of such a debate between Lenin and the opposition at the Seventh Congress of Soviets in December 1919. (cf. Lenin, Concluding Speech, December 1919, *C.W.*, 30, pp. 232-242.) Comrade Mikoyan is, however, wrong in saying that this was "the last battle Lenin and the Communists fought with the Mensheviks and the remnants of right-wing opportunist parties." (p. 132.) In December 1920, at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, the Mensheviks and S.R.s tabled resolutions and attacked the government's policy and were answered by Lenin. (Lenin, Reply to Debate, *C.W.*, 31, pp. 519-524.)

system had come into being in Russia, Lenin never sought to justify it as a normal feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the contrary, we find him in 1922, in the plan of an uncompleted article, "Notes of a Publicist", raising the question of once again legalising the Mensheviks.<sup>212</sup> Even Zinoviev, who was at this time the Communist leader most keen on referring to the Party's "monopoly of legality", did not represent it in his report to the Eleventh Party Congress (1922) as a permanent characteristic of the Soviet state, but only as a "phenomenon (which) will last for a number of years more."<sup>213</sup>

Not till years after Lenin's death was a one-party system proclaimed by Stalin to be a necessary feature of Socialism. It is hoped that the present article has shown how little this theory of Stalin's—and, even more so, his brutal measures aimed at the suppression of all dissent both inside and outside the Party—can claim to be Marxist. Drawing attention to the deeply democratic nature of Marx' and Lenin's views and the pluralistic elements that they contain, it has also endeavoured to show that any elitist or paternalistic interpretation of Marxism is a distortion of its very essence.

<sup>212</sup> Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy*, Volume 44, p. 505.

<sup>213</sup> *XI. S'ezd R.K.P. (b)*, pp. 391-2.

## Editorial Comments

(Continued from page 326)

to close the discussion on "Why Did it Happen?", that is to say that we will not accept any further contributions, but will publish over the next few issues those that are still in hand.

As we go to press, we have received four contributions on the Editor's article on "Socialist Democracy". One of these, is published in this issue. We shall accept for consideration contributions on this subject up to the end of January 1970, and will continue publication of such contributions in our December and subsequent issues.

We have received, so far, two contributions

on Monty Johnstone's "Socialism, Democracy and the One-Party System". Again we shall accept contributions for consideration up to the end of January 1970, and shall start publication of such contributions in our next issue.

We hope to print shortly, the article by Bert Pearce on "The Strategy of British Revolution"; in any case as soon as it is published we shall open discussion on it, and are asking for contributions of up to 2,000 words.

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