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Editorial

LAST quarter we gave some attention to recent discussions in the Soviet Union on the aims of literature in a Socialist State. Considerations of space made it necessary to begin by printing the essential documents before proceeding to a deeper discussion of the principles involved. One cannot usefully do this while people have in their minds the notion of Government decrees on the one hand and crushed, resentful writers on the other. How far from the truth anything resembling that misunderstanding is, the documents plainly show. They reveal that not the Government, but the Cultural Committee of the Party has intervened, *after* a considerable amount of criticism and discussion, *after* the publication and wide distribution of the books in question. It intervenes to fulfil its duty to lead in culture as in all other matters. (This point needs further elaboration, of course, but it is necessary to be clear as to the claim.) There follows widespread discussion, the aims of which should be carefully noted: (1) To strengthen the already accepted principle that literature exists to serve the people. (2) To bring literature closer to the needs of the people, especially youth. (3) To recover clarity of aim, obscured by the confusion, isolation and special tasks of the war; to get back to the fundamentals of Marxist philosophy and to get rid of streaks of decadent and alien ideology. (4) To lift Soviet literature on to a higher level; to go forward with the Soviet people to new social and cultural advances, playing an indispensable rôle in that advance.

Whether we agree with or completely understand these aims, let us begin by recognising that this is the situation and not the fantastic caricature with which we are familiar.

In this issue we can proceed to a clearer understanding of the underlying principles of that situation, realising that both situation and principles are completely unlike anything existing in this country and therefore cannot be understood if that is not realised. Zhdanov's address to the Leningrad Writers restates those principles, not in order to explain them to outsiders, but to recall them to those who already accept them. Resentment has been expressed here that a "mere politician" like Zhdanov should regard it as his business to have anything to say on literary matters, or that the Communist Party should take any responsibility in cultural

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matters. This is completely to misunderstand the nature and function of the Communist Party in a Socialist society, and the quality of leadership required in it. Zhdanov speaks for a Cultural Committee consisting of leading representatives of all sections of Soviet culture. He speaks as a Marxist philosopher who has a world view embracing, not only politics and economics, but ethics, art, philosophy and every phase of human activity. The Party is not a Tammany Hall racket, but comprises the leading theoretical and practical personnel in every department of Soviet life, shouldering collectively and in its special sections (scientific, educational, technical, economic), the tasks of a people united under their leadership and increasingly united with that leadership. It has also to be remembered that the days when the Communist Party was fighting for power against the parties representing various class interests have gone. The Party is, to an increasing degree, becoming more than the political leadership of the country. Its guidance and the guidance of its sections is naturally sought and respected in every field of Soviet life and in the great tasks of building a new world, a world of new values, new people. There can be no dictatorship of a governmental machine over the cultural forces in such a society.

But the whole basis of this position is the changed structure and qualitative nature of Soviet society. We still continue to translate Soviet conditions with our own terms, representing them as they would be if the critics' pre-suppositions were correct, after translation into the terms of another and opposite civilisation, another and opposed theory has taken place. We cannot but think of society as sick, as a class society; for us "government" exists to maintain a corrupt, unjust and unstable system against pressure from the oppressed and from a minority of freedom-loving rebels. There must be a protesting persecuted minority representing truth and justice while government must represent tyranny and the evil past. In such a corrupt society the artist must at all costs wrench himself free from the dominant trends of thought and feeling, he must never allow himself to share the views of the government, or to serve its purposes. He must always assert his individuality against society; he must always be a rebel against authority.

It is too often forgotten that it is in our own society that literary dictatorship is actually found. That it is by no means complete does not contradict the fact that it exists. The Press and film monopoly, the tight control of the B.B.C., the closed doors of most publishing houses, the extreme difficulty of getting anything reflecting a

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Marxist approach published, make it unnecessary for direct government interference in this country under present conditions, though elsewhere censorship is busy enough. In a classless society there is no minority class keeping the truth from the majority by their hold on the sources of information, but there is control of such sources in the interests of society as a whole, as there must necessarily be in every society. In Russia it is exercised by the people themselves for the people; through their own leadership, the Communist Party, and against the dying remnants of the old order.

The antithesis is not between an absolutely free society where everybody is free *and able* to publish anything regardless of its truth, regardless of consequences, and a society in which control is exercised. There is and there could be no such society. Least of all is our own society of that sort. The real contrast is between control exercised by Beaverbrook, Kemsley, Rank and the B.B.C. in the interests of monopoly capitalism and control exercised by the vanguard of the working class in the interests of a classless society, with a rapidly growing effective freedom to write and publish and discuss among the masses and the only restraint exercised over a dwindling minority of anti-social elements.

We mentioned last quarter the example of Romain Rolland. He felt on this question every doubt that troubles some of our own writers; no one could have been more sensitive on the question of literary and individual integrity, more quick to rebel against constraint of authority. He felt all that many liberal-minded and even Socialist writers feel about Russia to-day. He even wrote and argued vehemently against Soviet interference with the liberty of the writer. He was eventually convinced that he was wrong. How? By long and frank discussion face to face with the Russians, who are never averse to patient argument of their case. Why? Because he came to see *that in actual fact*, in a Socialist society, for the first time real harmony between the individual and the social is attained by the reorganisation of society on Socialist lines. This profoundly alters the whole position of the individual in relation to society. He now fulfils himself by the closest identity with and service of society. Similarly the attitude of the artist completely changes. Firstly, he becomes the voice and eye through which society expresses itself and sees the world, through him society comes to self-consciousness. Secondly, he shares this function with the leading political and technical personnel, and with the government, though they carry it out in organisational ways while he does so

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on the spiritual plane. There is no writing to order here, but simply the sharing of a common task. Even in this country we felt this to some extent during the war. The best literary talent we had was eager to devote itself to descriptions of the war effort, published by the Government, helping the Government in its great task. This is infinitely more true where the social purpose of the State is in line with the deepest needs of the whole people. Here the deeper the artistic inspiration the closer it is to an expression of that purpose, reflecting on the one hand the rising consciousness of the people overcoming inevitable personal and social difficulties, and on the other the patient, often no doubt blundering, but eventually successful efforts of the leaders at every level. The most inspired writing arises not out of isolation, jealous independence, scepticism and cynicism, but out of closest contact, and loyalist support.

The Soviet novel is the best means of appreciating what is going on in this new society, of understanding the real meaning of leadership. This new world cannot be argued about to much profit; but it can be experienced on the spot; and it can be conveyed artistically in the novel. The conventional criticism of Soviet literature as inartistically tendentious is wholly false. All that this criticism really means is that no novel describing Soviet life, however objective in approach and sincere artistically, can be recognised as good art if it shows the gradual *overcoming* of difficulties. It is not enough for the Soviet novel to show the path strewn with failures, the characters revealing many human weaknesses. It is not good art unless the outcome is *defeat*, or unless judgment on aims and values is suspended, unless the whole situation is described from an utterly remote and detached standpoint.

These are the implicit standards from which Soviet writing is judged, and they are the standards of two of our main schools of literature here. Realism must depict defeat. Anguished and frightened sensitiveness must cultivate an unreal, aloof and frigid detachment or go mad. Why should Soviet art be expected to see its new world as our artists see their dying world?

If we had more artistic sincerity and spiritual insight, these novels would open a window onto the Soviet scene that would work the miracle of making us see the chess-board as red squares on black, not black squares on red.

It is in this framework of reference that Zhdanov's address must be read. Translated into the terms of our own situation, it can only be misunderstood in order to be misrepresented.

Editorial

Two recent statements sharpen this contrast between a dying and a living culture and help us to see the gulf between these two attitudes to life and art. Our most widely read British philosopher tells us that "The nearer we come to the sphere of human interests the greater the distance that separates us from objective truth"; and Henry Miller, in *The Cosmological Eye*, writes:

"I want to be read by less and less people; I have no interest in the life of the masses, nor in the intentions of the existing governments of the world. I hope and believe that the whole civilised world will be wiped out in the next hundred years or so. I believe that man can exist, and in an infinitely better, larger way, without 'civilisation.' "

In the present issue Maurice Cornforth, in his critique of Logical Positivism, exposes the falsity of all such philosophy that seeks to rise above the battle-field, out of "the sphere of human interests," and makes clear the meaning of that separation of fact and value, of life and art into which so many are driven to-day.

A. Cornu, in his article on literary decadence, brings out very well the effect on the artist of a world in decay, and thus makes clear how completely different the relation of the artist to society must be in a country where the major dilemmas of our civilisation have been overcome.

We are indebted to *La Pensée* for Cornu's important contributions on "Marxism and Ideology." Georges Teissier's two articles on "The Mechanism of Evolution" were also from the same journal and we regret the omission of an acknowledgment of our indebtedness to *La Pensée* in previous issues. Professor Haldane's appreciation and criticism of Teissier's article, unavoidably held over last quarter, appears this time.

The Marxist interpretation of history is a subject on which there is much misunderstanding. Mr. Hobsbawm's criticism of Professor Sydney Hooks' *The Hero in History* will be the first of several communications on this subject, including a review article on Dr. K. R. Popper's *The Open Society*.

The Responsibility of the Soviet Writer

BY A. A. ZHDANOV

(Excerpts from an Address to the Leningrad writers. September 20th, 1946.)

ART cannot divorce itself from the fate of the people. Recall Belinsky's famous "Letter to Gogol." Recall Dobrolyubov's critical articles, in which the social significance of literature is shown with such strength. All our Russian revolutionary democratic critical writing is permeated with mortal hatred of Tsarism and with a noble desire to struggle for the fundamental interests of the people for their education, for their culture, for their liberation from the fetters of the Tsarist régime. Militant art, fighting for the best ideals of the people, such was the conception of literature and art maintained by the great representatives of Russian literature. Chernyshevsky, who came nearer to scientific Socialism than any other Utopian Socialist, and whose writings, as was pointed out by Lenin, were "permeated with the spirit of the class struggle," taught that the aim of art consisted not only in studying life but also in teaching people to estimate various social phenomena correctly. His closest friend and companion in arms Dobrolyubov pointed out that "it is not life that follows the standards set by literature but literature that must adapt itself to the tendencies of life." He persistently propagated the principles of realism and the popular character of literature, believing that reality is the foundation of art and that it is the source of creative inspiration and that art plays an active part in social life since it moulds the social consciousness.

Dobrolyubov maintains that literature should serve society, should provide the people with answers to the most pressing questions of the time, should be abreast with the ideas of its epoch. Marxist literary criticism, which is the further development of the great traditions of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, has always been the champion of realistic, socially oriented art. Plekhanov did much to expose the idealistic, anti-scientific conception of literature and art and to defend the fundamental theses of our great Russian revolutionary-democrats, who taught us to regard literature as a powerful means of serving the people.

Gorky in his time said that the decade 1907-17 deserves to be

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called the most ignominious and most sterile decade in the history of the Russian intelligentsia. It was the time when, after the 1905 Revolution, a considerable section of the intelligentsia turned its back on the revolution, sank into a swamp of mysticism and pornography, proclaimed ideological independence as their slogan and disguised their apostasy with such fine sounding phrases as "I have burned everything that I worshipped, and now I worship everything that once I burned." It was during just that decade that there appeared literary work of such a renegade character as *The Pale Horse* by Ropshin, the works of Vinnichenko and others who deserted the revolutionary camp for that of reaction, who made haste to dethrone those lofty ideals for which the best and most advanced section of Russian society was fighting. There emerged the Symbolists, the Imagists, decadents of all possible breeds, who repudiated the people, proclaimed the principle of "Art for Art's sake," and the ideological independence of literature, who camouflaged their intellectual and moral decay by striving after form without content. They were all united by an animal fear of the forthcoming proletarian revolution. It is sufficient to recall that one of the most outstanding "ideologists" of these reactionary literary tendencies was Merejkovski, who called the approaching proletarian revolution "the Black plague," and greeted the October Revolution with an almost insane fury.

Anna Akhmatova is one of the representatives of this reactionary literary swamp. She belongs to the so-called literary group of Acmeists who in their time emerged from the ranks of the Symbolists. She is one of the standard-bearers of empty, meaningless, aristocratic salon-poetry and absolutely alien to Soviet literature. The Acmeists represented an extreme individualistic tendency in art; they preached the theory of "Art for Art's sake," or "Beauty for Beauty's sake." They did not want to know anything about the people, about its needs and interests, about social life.

Its social foundations lay in the aristocratic-bourgeois tendency of literature of that period, when the days of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie were already numbered and poets and ideologists of the ruling classes tried to shelter from unpleasant reality in the heights and mists of religious mysticism, in petty personal feelings and rummagings in their little souls. Acmeists, like Symbolists, decadents and other representatives of a decaying aristocratic-bourgeois ideology were preachers of decadence, pessimism and faith in a world after death.

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Akhmatova's poetry is very far removed from the people. This is the poetry of the top 10,000, of the old aristocratic Russia of the doomed for whom nothing was left but to sigh after the good old days. The landlords' mansions of the times of Catherine, with their old lime-tree avenues, their fountains, statues, stone arcades, hot-houses, bowers for love-making, with their dilapidated emblems over the gates; Petersburg, Tsarskoie Selo, the Pavlovsk Railway Station and other relics of the aristocratic culture, all this has sunk into the irrecoverable past. For the human relics of this remote culture, alien to the people, which have by some miracle survived till our time, nothing else is left but to withdraw into themselves and to live on illusions. "Everything has been betrayed and sold"—that is how Akhmatova writes.

Not long before the Revolution, one of the outstanding representatives of this group of Acmeists, Osip Mandelstam, dwelling on the socio-political and literary ideals of the group, wrote:

"Acmeists share with the genius of the Middle Ages their love of organism and organisation. . . . The Middle Ages defined in their own way the essential nature of man, felt it and admitted it in everyone quite independently of his merits. . . . Yes, Europe passed through a labyrinth of culture of lace-like fineness when abstract being, personal existence unadorned by anything whatsoever, was valued as something unique in itself. Hence an aristocratic intimacy is our bond of union, alien in spirit to 'equality and brotherhood' of the Great revolution. . . . The Middle Ages are dear to us, because it possessed to a high degree the feeling of limits and castes. . . . The noble mixture of rationality and mysticism and the perception of the world as a living equilibrium makes us kin to this epoch and inspires us to draw strength from the works that arose on Romance soil around 1200."

The ideals and aspirations of the "Acmeists" are enunciated in these words of Mandelstam. "Back to the Middle Ages" such is the social ideal of this aristocratic salon group. Zoshchenko's latest works are by no means accidental either. They are but the results of his literary heritage, which dates back to the 'twenties. What was Zoshchenko in the past? He was one of the organisers of a literary group, that of the so-called Serapion Brethren. What was Zoshchenko's social and political outlook in the period of the "Serapion Brethren"? Allow me to

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quote the magazine *Literaturnya Zapiski* (No. 3, 1922), in which the founders of this group enunciate their creed. Among other revelations, we find there a statement of Zoshchenko's own faith—an article entitled "About Myself and About Something Else." Not ashamed of anything or anybody, Zoshchenko strips himself naked in public and quite frankly proclaims his political and literary convictions. Listen to what he said there. "In general, it is rather difficult to be a writer. Now, a writer is required to have an ideology. What a nuisance! Do tell me, what kind of sharply defined ideology can I have if no single party wholly attracts me? From the viewpoint of party adherents, I am a man lacking in principles. Personally, I can say about myself that I am neither a Communist, nor a Social-Revolutionary, nor a Monarchist, but simply a Russian, and politically negative at that. Upon my word, I don't even know to what party, for instance, Gouckov belongs. Devil knows! I know that he is not a Bolshevik, but whether he is a Social-Revolutionary or a Constitutional Democrat I don't know, and don't want to know," and so on, and so forth.

What have you, comrades, to say about such an "ideology"?

Allow me to give another illustration of the character of the Serapion Brethren. In the same *Literaturnya Zapiski* (No. 3, 1922), another of the "Serapion Brethren," Lev Luntz, also tried to find an ideological basis for the harmful tendency, alien to Soviet literature, represented by this group. Luntz writes:

"We have met in days of terrific revolutionary tension. 'Those who are not with us are against us.' We have heard these words from Left and Right. But who do the Serapion Brethren support? Are we with the Communists or against them? Are we in favour of the Revolution or against it? Whom do we follow? We follow the hermit Serapion. The domination of social thinking over Russian literature has been too prolonged and painful. We are against utilitarianism. We are not writing for purposes of propaganda. Art is as real as life itself, and like life it exists without reason and without aim, existing only because it cannot but exist. That is the role assigned by the Serapion Brothers to art, depriving it of ideological and social significance, proclaiming that art must have no principles proclaiming 'Art for Art's sake' without reason or aim."

Why should we provide a literary platform for all these decadent literary tendencies so completely alien to us? From the

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history of Russian literature, we know that the reactionary literary tendencies to which both the Acmeists and the Symbolists belonged have more than once made attempts to launch a campaign against the great revolutionary-democratic traditions of Russian literature, against its advanced representatives, striving to deprive this literature of its high ideological and social significance, to drag it down into a swamp of ideological sterility and vulgarity. All these fashionable movements have sunk into the waters of Lethe and were relegated to the past, together with those classes whose ideology they reflected.

The Acmeists proclaimed that nothing in the world should be improved and that criticism of things as they were should not be indulged in. Why were they against improving existence? Only because they liked that old aristocratic bourgeois existence of theirs which the revolutionary people were going to upset. In October of 1917, both the ruling classes and their eulogists were thrown on the dust-heap of history. And now, twenty-nine years after the Socialist Revolution, some museum rarities are emerging again from the world of shadows to teach our youth how to live.

These works can only spread feelings of gloom, downheartedness, pessimism, the desire to escape from the important problems of social life, to step aside from the wide road of social life and activity and to shut oneself up to the tiny world of personal experiences.

It goes without saying that the preaching of such moods can exercise only a negative influence on our youth, can but poison its mind with the decadent spirit of political and ideological indifference and with despondency. And what would have been the result, had we educated our youth in a spirit of despondency and lack of faith in our cause? The result could only have been defeat in the Great War which has just concluded. It was just because the Soviet State and our Party with the help of Soviet literature had educated our youth in the spirit of courage and confidence in their strength that we first overcame the tremendous difficulties encountered in the building of socialism and then achieved victory over the Germans and the Japanese.

Leninism assigns to our literature an enormous social, reforming influence. Should our Soviet literature permit a lowering of its great educative role, this would mean a backward movement, a return to the "Stone Age."

Comrade Stalin called our writers "engineers of the human soul."

The Responsibility of the Soviet Writer

This definition has a profound meaning; it speaks of the enormous responsibility of Soviet writers for the education of the people, for the education of the Soviet youth; it repudiates any toleration of third-rate literary production.

It seems strange to some people that the Central Committee has resorted to such drastic measures in literary matters. It is unusual. People think that if the inferior is tolerated in industry or if the plan of consumers' goods production or of timber supplies has not been fulfilled, it is but natural to reprimand those responsible. But if rubbish is tolerated in the education of human souls, if rubbish is tolerated in the education of the youth, that may be put up with? But as a matter of fact, is it not a more serious guilt than the nonfulfilment of a production plan or the disruption of an industrial task? By its resolution the Central Committee intends to bring the ideological front up to the level of all the other aspects of our work.

Comrade Stalin teaches us that if we want to maintain a high standard among our leading elements, if we want to teach and educate them, we must not be afraid to offend somebody, must not be afraid of open, courageous and objective criticism based on fundamental principles. Without criticism, any organisation, literary organisations included, will become corrupt. Without criticism, any disease can get a hold, may be driven inside, and it will be more difficult to overcome it. Only bold and open criticism helps our people to improve, urges them to go forward, to overcome their shortcomings in their work. Wherever criticism is absent, corruption and stagnation set in, and progress ceases.

Comrade Stalin has repeatedly pointed out that a most important condition for our development is the need for every Soviet citizen to sum up the results of his work every day, fearlessly to check upon himself, to analyse his work, boldly to criticise his failings and mistakes, to try to find a way for achieving better results in his work and to work constantly for his improvement. This applies to writers exactly to the same extent as to all other people. Those who are afraid of criticism of their work are contemptible cowards, unworthy of the people's respect.

The Soviet people are expecting the Soviet writers to provide them with real ideological weapons, with spiritual food, which will help them in fulfilling their reconstruction plans. The Soviet people makes lofty demands on its writers; the Soviet people wants its ideological and cultural needs to be satisfied.

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During the war and under war conditions, we were unable to satisfy these vital needs. The people now want to comprehend the events that are taking place. The ideological and cultural level of the people has risen. Very often, it is not satisfied with the quality of the literary and artistic works which appear in our country. Certain men of letters and certain workers on the ideological front did not understand and do not want to understand this.

The level of the demands and of the taste of our people has risen very high; and those who do not want to or are unable to reach this level will be left behind. Literature is called upon not only to be abreast of the people's demands, but more than that: it is also obliged to develop the taste of the people, to raise its demands, to enrich it with new ideas, to lead the people forward. Those who are unable to march in step with the people and to satisfy its higher demands, to keep abreast of the tasks of developing Soviet culture, will inevitably go out of commission.

One must never forget the work in the ideological field. The spiritual wealth of our people is as important as its material wealth. It is impossible to live with one's eyes shut, without concern for the future, not only in the realm of material production, but also in the realm of ideology. Our Soviet people have matured so much that they will not swallow any spiritual food which is thrust upon them. Workers in literature and art who do not reorient themselves and are unable to satisfy the high demands of the people, may lose the people's confidence very quickly. Comrades, our Soviet literature is animated, and must be animated, by the interests of the people, by the interests of our Motherland. Literature is dear to the people; that is why the people regard all achievement, every important literary work as their own victory. That is why every successful literary work may be compared to a successful battle or to an important victory on the economic front. And *vice versa*, every failure of Soviet literature which offends the people, the Party and the State, is bitter for them. This is exactly what the Central Committee has in view. The Central Committee takes care of the people's interests, of the interests of its literature.

You have been placed in the front line of the ideological struggle. You are facing enormous tasks of international importance, and this must make every genuine Soviet writer realise even more deeply his responsibility to his people, to the State and to the Party, and above all, the importance of his duty as a writer. The bourgeois world does not like our achievements

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either at home or in the international arena. The Second World War resulted in strengthening the position of Socialism. The question of Socialism has been placed on the agenda of many countries of Europe. This is not to the liking of imperialists of various breeds. They fear Socialism. They fear our Socialist country, which serves as a model for all progressive mankind. The imperialists and their ideological servants, their men of letters and journalists, their politicians and diplomats are doing their best to slander our country, to misrepresent it, to slander Socialism. Under these conditions the task of Soviet literature is not only to give blow for blow, to rebut these hideous slanders and attacks against our Soviet culture, against Socialism, but also bravely to denounce and attack bourgeois culture, which is in a state of decay and degeneration.

However beautiful may be the outward form of the works produced by modern, fashionable bourgeois writers, film and theatre producers of Western Europe and America, they will be unable to save or to bolster that bourgeois culture, for its moral foundations are rotten and decaying, since it exists to serve private capitalist property, the egotistic, grasping interests of the upper strata of bourgeois society. The entire crowd of bourgeois writers, film and theatre producers, is trying to divert the attention of the progressive sections of society from the acute problems of current political and social struggle, to deflect it into the channels of a shallow and degraded form of literature and art, abounding in gangsters, girls from variety shows, in eulogies of adultery, and in descriptions of rogues and adventurers.

Does it befit us, representatives of progressive Soviet culture, Soviet patriots, to adopt the attitude of admirers of bourgeois culture, or the attitude of apprentices to it? Without doubt our literature, depicting a system which is more advanced than any bourgeois democratic system, a culture far higher than bourgeois culture, has the right to teach new universal morals to others. Where else can you find such a people and such a country as ours? Where can you find a people endowed with such magnificent qualities as those which our Soviet people displayed during the Great War and which they are displaying every day in their labour now that they have switched over to the peaceful development and rehabilitation of the national economy and culture? Every day lifts our people higher and higher; to-day we are not the same as we were yesterday, and to-morrow we will be different from what

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we are to-day. Now we are not the same Russians as we were before 1917. Russia is not the same, and our character is not the same. We have changed, and we have matured, step by step with those great transformations which have radically changed our country.

The task of every conscientious Soviet writer is to show all those new high qualities of the Soviet people, to show our people, not only their to-day, but to give them a glimpse of their to-morrow, to lighten their forward path as with a searchlight—such is the task of every Soviet writer of good faith. The writer must not trail behind events; his duty is to march in the front ranks of the people and show the people the path of their development. Guided by the method of Socialist realism, conscientiously and attentively studying our real life, striving to penetrate ever more deeply into the essence of the processes of our development, the writer must educate the people and arm them ideologically. By selecting the best qualities and feelings of the Soviet people, by showing them what the future can be, we must at the same time show our people what they should not be, we must wipe out the survivals of the past, survivals which hinder the Soviet people on their way forward. The Soviet writers must help the people, the State and the Party to teach our youths to be courageous, to be confident in their strength, not to fear any difficulties.

However hard the bourgeois politicians and men of letters may try to hide from their people the truth regarding the achievements of the Soviet system and of Soviet culture, however hard they may try to create an iron curtain past which it is impossible for the truth about the Soviet Union to penetrate abroad, however hard they may try to minimise the actual development and scope of Soviet culture, all these attempts are doomed to failure.

Soviet writers and everyone else who works in the field of ideology are now in the front line, since under the condition of peaceful development the tasks of the ideological front, and first of all those of literature, do not lose, but on the contrary, gain in importance. The people, the State, the Party do not want literature to turn its back on modern times, but want it to take an active part in all aspects of Soviet life.

Soviet Artists discuss a "Modern Quarterly" Article

BY JACK CHEN

I WAS intensely interested in the article on Soviet art by F. D. Klingender which appeared in the first number of the MODERN QUARTERLY and the discussion which subsequently arose. There

were several points that I wanted to comment on immediately, but there were others which I felt uncertain about. I wanted to speak to our Soviet artist colleagues first, and so I reserved a



eral points wanted to on immediate but there others uncertain felt that I to speak Soviet leagues them first, bided my mentally place for

myself in some future issue. Now I have been fortunate enough to have had several talks with Soviet artists, not only on the specific points that were raised in that discussion, but also on the whole question of present-day trends in Soviet art. I translated Mr. Klingender's article as well as relevant passages in subsequent letters, and our Soviet friends read these through with interest.

Our conversations were happily rather rambling affairs in unofficial and informal surroundings, so it was impossible to take a stenographic account of them, but I did take notes of the most important points. I spoke with the three Kukryniksi. They have so grown together that they even talk as a team. Not infrequently a line of thought initiated by Sokolov was continued and enlarged upon by Kuprianov, with inspired interpolations by Krylov. They carry their ripe age of one hundred and thirty years with all the buoyancy and enthusiasm of youth. I had an enlightening talk with my former teacher Sergei Gerasimov, Chairman of the Moscow Union of Soviet Artists, with a poster artist who worked in the *Tass Window* studio during the war, with former fellow students of the

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Moscow art schools and with the sculptor, Sergei Mikhailovitch Orlov, who now, at thirty-five, is at the height of his career, producing china figures and groups that are inspired images of Russian folk-lore. It turns out that our Soviet friends are more or less familiar with the main ideas advanced both in Mr. Klingender's article and in the letters criticising points in that article. Indeed when I mentioned the fact that "some critics of Soviet art say that because the Soviet art public is now composed mainly of workers and peasants . . ." Gerasimov completed the phrase for me: ". . . therefore there is a predominance of naturalism or low standards of taste in Soviet art!" I need hardly add that phrases like this were the stock-in-trade of opponents of Socialist Realism among the old bourgeois intelligentsia.

Gerasimov stressed that Soviet artists are probably their own severest critics, that they by no means think that they can afford to be complacent. Indeed, I have heard that there was some very hard hitting at the last plenum of the Organisational Committee of the All-Union Artists' Congress, of which Alexander Gerasimov is Chairman, and I can vouch for it that the criticism voiced at such meetings is extremely frank. The naturalism and slap-dash work of some leading personalities in the art world were the targets of some acid comment. After these Moscow talks, however, I have felt that in this whole discussion on Soviet art (indeed, in most discussions on Soviet life to-day) many, both among the critics and apologists, approach the questions at issue rather from the point of view of what they want to find, based on rather abstract theories of Socialist development, and are then very disappointed because the Soviet Union does not come up to their own particular expectations. Life is always very much more complex than theorists usually make allowance for.

For instance, P. C. Rudall (unfortunately, he bases his conclusions inadequately on the reproductions in Loukomski's *Modern Russian Painting*) finds it difficult to see where the painting of Tsarist Russia ended and Soviet painting began. A complete review of Russian art from 1840 to 1940 will show, however, not only the gradual emergence of Russian bourgeois realism from the soil of Tsarist Russian art, but also the revolutionary "break" that came with the October Revolution. Venetianov (1780-1849) with his "Girl in a Kerchief" (1830) or "Peasant Girl with a Scythe and Rake" (1820) and other paintings in the Russian Museum at Leningrad, introduced an entirely new tendency

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that can only be described as realist, reflecting the emergence of a realist ideology of the Russian bourgeoisie, that struggled for dominance over the idealised aristocratic art of the Tsarist Academy.

In Russian art, it is the painting of the *Peredvizhniki*, the travelling exhibitions of the 1860's, that corresponds to the Victorian realist tendencies typified by Ford Madox Brown. The realism of the *Peredvizhniki* took on its characteristic of social protest as a result of the special "underprivileged" position of the Russian bourgeoisie under the Tsarist autocracy. The Russian bourgeoisie felt itself thwarted, politically frustrated by the feudal conditions maintaining at that time. Its young progressive intellectuals, like Makovski, Myasoyedov, Perov, were populist-humanists. They pictorialised their protest in carefully detailed scenes from everyday Russian life. During the years of the political reaction in the 1880's, these artists withdrew from their revolutionary position. Their formerly denunciatory canvases became innocuous genre scenes, anecdotes (Perov's "Fisherman"). Surikov and Repin carried on with large historical canvases. Surikov particularly displayed an intense interest in Russian history, costume and the problem of the individual and the mass in historic movements. Such was the first appearance of realism in Russian painting. The influence of the *Peredvizhniki* is still a living force in Russian art particularly in the treatment of "literary" genre and historical subjects. The second "neo-realist" trend was introduced by Valentin Serov (1865-1911). His "Girl with Peaches" in the Tretyakov Gallery is an outstanding achievement of late Russian bourgeois realism in paint. But Serov never attempted the epic on canvas. His themes were the same as those of the salon painters of Paris. P. C. Rudall considers that there was "no consciousness of the sharp break in Russian art traditions with the revolution as Mr. Klingender suggests there should be." But there was—a really shattering break from which Russian art is suffering even to-day. The first years in art after October were dominated by the "Left": the futurists, constructivists, suprematists, the abstract painters, and the "Cezannists." Mayakovsky, Tatlin, Malevich, the artists of the Jack of Diamonds Group. The break with the past was bitter. Not only was the art of the Tsarist Academy repudiated, but also the "literary" art of the *Peredvizhniki*. Even the study of anatomy was exiled from the art schools. This conscious break with the bourgeois realist tradition and with Tsarist feudal art

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lasted from 1918 till 1924. As a result, a whole generation of artists left the art schools without the basic equipment for realistic painting. Some of them, like Deineka, Pimenov, Williams, Tishler, the Kukryniksi, made up for this by hard work on their own and by brilliant improvisation. Their original individual solutions to artistic problems, their approximations to realist vision at this period enjoyed considerable success among the intelligentsia of the Western countries, as well as with Soviet society, but, as I have tried to show in my book, *Soviet Art and Artists*, by the 1930's these artists felt the need for a deeper approach to reality. This was the "social demand" of the time. The "Left" was in turn subjected to devastating criticism. A new phase in Soviet art began in 1935 with a reaction against the formalism of the "Left" and in fierce criticism of the photo-naturalism of the "Right." But though the "break" between the Tsarist Academicians and *Peredvizhniki* and the "Left" formalists seems to be the most noticeable artistic break of this time, this was not the revolutionary change to a new quality, a new style of painting. "Left" formalism in Russia was the artistic expression of anarchic disintegrating bourgeois elements in Russian society, the "fellow-travellers" of the Revolution. The real revolutionary break came with the production of pictures with a new content on Soviet themes in a realist tradition: Deineka's "Defence of Petrograd," Johanson's "Interrogation of Communists," Gerasimov's "Partisan's Oath," etc. It was at this stage that I left the Soviet Union for work and travel in China and the West to return to Moscow after an absence of nine years. What is the position of Soviet art now?

The Soviet artists with whom I spoke all stressed the same point: that the exhibition of Soviet graphic art (collected, by the way, under considerable wartime difficulties) represented a very wide range of trends. A similarly representative exhibition of British art, for instance, would obviously include a disproportionately large number of Academic artists (who predominate in numbers if not in quality or significance). The Soviet Academy show was undoubtedly overburdened with the work of many artists who play an important role in the general production of artistic material, but whose significance should not be overestimated. The choice of a single artist to represent the most vital and significant tendency in modern Soviet painting is therefore no easy one. Pakhomov was and still is one of those artists who show vitality and initiative. Even at forty-six there is still an extraordinary youthfulness in

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his approach to life. Hitherto he contented himself with producing extremely charming pictures of Soviet children. This was well within the compass of his considerable but by no means deep talent. In his latest large lithographs he has essayed larger compositions than before and to a certain extent succeeded in imbuing them with life. But at the moment I doubt if any one artist can be taken as an exemplar of all Soviet art to-day. Pakhomov does indeed demonstrate the current characteristic trend towards a wider and fuller grasp of life expressed in realistic idiom, but that is not enough. Who should we choose to represent England, say, in similar circumstances? It is clear, as the Kukryniksi pointed out, that it would be more reasonable to take a representative group. I would suggest the Kukryniksi themselves, Sergei Gerasimov, Soifertis (whose Sevastopol sketches were among the best things produced by any artist anywhere during the past war), Pakhomov, Deineka, Dmitri Shmarinov. . . . When such a group is considered, the analogy with Victorian art falls completely to the ground. And, anyway, it is historically inaccurate.

All of the artists represented in the exhibition, said the Kukryniksi, have their "public." It is when you consider these "publics," and these varied individual styles of the artists, that you get an answer to the main points posed in Klingender's article and the supplementary correspondence.

"The present form of pictorial narrative in Soviet art corresponds to the present level of appreciation among the majority of Soviet people," writes Klingender. This is somewhat gratuitously taken as a form of disparagement by Jack Lindsay, as a statement of complacency, as if "pictorial narrative in art" is inherently a low form of art. Yes, Pakhomov's unsophisticated illustrations are enjoyed both by the peasants and intellectuals. (I too enjoy them, though I think his girls on the top of the Winter Palace is not only unsophisticated, but poor composition, poor selection of material and poor art.) But Soifertis' sketches, that combine "sophistication" with simplicity, keenness of vision and feeling with entirely adequate form, have a wide public too and appear in the same mass journals as Pakhomov's. I do not need to characterise the Kukryniksi's work. This enjoys a popularity far beyond the borders of the U.S.S.R. It enjoys the confidence and praise of *Pravda*, of Stalin, of the man in the street and every artist of repute in or outside the Soviet Union. I think that this disposes of the suggestion that "only such art as the [Pakhomov]

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lithographs can affect Soviet citizens at the present stage of their development."

Jack Lindsay says: "Much of the culture of the U.S.S.R. is still dominated by the prestige values of displaced middle-class levels." My own experience of Soviet art confirms this. Many instances can be cited, but it would indeed be a miracle if it were not so. To transform the economic basis of society is relatively simple once power has been taken by the proletariat, but the eradication of the last vestiges of a previously dominant ideology in the minds of the people is a far more radical process. And, of course, this is particularly true in art. The artists with whom I spoke were all keenly conscious of the need for struggle here, but they were just as insistent that they must find their own path to creation of a Socialist art by a critical analysis both of Western formalism and "Russian" naturalism. Naturalism is in no better repute among them than it is among progressive English artists. It is not denied that there is a body of art work here that is naturalistic; that there are artists who allow themselves to be carried away by the naturalism that undoubtedly has its devotees. From my own knowledge, I know that in the awarding of contracts for portraits by institutions or factory committees, it often happens, as one might expect, that the persons in charge are more interested in receiving a likeness (naturalism) than a work of art. Some artists, instead of fighting for their own artistic solution of the problem of portraiture, take the easy path of giving the buyer what he wants. The walls of Moscow, like those of the Royal Academy and many an English, French or American town council, are littered with these coloured photographs. Not every Soviet artist is a *Soviet* artist, a Socialist realist. Not every Soviet factory committee ordering a portrait of their best Stakhanovite is composed of Marxist art critics. But if anybody is to blame here, it is the artists themselves. They have often raised this problem at their meetings. But so enormous is the demand for art work and portraits of favourite leading figures that, though "self-criticism" is often scathing, large amounts of poor quality painting is still allowed to pass through the sale-rooms of their co-operatives and selling agencies.

The Kukryniksi warmly contested the idea that the peasant public is inherently prone to naturalism. Certainly, a characteristic feature of Soviet culture to-day is the vitality of the old folk-crafts and arts which can least of all be accused of naturalism.

It seems to me that Soviet graphic art has consistently

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maintained its progressive and leading role in Soviet culture and that it is extremely unjust to accuse its practitioners of "passive acceptance of low levels in art." No one here would deny that there is always room for improvement, but even a cursory review of Soviet illustrations, posters and cartoons is a challenge to the artists of any country.

Soviet oil painting, however, is another story. I must say at once that I was very much disappointed when I saw the work at the present All-Union Art Exhibition in the Tretyakov Gallery, the Artists' Co-operative and the Park of Culture and Rest. Here indeed, "Soviet form still seems inadequate to express the marvellous new content of Socialism." But I found no complacency among Soviet artists on this score.

They are fully conscious of the high achievement that is expected of Soviet artists. But, while sanely listing their successes, they do ask that account be taken of the serious difficulties with which the artist here is faced—difficulties which impatient sympathisers abroad tend to ignore. They do not speak of material difficulties. Russians, like Britishers, keep their grumbles to themselves. But though the artist here enjoys conditions for creative work that can well be envied by us abroad in the sphere of selling, exhibitions, etc., there is a serious lack of studio space and a shortage of art materials that was, and is, far more serious than any we faced in London. They have in mind a more fundamental difficulty—the loss of a realist tradition.

There is no doubt that the aim the Russian artists of this generation are setting themselves—the achievement of a Socialist realism—is sound. This is the underlying tendency of the times that will draw art once again on to the rails of the great tradition—towards what Jack Lindsay calls "a creative relation to life," an "integrated art sense." They are quite conscious that this needs a thorough knowledge of technique, of anatomy, perspective—all the elements of art that were the groundwork of the Renaissance, of the art of Michelangelo and Rembrandt plus the elements of modern art that have enriched the vocabulary of artists, and all this inspired by a Socialist ideology and "a feeling of pride and elation, the self-confidence of ordinary working people who have mastered their own destiny." It is a tall order. Gerasimov scratched his forehead thoughtfully as he described what he sought in art. He nodded when I said: "That's a hard road!" He turned the pages of the Penguin reproductions of Graham Sutherland, Paul Nash,

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Henry Moore that I had brought, and paused over those pictures that interested him—Nash's "Totes Meer" and Sutherland's "Bombed East End houses." But it was clear that he felt that these could help but little along that hard road. While many Western artists are experimenting and seeking to advance along the paths of expressionism, surrealism, romanticism, clambering over and through the "isms" of the last thirty years, he is endeavouring to forge his own idiom of realistic expression, to blaze as much of the trail towards Socialist realism as he is able. Gerasimov stressed that in his opinion most of the serious artists of the U.S.S.R. have sincerely and consciously taken this path of development. He also stressed that there must not be a narrow interpretation of "Socialist realism." The painters, like the writers, "do not reject any form that is able to express the content they wish to propagate," as Mr. Ilberg phrases it in his letter.

The Kukryniksi enlarged on these ideas to point out the desire of their public—and their own desire—to pictorialise outstanding historical events of the present epoch. It was in this spirit that they painted their large picture of the German capitulation that is now hanging in the All-Union Art Exhibition in Moscow and will later be taken to other towns.

A glance at the present production of Soviet painters shows that these ideas are indeed a dominant trend in Soviet art, while the forms of approach are characteristically Russian. As the Kukryniksi pointed out, the very technique of realistic oil painting has been lost, not only in the West, but in the U.S.S.R., in addition to the sharp break in tradition caused by the short but complete dominance of the "Left" formalists in the early 1920's. Now, besides the desire to master again the idiom of realist painting, there is a parallel interest in the Russian cultural heritage. These two tendencies have united to create a renewed interest in the Russian realists of the 1860's and the historical genres of the 1880's. The influence of these painters is very noticeable in the large size of canvases, in the anecdotal subject matter and the theatrical nature of the compositions. There have been some undoubted successes. But the problems have been, I think, beyond the range of ability of the average artist of to-day. Furthermore, many artists, from whom because of their earlier promise we have come to expect so much, have, instead of seeking a deeper understanding of reality and an idiom really adequate to pictorialise it, seemingly been satisfied with the exposition of the purely external



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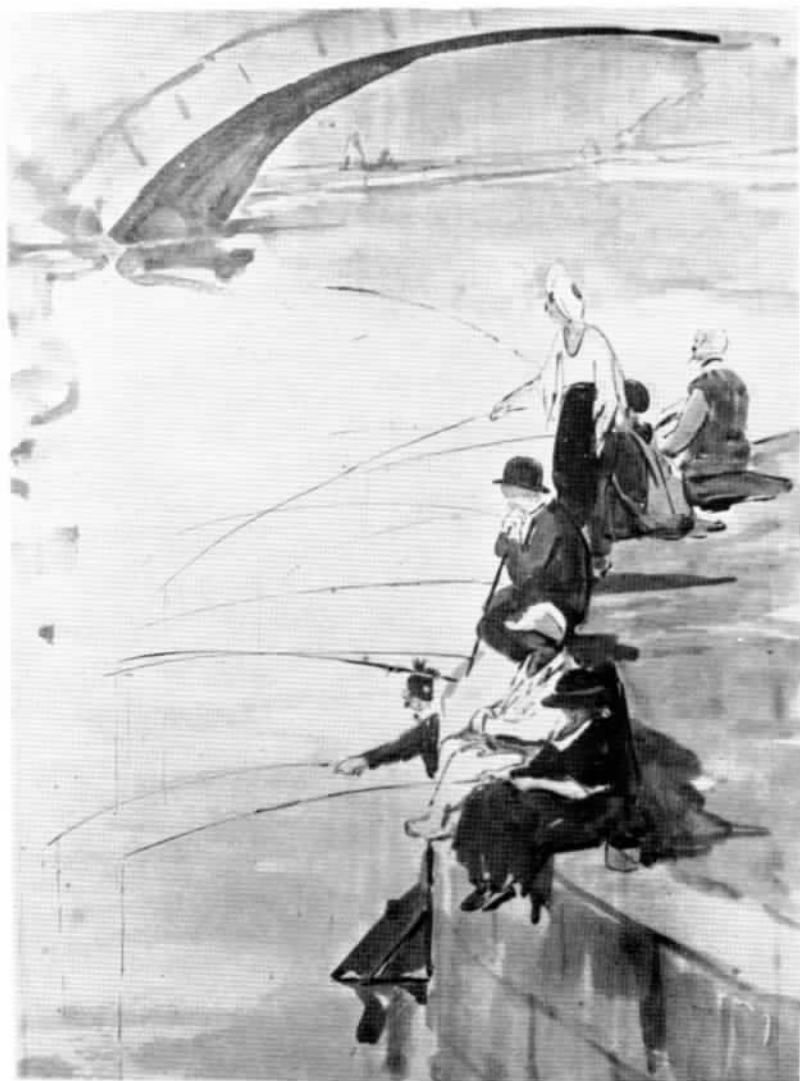
A. Laptev



GIRL WITH PEACHES

Painting by Serov

*From "A HISTORY OF MODERN RUSSIAN PAINTING"
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ON THE SPREE

Painting by L. Soifertis



GORKI ON THE VOLGA

Painting by V. Tsiplakov

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attributes of reality, and this often in a fashion that showed an astonishing lack of responsibility. This is particularly true of many portraits that I saw. Instead of presenting us with a deep insight into the character of their sitters—marshals of the Soviet Union, leaders of the people, Stakhanovites, intellectuals of the working people—we are given a purely superficial representation of external attributes: the texture of materials, the glitter of medals, merely formal likenesses and sometimes not even that, as in Alexander Gerasimov's picture of the Teheran Conference, and Gerasimov is an accomplished painter with much fine work to his credit. There is also a disquieting similarity of treatment in the great historic theme paintings: the multicoloured masses of opposing figures, the frequent introduction of children to fill up the awkward lower planes of the picture, the accumulation of often irrelevant detail. A large canvas does not make a big picture. It does put a greater responsibility on the artist. I must add that these criticisms are my own, but similar strictures have, I understand, been vigorously voiced at open artists' meetings. I also feel that the standard set for the award of the famous Stalin Prizes has not been high enough.

Sergei Gerasimov is one of those who are fully conscious of the difficult task the Soviet artists have set themselves, but he was optimistic that successes would be achieved. As a teacher, he has endeavoured to give the younger generation those opportunities that he feels he himself lacked: a good schooling in the fundamental disciplines of art.

Nineteen young the first time at the show. He particularly Tsiplakov ("Gorki on promising young niksi ended their quotation from Gorki: ment and people give except the right to "and that applies to



graduates exhibit for present All-Union mentioned Victor the Volga") as a painter. The Kukry-comments with a "The Soviet Govern-the writer everything write badly!" adding: us artists too!"

Moscow.

June, 1946.

A Materialist Evaluation of Logical Positivism

BY MAURICE CORNFORTH

THE philosophy known as "logical positivism" was gaining considerable influence before the war. It was very positive as to its claims to be *the* philosophy—to have provided a logical method whereby *all* the problems of philosophy could be solved. It was strongly organised internationally as a "school," with its adherents working in an organised way in Europe and America and holding international philosophic conferences.

Will the logical positivists succeed in reorganising their scattered forces now the war is over? Will logical positivism spread again and regain its pre-war influence? At all events, the views of this school—or at least hang-overs of the views of this school—are still very influential, particularly among scientists.

It must be admitted that the philosophy of logical positivism confers certain advantages upon its adherents. Whatever philosophical question may be raised, the logical positivist has always an answer ready for it—he explains that the question rests upon a misunderstanding of "the logic of language."

In relation to many contemporary controversies concerning which philosophical ideas are invoked, this characteristic seems to place logical positivism on a plane of its own, high above the struggle. For example, not a little paper and ink is being expended at the present time in the assertion of "Western values" and "Western ideals" against the evils of materialistic Marxism. From across the Channel, we hear of all sorts of "new" forms of idealism—of the "spiritual revolution" and of "existentialist dialectic." Nearer home, Professor Joad continues to expound the eternal truths of morality and the independence of spirit from matter, warning all and sundry to beware of the evils of the flesh. But logical positivism regards all these manifestations with a sophisticated disdain. All such talk, it assures us, consists merely of emotive noises with no intelligible meaning attached. As regards Marxism, it admonishes Marxists that they are old-fashioned, dogmatic and metaphysical.

According to Lenin, "scarcely a single contemporary professor of philosophy can be found who is not directly or indirectly engaged in refuting materialism." "It is impossible," he said, "not to see

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the struggle of parties in philosophy, a struggle which in the last analysis reflects the tendencies and ideology of the antagonistic classes in modern society."

Logical positivism says that while that may have been true when Lenin wrote it, in the year 1908, it is true no longer. We are invited to rise above this struggle, and to reach a new plane of purely scientific philosophy. And on this plane we will understand how all the "contending parties" have got themselves involved in verbal confusions, arising from their misunderstandings of "the logic of language."

Science versus "Metaphysics"

It is a primary characteristic of logical positivism that it vehemently asserts the claims of empirical or natural science to be the sole method of obtaining reliable knowledge. Faith, intuition or abstract reasoning are often counterposed to empirical scientific methods of thought: logical positivism rejects them. It will have science, and science alone.

Logical positivists particularly stress the rejection of anything tainted with what they call "metaphysics." The exact meaning of this word is sometimes obscure. But in general they seem to characterise as "metaphysical" any statement which cannot be empirically verified. "Scientific" statements can be empirically verified, "metaphysical" statements cannot.

A good example of a "metaphysical" statement would be the well-known theory of Leibniz, to the effect that God created the world as "the best of all possible worlds." For there is no way of verifying such a statement by experience or observation. Another example is to be found on p. 15 of Mr. Victor Gollancz's *Our Threatened Values*: "The ideal society is one of fully developed personalities, freely co-operating, but each one of them with an inner core of unassailable loneliness." For Mr. Gollancz suggests no way of verifying this statement.

The logical positivists insist that all such "metaphysical," as distinct from "scientific," statements must be rejected. The only reliable statements are scientific statements, empirically verified by observation and scientific method.

Anyone who is neither a mystic, a theologian nor an idealist will probably agree with the logical positivists in this. Marxists will certainly agree.

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But what should be noted is that already in this distinction between science and metaphysics attention has been fixed entirely upon the nature of different *statements*—which “statements” are reliable and which are not, which “statements” are scientific and which are metaphysical, and so on. In other words, we are already talking, not about the world in which we live and about our life in it and the problems of life, but about *statements*.

Now, a statement is a combination of words, expressed in a language. And the peculiarity of logical positivism is that it directs its whole attention upon language—upon words and the way words can be put together to make significant statements—rather than upon the world. It deals with the problems of language rather than with the problems of reality, with the problems of putting words together rather than with the problems of life.

I think it must certainly be admitted and agreed that what logical positivism calls “the logic of language” has its importance, and that a great many scientific and philosophical disputes have been complicated by confusions about language, so that an understanding of “the logic of language” is necessary for clearing up such disputes and is an aid towards reaching clear and useful scientific formulations. This has in fact been recognised by many materialist philosophers, beginning with Thomas Hobbes, and is certainly recognised by Marxism. Where the logical positivists seem to go wrong is that they forget that the purpose of language is to communicate useful information about the world, and that its “logic” cannot be disconnected from that purpose.

“Philosophy,” “Logic,” “Analysis of Language”

Having said that the only reliable sort of statements are scientific as distinct from metaphysical statements, the logical positivists go on to consider the role, if any, of *philosophy*, which they carefully distinguish from science.

It has often been remarked that philosophers are peculiarly prone to contradict one another. So are scientists, but then scientists can usually agree upon some method to determine which of rival scientific theories is the right one. Difficulties in philosophy, on the other hand, have arisen historically through different philosophers making contradictory statements without having been able to come to any decision as to which was right, or even to any agreement as to a possible method for reaching such a decision.

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Thus one philosopher says that the world was created by God, while another says it was never created at all. One philosopher says that matter does not exist and that only thoughts and sensations are real, while another says that nothing exists except matter and that consciousness is merely a by-product of certain material processes.

All these sorts of difficulties and contradictions, say the logical positivists, arise from confusions about *language*.

Logical positivism does not examine the material historical conditions under which such divergent philosophies have arisen. It sees the whole trouble as originating from misunderstandings about the use of language. Nor will it admit that one philosophy may be interpreting the world rightly, while another is on the wrong track. All alike are confused about the use of language. They are not misunderstanding the nature of the world; they are misunderstanding the nature of language. Their essential mistake consists in asking questions which there is no way of answering: such questions are wrongly put, they are nonsensical, meaningless. And so philosophers are not so much making statements which may be true or false as making *nonsensical* statements. Their "metaphysical" views are based on the misuse of language, and hence become in the strict sense meaningless.

Here the use of the word "metaphysics" gets a new twist. A "metaphysical" statement, as a non-empirical statement, is a meaningless statement, i.e. in the strict sense not a statement at all. Most philosophical statements are meaningless.

From this follows the logical positivist definition of the proper subject-matter of philosophy. To paraphrase Pope, it may be said that "The proper study of philosophers is words." "In the present theory," says the logical positivist, von Neurath, "we always remain within the realm of *speech-thinking*." Philosophy has nothing to do with determining the nature of the real world and our place in it. Philosophy should not aim at interpreting the world—still less, therefore, at changing it. It should be exclusively concerned with "the analysis of language," and in particular with the analysis of the language of science.

Rudolf Carnap, the principal founder and exponent of logical positivism, equates philosophy with "logic," and he equates "logic" with "analysis of language." In his little book entitled *The Unity of Science*, he writes: "A philosophical, i.e. a logical, investigation must be an analysis of language." And in a longer

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work, *Logical Syntax*, he states that "Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science—that is to say, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences; for the logic of science is nothing else than the logical syntax of the language of science."

Hence the logical positivists insist that all philosophical statements—that is, all statements other than factual and scientific statements—must be expressed as statements about words or about language—as distinct from statements about things, about the world.

As I said, one can agree with Carnap that an "analysis of language" is often useful. For example, contemporary physics often seems uncertain about what one is tempted to refer to as "the nature of space": sometimes it speaks of space as Euclidean, sometimes as non-Euclidean. And in this connection it may well be helpful to ask, not "*Is* space Euclidean or non-Euclidean?" but rather: "Under what circumstances is it convenient to use a Euclidean geometrical 'language' in formulating spatial relations, and in what circumstances a non-Euclidean 'language'?" For the difference between a theory which makes use of Euclidean geometry and one which makes use of a non-Euclidean geometry may be at least partly reducible to a difference in language, derived, not from rival views about "the nature space," but from different methods of measuring space, and of formulating the results of such measurements.

But in such cases, whatever "language" is used, one is evidently speaking about the same world. And to understand the principles of language and of "logical syntax" one must treat language as a means of formulating propositions about the world. This surely entails some view as to (a) what sort of a world it is, and (b) what is involved in the process of gaining scientific knowledge about the world and formulating the results of that knowledge.

But such a view is just what logical positivists will not allow. They say it is "metaphysical." They want to study language in the abstract, for they insist that to talk of the relations of language with what is expressed in language—that is, to talk about the relations of thought with things—leads to questions that cannot be answered. Yet at the same time it is hard to see how one can talk sense about the use of language without talking about the way language is used. And the way language is used certainly involves a relationship between the thinking mind and the objective world. It is just this relation that has traditionally been the main problem

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of philosophy. But logical positivism says it is "metaphysics" to discuss it.

Thus the "anti-metaphysical" programme of logical positivism begins to involve itself in difficulties. And, as we shall see, this programme proves to be a very barren one.

Materialism and Idealism

One of the attractions that logical positivism certainly has for many scientifically-minded people is that it appears to be a powerful de-bunking agent. In particular, it appears to attack all forms of traditional idealism, and to make short work of any form of theology.

Carnap himself makes no bones about this, and goes so far as to say that logical positivism is a form of materialism. "Our approach has often been termed positivist," he writes in *The Unity of Science*. "It might equally well be termed materialist. No objection can be made to such a title, provided that the distinction between the older form of materialism and Methodical Materialism—the same theory in a purified form—is not neglected." Thus Carnap is a materialist; but a materialist, be it noted, of a "purified" sort, a "methodical" materialist.

The essence of the logical positivist criticism of traditional forms of idealism and of theology is to say that they represent a misuse of language and are all nonsense—meaningless. Thus it is alleged that such statements as that God created the world, or again such statements as that of Berkeley when he said, "All those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world have not any subsistence without a mind," are to be criticised by pointing out that no exact meaning can be attached to them, and that they cannot be empirically verified.

Yet, in reality, to say that it is "nonsense" is no real weapon against idealism and theology.

This type of criticism is merely an elaboration of nineteenth-century agnosticism. The agnostics said that the existence of God, the ultimate nature of reality, and so on, could not be known because such questions lay outside the bounds of empirical knowledge. The logical positivist criticism is nothing but a repetition of this, with the addition that statements which refer beyond the bounds of empirical knowledge are meaningless. None the less, this whole line of criticism fails to satisfy and falls short—because

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it leaves an easy way open for those who would claim that "beyond" empirical knowledge lies the field of *faith* and *intuition*.

The real case against idealism and theology can only be developed from the standpoint of a consistent materialism—a standpoint that involves far more than a doctrine about words. This standpoint insists first and foremost that the external material world exists, independent of any consciousness, and is reflected in our consciousness; that matter is prior to mind, being is prior to consciousness; and that therefore ideas and thoughts can be shown to have their origin in material conditions. It definitely deals with *things* and not words, with *the material conditions that give rise to thoughts* and not with thoughts in the abstract. And from this basis, materialism can show: (1) the material and historical conditions which give rise to religious ideology and idealism; and (2) that this whole ideology is without rational foundation.

But further. When traditional idealism and theology is criticised on the grounds that it is "nonsense," it turns out that this "nonsense" criticism is directed also, and indeed primarily, against materialism.

"Which is prior," ask the materialists, "matter or mind?" For logical positivism this question is a "nonsense question." And so if the logical positivists say that idealism is "nonsense," they say that materialism is "nonsense" too. They set out to eradicate all "meaningless" "metaphysical" statements; but one of the chief "metaphysical illusions" they attempt to destroy is that of the real existence of the material world. "We make no assertions," said Carnap, "as to whether the given (i.e. sensation) is real and the physical world appearance, or vice versa; for . . . such assertions belong to the class of unverifiable pseudo-statements."

But in this way logical positivism in actual fact protects and screens idealism by turning upon its only real opponent—materialism.

In attacking certain forerunners of the logical positivists,—whose philosophy he called "Empirio-Criticism"—Lenin stated that such a philosophy was in fact nothing but a shield and screen for "fideism." This is equally true to-day of logical positivism. The outcome of what people do often turns out to be the opposite of what they intend. The logical positivists certainly in no wise intended to act as stooges for *reactionary* tendencies of thought. But yet that is just what they have been doing. Under cover of championing science and of preaching a "methodical materialism,"

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they have been busily opposing materialism, trying to discredit it and to make out that it is out-of-date metaphysical nonsense; and thereby they in effect bring both aid and comfort to the reactionary opponents of materialism.

Engels, as is well known, put forward a very different view about the nature and problems of philosophy from that advocated by logical positivists. He did not think that the main question of philosophy was the question of the analysis of language. "The great basic question of all philosophy," he said, "... is that concerning the relation of thinking and being." And he went on to make a division of philosophical tendencies into two trends, idealism and materialism. "The answers which philosophers have given to this question split them into two camps. Those who assert the primacy of spirit to nature ... comprise the camp of idealism. The others, who regard nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism" (Engels, *Feuerbach*, Chapter 2). This seems clear, and its truth can be verified by the study of the history of philosophy. But the logical positivists would say that it is confused and out of date.

Engels himself showed in the Introduction to his *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, and Lenin developed the point in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, that modern idealism tends to take the form of saying, not merely that spirit is prior to nature (e.g. that God created the world), but that nature, the material world, does not really exist at all. According to most modern forms of idealism, the material world does not exist; all that exists is our own thoughts and sensations. Thus to-day the controversy between materialism and idealism tends largely to centre round the controversy as to whether the material world exists at all, external to our consciousness. Materialists say it does exist, idealists say it doesn't.

Logical positivism, then, steps in and makes very short work of this whole controversy. It is just a controversy about words, say the logical positivists, and the idea that there is some kind of contradiction between materialism and idealism rests simply on a misunderstanding of the logic of language.

Thus Carnap puts the whole issue like this: "Suppose that a positivist (idealist) maintains the thesis, 'A thing is a complex of sense-data,' and a realist (materialist) the thesis, 'A thing is a complex of atoms.' Then an endless dispute will arise over what a thing 'really is.' " But the solution of this dispute is to understand

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that in fact the idealist is just using a "sense-datum language," while the materialist prefers to use a "physical object language." Each can use whichever language he prefers, for it makes no essential difference. Thus: "The controversy between positivism (idealism) and realism (materialism) is an idle dispute about pseudo-theses."

Science and Objective Truth

It is interesting to trace some of the consequences of this point of view when it is applied to the main goal of logical positivism, "the logical analysis of science."

Consider the question allegedly asked by Pontius Pilate: "What is truth?" He would not stay for an answer. But the materialist answer is that truth consists in the correspondence of thoughts with objective fact, a correspondence tested in experience and practice. But obviously logical positivism will not accept such an answer. For it insists that we consider only *statements*, and not the relations between statements and *facts*: to talk about the relations between statements and facts is "metaphysics." Hence, for the logical positivist, the truth of a statement does not consist in its correspondence with facts, *but in its correspondence, or rather coherence, with other statements*. The truth of a statement is tested by how far it agrees with other statements, already accepted. Thus there is no objective truth.

All this now produces truly remarkable results when it is applied to science, in the "logical analysis of science." True to its method, logical positivism is not interested in what science says, but in how it says it. It is not interested in the history, significance or applications of science, but it treats science simply as a system of "scientific statements." Carnap insists that "logical analysis" may refer "only to linguistic forms," and must disregard "sense, content and meaning."

There results, then, what is in essentials a quite simple account of science. Science consists in a system of scientific statements, which are derived by a system of linguistic rules and conventions from certain basic statements, which are called "*protocols*." The "protocols" express what in ordinary language might be called the data of science.

Thus, for instance, "the protocol" of the science of physics consists in the readings taken off various instruments in the

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physical laboratories—"pointer-readings" and so on. From this "protocol" the physicists construct their "physical theories" according to a set of linguistic-mathematical rules agreed on amongst themselves. Of course, as new data are added to the "protocol," the "theories" are changed, developed and adapted. And since the "protocol" is always being added to, the science is always changing and developing.

This is only a variant of Eddington's well-known statement about physical science, to the effect that what it deals with is exclusively "pointer-readings and similar indications." And from this Eddington concluded that what the "indications" indicate is "inscrutable."

One of the more obvious difficulties about this view is that it quite fails to tell us why physicists should take such an interest in "pointer-readings," which are not phenomena met with in ordinary experience. Pointer-readings are read off complicated instruments, manufactured with great care; but neither Eddington nor Carnap seems very concerned about the principles and use of such instruments in scientific technique. Yet to theorise about the interpretation of such pointer-readings and "protocols" without analysing the technique from which they result and which they serve, seems rather short-sighted. If this further analysis were made, then the connection of scientific theory with objective reality, which Carnap says is a subject of "metaphysics," might be grasped without any "metaphysical" difficulties.

For logical positivism, however, the truth of a scientific theory does not depend on its correspondence with reality, but on its agreement with the scientific "protocol," with the accepted "protocol statements." But on what grounds are the "protocol statements" themselves to be accepted? Two different answers to this question have been given by logical positivists.

The first type of answer is to the effect that the "protocol" expresses "directly given experience." Thus Carnap states in *The Unity of Science* that: "The simplest statements in the protocol language refer to the given, and describe directly given experiences or phenomena, i.e. the simplest states of which knowledge can be had." Hence "protocol statements" are "statements needing no justification and serving as foundations for all the remaining statements of science."

This view says, roughly, that all knowledge is based on immediate knowledge of our own sense-data; that the protocols of science refer

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to or describe sense-data; and that all scientific theories are derived by various linguistic devices from statements originally about sense-data. In so far as it holds this view, logical positivism evidently does not diverge greatly from the positivism of Mach and others in the nineteenth century, which in turn was only a variant of the subjective idealism first enunciated by Berkeley in the eighteenth century.

Some such view as this seems to be held by the English logical positivist, A. J. Ayer. In an article in *Mind* (October, 1945) entitled *The Terminology of Sense-Data*, Ayer distinguished "a physical object language" and "a sense-datum language," and said: "The sense-datum language is logically prior; and this is shown by the fact that, while referring to sense-data is not necessarily a way of referring to physical objects, referring to physical objects is necessarily a way of referring to sense-data." On the basis of this view, he summed up, in his *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, the whole scope of possible human knowledge: "The most that we can do is to elaborate a technique for predicting the course of our sensory experience." In other words, "the most we can do" is to define the order and arrangement of our own sensations, as distinct from arriving at knowledge concerning the external material world.

The programme of reducing all positive knowledge to "predicting the course of sensory experience" and of deriving all positive knowledge from statements "referring to sense-data" has an attraction for many people. I agree, however, with W. Kohler, in his book, *The Place of Value in a World of Facts*, when he remarks that this programme "is plausible only in so far as it is kept general, and with increasing concreteness of investigation it may soon lose its apparent self-evidence."

From the standpoint of logical positivism, however, this older type of positivist view contains too much reference to "meanings." Hence the second type of theory about "protocols" is far more "radical" than the above. The most "radical" logical positivists, of whom von Neurath is an example, contend that the view that "protocols describe directly given experience" is itself only "a more or less refined metaphysics."

Why, then, are "protocols" to be accepted? What grounds can science have to base itself on such and such particular "protocols"?

In *Sociology and Physicalism*, von Neurath explained that there

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really were no grounds, and that to ask for such grounds was to ask a pseudo-question. The "protocols" are accepted because scientists have agreed to accept them. As to *why* they have agreed to accept them, that is merely a question of "sociology"—of the peculiar social behaviour of scientists. If they liked, they could start with a quite different "protocol," and build up a quite different "science."

Thus von Neurath—who is, I think, in this respect a most consistent logical positivist—is led to a whole-hearted rejection of any sort of foundation for science.

I said above that the logical positivist programme would prove itself to be very barren. I think that the actual procedure and results to date of the logical positivist "analysis of science" fully justify that remark. It proves itself in fact quite unable to analyse science; for the type of generalities about language and about the linguistic structure of the system of "scientific statements," which result from logical positivism, cannot possibly satisfy the demands of a detailed objective analysis.

Faced with the actual body of scientific knowledge, and with the profound and pressing problems of both theory and practice which it involves, all logical positivism can do is to say that it is derived from protocols by means of complicated rules—far too complicated, in fact, for analysis in detail—and that to seek for any rational justification for scientific method is to embark upon "metaphysics." It points out that the "different sciences" have "different languages," but expresses the hope that all such "different languages" may be translatable somehow into one "universal language of science" (which Carnap says must be a "physical language"), and that in this way a "unity of science" may emerge from the diversity of different sciences.

But such generalities do not get us very far. What grounds we can have for thinking that science does give us reliable knowledge of the universe in which we live; why we should prefer science to mysticism; how we can best organise scientific research in order that it may serve the ends of human progress—such questions as these, which are questions which any "analysis of science" ought to answer in our time, are questions which logical positivism cannot answer, and, indeed, does not even recognise.

The Retreat from Philosophy

What does the logical positivist type of theorising represent in the modern world?

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It is a retreat from philosophy. The task of philosophy is to help us to understand and to solve our problems—to understand the world and our life in the world. Logical positivism deliberately sets its back upon understanding anything about the world and about life. It seeks to concentrate attention on words and not on things—on words divorced from their meaning—and says that the summit of wisdom is to analyse how words are put together.

Such a retreat from philosophy has been going on for a very long time now in the theoretical activity of the capitalist world. The first bourgeois philosophers—Descartes, Spinoza, Bacon—were very bold people in their stand for new positive ideas in opposition to the outworn ideology of feudalism. But the rot set in with the elaboration of subjective idealism (first definitely formulated in 1710 in Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge*).

As the new developing experimental science began to lay the firm foundations of a materialist scientific view of the world, potentially solving the theoretical and practical problems facing mankind, so the ideologists of the ruling class began to take fright and to look around for means of combating scientific materialism. They began to say that science did not provide knowledge of the nature of the objective world, but only of the subjective world of sensations. They said that material things had no existence apart from our sensations of them. They denied the very existence of the material world.

This line of philosophy now culminates in logical positivism, which says that we must not say anything about the material world at all—not even that it does not exist; that we should not even analyse sensations, but only analyse language.

Such a philosophy completely detaches itself from the world and from the problems of mankind, who live in that world. It represents the ultimate limit of the divorce of theory from practice.

Such an attitude means a slow death for bourgeois philosophy. By reducing philosophical thought to what Neurath aptly calls "speech-thinking," it deprives it of any subject matter. We get word-spinning about words, thought without a subject, form without content. Logical positivism is a programme for the impoverishment of thought.

Indeed, if we consider the latest type of "work" on which logical positivists are engaged, we find that in their search for universal principles of "logical syntax" applicable to any "language," they find it necessary to construct what are called "symbolic languages."

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But these would more properly be called "non-symbolic languages," since none of the signs in them mean anything. In order to ensure what Carnap calls a "formal" treatment, which disregards all "sense, content and meaning," they seek to avoid signs that normally bear a meaning, and to use signs that no one can possibly think have any meaning at all. The utility and applicability of these researches is far from evident.

But meanwhile the common man, the man in the street and in the factory, who has many great problems to contend with, looks towards philosophy—even if unconsciously and without formulating any definite demands—for aid in solving his problems. Such philosophers as the logical positivists give him absolutely no aid whatever—they simply make no contact. Hence they leave the field open for the most reactionary, the most obscurantist ideas, which they pretend to combat, to exert their influence and do their work. This is how logical positivism serves reaction.

True philosophy is the attempt to understand the nature of the world and our place and destiny in it. It is necessary to reinstate this aim of philosophy, and to get over the narrow formalising attitude which dismisses all the great historical problems of philosophy as "pseudo-problems."

Such an outlook as that of logical positivism has its basis in the position of definite strata in modern capitalist society. It is an expression of the dilemma facing middle-class, intellectual and professional people. They want material progress, they want to adopt a progressive and scientific outlook. But they do not want the sharp struggle which this involves. They are scared and want to find an escape. And logical positivism, for the intellectual, provides such an escape.

Particularly does this outlook reflect the dilemma of the modern scientific worker. He makes great discoveries, which can transform the world, for good or ill. But at the same time he is just a paid servant, employed by great vested interests, and he wants to keep himself clear of trouble. Hence he finds a refuge in "pure science," and runs after the idea that all he is concerned with is the development of a "scientific language."

But it is in fact impossible to go on treating science as a theory separate from life and from the real world. There is no pure science. The scientist cannot just analyse his language, but must realise that he is dealing with the real world, and must take one side or another in the social controversy in that world.

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It is this social controversy which is reflected in philosophy today. Theory cannot stand aloof. To attempt to do so is to aid reaction. Logical positivism has this positive feature: it does pose the problem of understanding science. But then it runs away from the problem. The narrow formalism of its whole approach must be overcome if we are to advance along the highway of progressive thought and action.

Britain's Economic Strategy

BY M. HEINEMANN AND N. J. KLUGMANN

I

LEND-LEASE supplies, followed by the American Loan, still shield the British people from fully realising the change in Britain's economic position and with it the urgency of the production and trade problems the Government has to solve. Yet uneasiness about these is growing among those who want Labour to succeed.

The British economy has been built up for over a hundred years on the basis of an enormous export and import trade. The foundations of this pattern were laid in the period when Britain was the only country producing by modern industrial methods—when, as Marx put it,¹ “the cheap prices of their commodities were the heavy artillery with which the bourgeoisie battered down all Chinese walls and compelled all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production.”

Our industrial structure to-day bears all the marks of Britain's history of imperialism. Much of it was laid down early in the nineteenth-century in the period of industrial monopoly, and has altered wonderfully little since, as the southerner realises when he first visits Blackburn or Stoke-on-Trent. In the last quarter of the century, when Britain had to face serious industrial competition from the U.S.A. and Germany, the capitalists sought a way out in increased export of capital (which in itself paved the way for export of capital goods) rather than in modernisation of the basic industries. In the period 1873–1913 capital invested at home rose by 80 per cent, overseas by 165 per cent. By 1913 probably more British capital each year was being invested abroad than at home. Professor Clapham has stated that in the years after 1900:

“Manufacturers and all who thought like manufacturers gloried in the swollen exports. . . . Resources were turned towards foreign investment, rather than to the rebuilding of the

¹ *Communist Manifesto*.

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dirty towns of Britain, because foreign investment seemed more remunerative."¹

In this period began the relative stagnation of technique in coal, iron, steel, pottery, cotton and other of the older industries.² To-day the Working Parties in one industry after another find glaring evidence of crippling inefficiency, backwardness and waste, which have their roots in the past privileged position of the British capitalist class.

The imperialist basis helps to explain why monopoly in the older industries has largely taken the form of organising the old mills and steelworks into price-fixing rings and combines, with technical modernisation kept in check so as to safeguard profits on the older plants. British firms have come to rely in the export market increasingly on "connections" and "goodwill" (often a euphemism for imperialist financial control and political domination) rather than on the efficiency of their designs and productive methods. Production per man-hour in British industry just before the war is estimated at little over one-third of that in U.S.A.

Britain's trade pattern immediately before the war was thus based on a high degree of specialisation, which was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain with the competition of younger and more efficient industries in a limited world market. We imported half our food, and the bulk of all the main raw materials for industry, except coal.

Only half these imports were paid for by exports of goods. The remainder were met as to one-fifth by services (shipping, insurance and financial commissions) and one-quarter by the interest and dividend on some £3,700 million of overseas investments built up in an earlier period (especially before 1913).

Thus even before the war Britain was barely managing to pay her way on overseas account. Before 1913 there had been a long period when Britain had an annual export surplus of about £200 million, which helped to swell investments abroad. In the ten years to 1938 there was an average annual deficit of £12 millions, increasing towards the end of the period.

The war further upset the precarious pattern of British trade and overseas payments, and has made it impossible to go on "muddling

¹ *Economic History of Modern Britain*, Vol. III.

² See Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, p. 317.

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through" on the old basis. Not only were exports restricted during the war and the merchant fleet reduced by over a quarter, but gold and dollar reserves were depleted and some £1,118 millions of overseas securities sold in order to pay for supplies. Moreover, in March, 1946, Britain had accumulated an overseas sterling debt of £3,500 millions (over £1,000 millions of it to India), largely for pay and expenditure of the Forces overseas, but partly (as in the case of Argentine and other neutrals) for supplies.

The Government officially estimates that, in view of these changes, to pay for the pre-war volume of imports will require a 50 per cent. increase above the pre-war volume of exports. But before the war there was considerable unemployment in Britain. Full employment would require a larger volume of imports (one commentator suggests that this alone would require an increase of 21 per cent. on pre-war exports)¹ and with debt service it is reckoned that the total export target must be 75 per cent. above the 1938 volume.

It is certainly possible to reduce this target to some degree by increased production at home from our own resources (especially of food). On the other hand, we must reckon that in the present world conditions our import prices (for food and raw materials) are likely to be higher relative to export prices than they were before the war.

A superficial reading of the statistics of imports and exports of goods during 1946 gives an unduly reassuring picture of the progress made. The monthly volume of exports had passed the 1938 level by July, 1946, and in the latter half of the year reached 12 per cent. above 1938. Meanwhile, the volume of imports has been restricted, owing to world shortages. As a result, the imports for the year will be rather under £1,300 million and the exports over £930 million—a deficit of about £350 million, which is actually less than the average deficit in 1936-8.

But the underlying situation is much more serious. Firstly, Government expenditure overseas for military commitments alone is estimated at £300 million, and with other items, such as the feeding of Germany, may total as much as £450 million.

Secondly, imports in 1946 have been perforce restricted to 70 per cent. of 1938 levels, partly because of world scarcity; we have been living on stocks or going short. Not only do the people lack variety in their diet, but industrial production is being cut because

¹ F. Friday, in *Oxford Bulletin of Statistics*, June, 1946.

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of raw material shortage—for instance, the lack of imported timber already cripples production of houses and furniture.

Thirdly, our present trade is dangerously lopsided. A greater part of our vital imports than ever before comes from America (especially U.S.A. and Canada), countries outside the war zone which have greatly increased their production and have an enormous export surplus; while our exports are going largely to Europe, which, owing to war devastation, has little in the way of essential goods to send us in return for the time being. Thus for the first nine months of 1946 Britain had a deficit of £260 million in her trade with North America and a surplus of £101 million in her trade with Europe. The resulting shortage of dollars and other similarly "hard" currencies means that Britain is drawing very rapidly on the U.S. and Canadian loans for her current imports, and at the present rate the loans will barely last two years.

Fourthly, the present level of exports has been achieved on an unprecedented "sellers' market." Every country in the world is short of goods; there is immense stored-up purchasing power; U.S. competitors are torn between the desire to seek profitable export markets and to supply the huge accumulated demand which still exists at home. But this will not last very much longer: already competition is becoming keener, and even to maintain the present level of export sales will not be easy unless there is a general expansion in world trade.

If Britain could be considered in isolation, it might nevertheless appear that by continuing on the present lines of economic development we should be moving steadily, if not very rapidly, towards a solution of the problem. The illusion is shattered when we consider the background of world economy, and above all the fact that the United States is moving towards an economic crisis which is not likely to be delayed more than a year or two, and which may well prove to be the most severe in its history. Because of the immense economic weight of the U.S.A. (now controlling 60 per cent. of the production and three-quarters of the investment capacity of the capitalist world)¹ U.S. crises have always had a direct and tremendous impact on the course of world and British trade; and Britain is the more vulnerable to their effects now because of the policy which, in the post-war period, has linked her more and more closely and exclusively with the American economy.

It is therefore necessary to examine more closely the character

¹ T. Balogh, *Oxford Bulletin of Statistics*, October, 1946.

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of American capitalism and the nature of the approaching crisis in order to assess its relation to future developments in Britain.

II

Already on the eve of World War II the United States was the greatest industrial power in the world, the greatest exporter of goods and capital. This great wealth and power was concentrated in the hands of a very few immensely rich families, in the hands of a small number of colossal corporations. In their classic book on *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, published in 1933, Berle and Means showed that while the 200 greatest non-financial corporations owned 50 per cent. of the total assets of all American productive corporations, only 30 per cent. of the assets were owned by 400,000 small corporations at the other end of the scale. In 1939 the National Resources Committee established by President Roosevelt, in an important study on *The Structure of American Economy*, named the eight dominant economic interest groups which together controlled about one-third of the total American economy. These were the Morgan interest group, Kuehn-Loeb, Rockefeller, Mellon, du Pont, Chicago, Boston and Cleveland groups.

In the course of the war the concentration of American economy has advanced considerably further. This is revealed in all clarity by a most excellent United States Senate Report (published, Washington, 1946) on *Economic Concentration in World War II*.

During the war, the report states, small businesses were increasingly eliminated, "wartime business casualties reached alarming proportions. Government figures indicate that there were over one-half million fewer businesses in 1943 than in 1941. . . . On the contrary it [this period—M. H. and N. J. K.] saw great increases in the concentration of the American economy and startling developments of those monopolistic controls and practices which recent economic history has shown mean curtailed opportunity for successful independent business." By 1942, already, the upper 50 per cent. of non-financial corporations earned 84.5 per cent. of the total income of all non-financial corporations. "The relatively few giant corporations of the country," states the Report, "which have come to dominate our entire economy are, themselves, largely owned by only a few thousand stockholders and are controlled by a mere handful of huge financial interests."

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Dealing with development of concentration during the war, the report shows that between June, 1940, and September, 1944, prime contracts amounting to \$175 billion were made by the Government to 18,539 corporations, and that no less than two-thirds of these contracts went to the top 100 corporations: 49 per cent. to the top thirty, 8 per cent. to the General Motors Corporation alone.

Dealing with the development during the war of scientific research, the report shows how the great bulk of war contracts to private laboratories for research went to an extremely small number of large firms.

Of the \$2 billion spent in the United States on the atomic bomb project during the war, about \$1.167 billion represented funds spent by the Government on three major facilities, each of which was operated by one of the nation's largest industrial concerns: the diffusion plant by the Union Carbide and Carbon Company, the electromagnetic plant by Eastman Kodak and the Hanford plant by Du Pont de Nemours. These companies, and others involved in the operation, states the Senate report, "will inevitably have a tremendous head start over all other firms in terms of scientific and technical knowledge, production 'know-how' and general familiarity with the subject when atomic energy is applied to peace production."

Whilst, for the peoples of the world who had to fight Fascism at the front and in the rear—above all the people of occupied Europe—the Second World War was very terrible, for American monopoly it was terribly profitable. In fifty-five months of war acknowledged profits of all corporations, after payment of taxes, were £13,000,000,000.

The capacity of American industry increased by 40 per cent. as a result of new additions to plant and machinery, with an approximate value of £6,250,000,000. By 1946 American non-financial corporations had financial reserves and credits of about £21,250,000,000. As a result of the enormous growth in the American production machine, the Federal Reserve index of industrial production during 1943 reached about 250 per cent. of the 1935-9 average, and in July, 1946, it was still at 174 per cent. of that average.

By the end of 1946 corporate profits after payment of taxes were about 50 per cent. higher than at the highest point of the war and on a scale never previously reached. In December, 1946, the

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volume of profits before payment of taxes was two and a half times that of 1929 (boom period) and nearly five times greater than the average volume of 1936-9.

The total wage increase of all industry from January, 1941, to 1945 was 37 per cent., compared to a rise of prices of 55 per cent. (this prior to the ending of price control). In 1946, with the ending of O.P.A., the rocketing rise of prices began. By the end of November, 1946, commodity prices were 45 per cent. higher than June, 1946, and 60 per cent. higher than one year earlier. Food prices had risen 50 per cent. in one year.

The contradiction between the American capacity to produce and the ability of the American people to consume has greatly intensified since the war period. In this position, therefore, America is moving rapidly to what may well be the greatest economic crisis in its history. The omens of approaching slump are unmistakable. The boom, based on the vast purchasing power accumulated during the war added to the "normal" purchasing power of America, which had itself increased on the basis of current production, is running to an end. The vast savings which were supposed to cushion the crisis were held in the main by an upper income group. By the end of the second quarter of 1946, savings had been decreased by half, and those of small and medium depositors had virtually disappeared by the end of the year. Despite the boom, by the end of 1946 there were 2½ million registered unemployed and some 1½ million demobilised soldiers living on gratuities. Real unemployment was probably approaching the 5 million mark. The total industrial output for 1946 was over one-third below that of 1943.

Mr. Philip Murray, President of the C.I.O., has stated that "there is not an honest economist in America who does not predict a bust to follow our present boom." Even Mr. Henry Ford II, in mid-January, 1947, warning of the danger of crisis, regrets that "already millions of Americans are unable to buy the things which in normal times make up this standard of living" (*Times*, January 17th, 1947).

The structure of American economy is such that when the crisis comes it is likely to be severe. During the 1929-32 crisis, it should be remembered, industrial production in U.S. fell 46 per cent., compared to 27 per cent. in the capitalist world as a whole. According to figures of the Department of Commerce, if the level of production fell to that of 1940 (a high year for peacetime production), that would mean a drop of 30 per cent. output from wartime level

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and lead to 19 million unemployed. It must be left to the imagination at this stage to conceive of what a real crisis (for instance, a drop to 1930 level of production) would mean in terms of hardship and hunger for the American people.

Thus there is, and increasingly will be, tremendous pressure by U.S. imperialism to dispose of its surplus products and capital abroad. More than ever before the American Government is concerned to win new export markets. In order to carry through this expansion, the U.S. is waging a war to remove what she calls "barriers to international trade"—that is, in cold fact, all exchange control, import quotas, bilateral agreements, imperial preferences, etc. With a "free" (for American business) international market, America, with its colossal productive capacity and huge export surplus, can hope to solve its internal problems by capturing markets in the British Empire and elsewhere. Mr. Wallace B. Phillips, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in London, at a meeting of the Chamber on February 22nd, 1945, stated: "American trade intends to become a most formidable competitor in world trade. Great Britain must face a very stiff fight, and it is not difficult to foresee a period a few years hence after the war when international trade relationships may be strained."

Since the death of President Roosevelt the American Government has adapted the content of the Bretton Woods Agreement to suit its new aims. The Agreement is seen to-day as a system by which U.S. can capture all the markets she needs without discriminating interference from governments, whilst she maintains her own protective tariffs. The American fight for "equality of opportunity" in the Danube area, waged with British support at the Paris Peace Conference, is another example of Wall Street's fight against the right of countries who are to-day economically poor to plan the development of their economy. This conception of "equality of opportunity" means that all countries are to have equal opportunity to be subordinated to American monopoly capital. The American decision to terminate U.N.R.R.A. at the end of 1946, and put in its place direct American relief for those countries with suitably reactionary governments and sufficiently docile to Wall Street plans (Austria, Italy, Greece), is another indication of the same development.

Within the framework of this policy, what role does American imperialism assign to its junior partner, Britain?

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When in the Senate debate on the American loan, Senator Johnson asserted that "if the United States desired to do so, and were willing to fight fire with fire, it could knock the sterling *bloc* and its dollar pool into a cocked hat before sundown" (*Times*, May 7th, 1946), Mr. Spence, Chairman of the House of Representatives Ranking and Currency Committee, answered him, saying: "The association of Great Britain and the United States, for which the Loan would prepare, would erect a bulwark against the possible spread of Communism in Europe" (*Times*, May 9th, 1946).

Speaking on December 10th, 1940, to a convention of the Investment Bankers' Association, Mr. Virgil Jordan, President of the National Industrial Conference Board, said,

"Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked on a career of imperialism. . . . Even though, by our aid, England should emerge from the struggle without defeat, she will be so impoverished economically and crippled in prestige that it is improbable she will be able to resume or maintain the dominant position in world affairs which she has occupied so long. At best [Note the best—M. H. and N. J. K.], England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism."

The perspective is clear. As junior partner in the Anglo-Saxon *bloc*, harnessed to American imperialist foreign policy, Britain, betrayed by her own reaction, is to be isolated and deprived of all her natural friends and allies. When the crisis comes, it will not be difficult for the American trusts to deprive Britain of her hard-won export markets, and to make her utterly dependent on America for charitable despatch of goods and raw materials in exchange for suitable adaptation of home and foreign policy, including, perhaps, a change of government. Hunger, unemployment and social reaction would be the firstfruits of such an alliance. The second would be to become an armed base from which atomic war can be waged on the Soviet Union and other democratic countries of Europe.

The problem is therefore whether this prospect of subservience is inevitable, or whether there is any workable alternative for Britain. The Churchill view, stated clearly enough, is that American economic domination is inescapable, and that the wisest course for Britain is to ally itself politically and economically with this mighty Power, and on that basis to retain and rebuild something like its former imperialist predominance. This view appears in practice to govern our present economic policy in the international field.

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It is not surprising that there are many signs of uneasiness and search for an alternative both in political circles (notably in the speeches of Crossman and others in the Foreign Policy debate) and among economists of the Left (one may instance G. D. H. Cole's recent articles in *Reynolds'* and T. Balogh's in the *Tribune*). Our concern in the remainder of this article is to examine soberly the possible alternative—an economic and political strategy involving a sharp break with past traditions in many fields as yet unaltered by the advent of a Labour Government.

III

The way forward involves three interrelated lines of policy:

1. The operation of a broad national economic plan at home.
2. A radical change in our international trading relationships with U.S.A. and Europe in particular.
3. A radical change in our economic relations with the Colonial Empire.

Clearly, these economic changes cannot be effected without important changes in the political field, and especially in foreign policy. We shall deal briefly with each of these aspects in turn.

We do not claim, however, to put forward a method of enabling Britain to enjoy complete immunity from the effects of a U.S. slump in the next year or two. Given the past history and present structure of British economy (and the limited use so far made of the breathing-space afforded by the Loan), the coming crisis cannot but affect our export markets and cause dislocation. The question is how to place Britain in a position to ride the storm, how to hold the country on the course its people voted for in 1945, so that over a period it can begin to extricate itself from the over-production crises of the capitalist world.

First, what do we mean by a national plan at home? Is not Britain already fast becoming a planned economy?

It is true that the Labour Government has adopted important measures aimed at developing planned economy, or at any rate a planned sector within the private profit-making economy—notably the nationalisation of the mines and the Bank of England, the Bills for electricity and transport, the control over capitalist use of the land, and the placing of housing in the hands of the local authorities, as well as the continuation of price-controls. Nevertheless, the relatively slow, lopsided development of peacetime production and

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productivity indicates that the planned sector is growing too slowly. Scarce manpower is wasted and precious time is being lost. There is grave danger of the unplanned, chaotic 90 per cent. of the economy overwhelming the planned 10 per cent. and preventing the planned sector from achieving practical changes before it is exposed to the test of the U.S. slump.

There have already been plenty of instances of this. The lack of priorities in the engineering industry has led to motor cars reaching pre-war production and electric fires double pre-war, while it takes over a year to get an electric motor for a colliery—at a time when industry is stopping for lack of coal. Again, the nationalised mines have strained heroically for production, part of which has been wasted because distribution has not been according to planned priorities for essential industries, but according to the F.B.I. principle that all firms should have an equal cut (unless their coal merchants can get them a bit extra). In building, the luxury black market and semi-legal work have been drawing labour and materials away from the urgent local authority jobs.

The economy as a whole is still under capitalist control. This is reflected above all in the fact that after eighteen months of a Labour Government less than 5 per cent. of the workers are in nationalised industry. Prices are rising more rapidly than wages; industrial profits in the third quarter of 1946 were 5 per cent. above 1945 and 20 per cent. above the peak war production year of 1943 (*Economist* sample figures), and are still rising, accompanied by a hectic rise on the Stock Exchange. The Government has now called the T.U.C. into serious consultation on the economic situation—not to discuss ways of advancing further against capitalist chaos, but to ask the unions to forego wage demands as far as possible until the production problems have been solved.

These facts are not lost on the workers in industry. Appeals for more production come up against the conviction that in a predominantly capitalist economy harder work now leads to unemployment sooner. Something more than posters is needed to change this conviction.

Britain is in fact the only progressive country in Europe which as yet lacks a practical and binding national economic plan, laying down for some years ahead its main economic strategy and the immediate practical objectives to be achieved. Yet our need to economise and direct our resources is, as we have seen, most urgent.

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It is clear that in the political stage now reached in Britain it would be unrealistic to attempt a complete, 100 per cent. plan covering all branches of the national economy and having (as the planners of the U.S.S.R. are now able to say of their fourth Five Year Plan) "the force of economic law." The degree of State planning reached in Czechoslovakia with almost 70 per cent. of industry nationalised is not practicable for Britain with only 20 per cent. proposed in the present Government's programme. But it is fully possible for us (as the experience of the Monnet Plan in France shows) to work out as a beginning a plan for at least the priority needs without which the economy cannot expand, and to make sure of those.

Such a plan will depend for its fulfilment on the wholehearted support of the people, and above all of the organised working class in industry, against any attempt by capitalists to set the clock back. It must therefore be made clear to the workers from the outset that the plan is intended permanently to strengthen and improve their position and to weaken capitalism, that they are being asked to work hard and steadily, not for the benefit of the employers, but for themselves, to make possible a further advance.

Production targets have to be set at least for certain key industries—say, for coal, steel, power, building materials, textiles and agriculture. On this basis the necessary manpower and increases in productivity (including new plant) can be estimated. Priorities for the re-equipment of these industries will form the basis for at any rate partial planning of the engineering industry. These plans should from the very beginning be discussed with the unions, both for the industry as a whole and in the process of breaking them down into targets for regions and individual firms.

This approach is far more fruitful than the attempt to begin by allocating the whole manpower of the country on paper between the various industries—especially since for many industries (e.g. engineering, building) the products vary from the most to the least essential. The Government did not equip its armies in wartime by allocating £3,000 million and 5 million workers to engineering and chemicals and then leaving the firms to produce what they liked (on the principle that aircraft paid better profits than anti-aircraft guns or Tommy-guns than tanks). Out of practical steps to secure the priority needs, a general plan for production, re-equipment and investment will begin to emerge.

The first and strongest means of enforcing the plan is by

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nationalisation and extension of State enterprise generally (especially in Government and local authority building by direct labour and the use of existing R.O.Fs.). In view of the position of the nationalised industries as strong-points for the whole plan, the country cannot afford the luxury of long delay in taking them over. In the case of coalmining, a Bill was largely prepared before the election and "rushed" through Parliament, yet it was nearly eighteen months before serious national control and planning could begin; at this rate, steel will take another three years. Ways and means have to be found drastically to shorten the process, and to see that the key posts in nationalised industry are in the hands of the Labour movement and not of the City.

Control over privately-owned industry must be secured partly (as during the war) by Government contracts; partly by the allocation of the main raw materials, which will continue to be scarce for some time, in strict accordance with the production plan.

The main object of financial controls must be (a) to strengthen the State's position in the economy by increasing its command of expenditure as against that of the private capitalist, (b) to effect a redistribution of real income and thus to enable the needs of the mass of the people to be met before luxury consumption. Price controls will need to be operated, not merely to bless existing profit margins, but to squeeze them.

Manpower for priority work can be attracted largely by good wages, conditions and other privileges (such as the much higher rations accorded to French miners). But this may need further reinforcement, not by direction of labour to specific work, but by requiring all employers to engage labour solely through an approved exchange, and thus restricting severely the manpower on inessential work. The demobilisation of, say, 800,000 extra men used for defence compared with 1939 would enable some £300 to £400 millions to be added at once to the national production: by breaking bottlenecks, it might add considerably more.

Some of these measures will undoubtedly be resisted or by-passed by individual firms or whole industries: and a key question is the firm handling of obstruction—the jailing of black marketeers, and the requisitioning of firms which either cannot or will not meet requirements (on the precedent laid down in wartime over Shorts' aircraft). The more the plan and strategy are publicly understood as a whole, the easier will it be for the Government to act decisively.

Hence the whole plan can only be carried through if it is

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thoroughly discussed and publicised, especially in the workshops and the mines, and the role of the unions as the Government's allies in it clearly recognised. Joint production machinery, which has tended to be weakened since the war, needs to be rebuilt and given a more definite status, especially in State industry, and if shop stewards and job representatives are to check on the plan's fulfilment they must be legally protected against victimisation. A necessary basis for this co-operation is for the Government clearly to state a policy of raising wages at the expense of profits, and instead of a formal neutrality in wage disputes (tempered in practice by the use of troops as strike-breakers) to intervene in time to secure a settlement satisfactory to the workers and prevent recalcitrant employers from provoking large-scale stoppages.

In building up the authority and public status of the unions, the Government will be creating the popular confidence that will enable it to proceed, when the time comes, to further and more drastic inroads upon capital.

The second necessary step is a thorough reorientation of Britain's economic relations with other countries. The problem is not to divert exports away from the non-dollar countries (mainly the war-devastated countries of Europe), but rather to examine (a) to what extent British imports can be diverted now away from the dollar area and (b) to what extent long-term economic agreements can be developed with the non-dollar countries, above all with the countries of planned economy, to what extent the British economic plan can be synchronised with other plans, to what extent imports, now obtained from the dollar areas, can as a result be obtained from the planned economies. The more successful we have been in achieving a planned economy in Britain, the easier it will be to develop economic relations with the Soviet Union, France, Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, and, in reverse, the closer our economic relations with these countries the more effectively we can develop a planned economy inside Britain.

An examination of British imports during 1946 reveals that from America and Canada Britain imported 90 per cent. of her grain, 87 per cent. of her tobacco, 65 per cent. of her iron and steel, 58 per cent. of her timber, 48 per cent. of her dairy produce, 34 per cent. of her non-ferrous metals, 34 per cent. of her petroleum, 27 per cent. of her meat, 21 per cent. miscellaneous goods and 13 per cent. of her cotton.¹ Part of this dependence, however, is due to temporary

¹ See Article on "Britain's Import Problem," in *Labour Research*, January, 1947.

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causes. By a correct and energetic approach to this problem, it should be possible in the next two to three years to reduce these imports by obtaining more timber from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe (Rumania, Yugoslavia), together with furniture from East Europe and Italy, greater quantities of dairy produce from Scandinavia, Holland, Eire, large quantities of non-ferrous metals from Eastern Europe (for instance, bauxite) and possibly miscellaneous foodstuffs (canned goods especially) from the Soviet Union. A detailed examination of this problem would reveal many other possibilities. Such a policy, if carried through with energy and system, might well reduce the dollar gap in trade with North America by one-quarter to one-third within the next few years. Moreover, a serious examination of the use made of the American Loan to purchase goods in America would reveal possibilities of eliminating many luxury goods, inessential foodstuffs, films, etc., and replacing them by purchase of raw material and machinery which would in their turn increase Britain's economic efficiency and independence.

The most important aspect of the problem is its examination from a more long-term point of view. The synchronisation of the British plan with various European plans over a five-year, ten-year or longer period is both practicable and of the greatest importance. Besides the five-year Plan in the Soviet Union and the Monnet Four-year Plan in France, there are to-day already in operation, or about to operate, a Three-year Plan in Poland, a Two-year Plan in Czechoslovakia, a Five-year Plan in Yugoslavia, a Two-year Plan in Bulgaria, a Three-year Plan in Hungary, an Albanian economic plan, and a series of industrialisation and electrification plans in Rumania. These plans will be followed by further plans on their completion. By the development of long-term bulk purchase agreements with such countries, it should be possible to reduce further the imports from the dollar areas and to obtain important quantities of grain (Soviet Union), dairy produce, timber, miscellaneous foodstuffs, non-ferrous ores and metals and cotton from the planned economy areas. Such a development would (a) decrease the dollar shortage and the dependence of Britain on the United States, (b) facilitate long-term planning in Britain, and (c) by increasing our relations with stable and expanding planned economies, help to withdraw Britain from the area of American slump and capitalist crisis.

The aim of such economic development would not be to build

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an exclusive trade *bloc* against the United States. However, the greater the development of planned economy in individual States and the closer the relationship between the countries of wholly or partially planned economy, the greater the possibility will exist of compelling the United States, because of its need for foreign markets, to join with other countries in developing real international economic co-operation on the basis of the respect for the sovereignty of all States. The aim is to achieve international trade relations and expanding world trade as originally envisaged in the Roosevelt era, and not the adaptation of Bretton Woods now envisaged by the American Government for the furthering of American trade at the expense of the economic independence of other lands. The planned economy countries, if united, would be in a position to say to America: "We want your trade, we welcome your capital, but we insist that they should be given on terms that safeguard our national sovereignty and our right to plan our own countries for the prosperity of the people."

Such a reorientation of British economic relations will only be possible, it is clear, on the basis of a radical reorientation of British foreign policy. Political and foreign policy are inextricably inter-related. The achievement of close economic relations with the planned economy countries will lay the basis for new political relations of friendship and co-operation. In the same way the termination of Britain's policy of unreserved support for the foreign policy of American imperialism and a turn to political co-operation with the Soviet Union and the European democracies can speed the achievement of real international political co-operation, a strong and effective U.N.O. Such a political attitude by Britain could lead speedily to the acceptance and carrying through of disarmament as first proposed by the Soviet Union, the ending of the atomic monopoly of the U.S., the demobilisation of a great part of Britain's overseas army, making some 800,000 men available for home production. Such a policy could accelerate the establishment of a united democratic Germany and the consequent powerful development of peaceful production of the type now begun in the Soviet Occupation Zone. The need, therefore, is not for specifically political or economic reorientation, but for both.

The third step is a change towards planned development of production and living standards in the colonial countries. The natural resources of the British Colonial Empire both in food, minerals and other materials are enormous, but their development and use to

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raise living standards has scarcely been begun. The methods of production are incredibly primitive and unscientific, nutrition and physique at starvation level, so that crop yields and output per worker (e.g. in mines) are fantastically low. One may instance the fact that rice and wheat yields per acre in India are under one-third of those in more advanced countries, and have fallen 25 per cent. since 1913; that, owing to lack of fertilisers and planned crop rotation, the fertility of the soil is being destroyed, yields lowered and the farmers resort to shifting cultivation for cocoa and ground-nuts in West Africa and for bananas in the West Indies.

The monopoly concerns which have investments in and carry on the bulk of both import and export trade with the colonies have had no interest in developing the wealth of the area as a whole and over a long period. Their concern is merely to gut it of cheap raw materials with the minimum expenditure of capital on roads and railways. Living standards are so low (pre-war national income in India under £5 per head; Uganda, pre-war imports 8s. per head per annum) that colonial countries by preference did not buy British, but went for the cheapest Japanese products.

Before the war (1938) the twelve most advanced industrial countries did 34.7 per cent. of the world's importing and 30.3 per cent. of its exporting. But what is extremely significant is that these "industrial twelve" did 24.3 per cent. of the world's import trade (£5,980 million) *among themselves*, i.e. exchanging mainly industrial products with one another.

The population of these twelve at that time was 450 million, one-fifth of the world total. Their *total* imports were 59 per cent. of the total world imports. India and China, with over 812 million people—two-fifths of the total—had 4 per cent. of the trade. The poor countries hardly enter into the trade in high-grade products, which Britain is equipped to supply. The £200 million of interest on British capitalists' overseas investments were purchased at the price of unemployment in home export industry as well as degradation in the colonies themselves.

During the war the cost of living has soared. The colonies have been kept extremely short of imported consumer goods and as a result, small producers have little incentive to raise production. If we want to increase supplies immediately from Burma and West Africa, we need above all to get our home textile industries going and allocate a due proportion to them.

In the longer run, ample supplies from the present colonies

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depend on the planned capital development both of their agriculture and industry, which in turn would raise their purchasing power as markets for British exports. This is inseparable from outside capital assistance and changes in their own class structure, which cannot be made under imperialist domination. One example of hundreds may be given. Dr. Burns (*Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India*), quoted by the Bengal Famine Commission, estimates the potential immediate increase in Indian rice yields per acre at 50 per cent. by better seed and fertiliser, while repair of existing irrigation works could add 15 per cent. to the area of cultivable land. But, comment the Commission:

"These are *technological* possibilities, illustrating what might be achieved by the application of thoroughly efficient agricultural methods. They are not immediate practical possibilities for the small producers, without capital or education, who form the bulk of Indian agriculturalists."¹

Given the right policy, over a longer period Britain's exports to colonial areas will tend to concentrate more on capital goods—machinery, chemicals and fertilisers, electrical power equipment, manpower, etc.—and less on cheap textiles and consumer goods, which can more easily be produced locally. This will enable Britain to specialise in those industries where our output per head is highest and the skill and experience of our workers and technicians is most fully used. It is in the interest of the British people to foster these developments, which in the long run promise to provide many of our raw materials far more plentifully than before and to afford us a stable market for the exports we are best fitted to produce.

These are the possibilities. The very first steps towards achieving them demand a change in British colonial policy—not the pious gesture of a Colonial Development Fund, but the speediest transition to self-government.

The three lines of policy here indicated involve tremendous changes in policy of the Labour Government. With the present structure of imperialism maintained, there is no prospect of economic independence or stability for Britain.

¹ *Indian Famine Commission Report.*

*Marxism and Literary Decadence*¹

BY A. CORNU

BY ideology we mean what Marx called "mystification," a transposition of reality by thought, substituting an imaginary world of abstraction and fantasies for the world of reality. It is the religious, philosophical or political interpretation of the world as we find it in the ideology of pagan or Christian times, in the ideology of idealism, in the ideology of every form of class society, from monarchist to capitalist.

Its essential character is shown in the separation which it establishes between man and concrete activity, between ideas and reality. When the world of ideas is considered as existing in itself, independent of the life of men, such ideas take on an absolute quality, and action is transferred from the real world to the spiritual and ethical level.

The study of German romanticism, an almost perfect example of this process, shows clearly that however distant the ideology may be in appearance from concrete reality, the ultimate cause is always there, in the economic and social world at its particular stage in development and with its particular class interests.

In fact, each ideology expresses in its conception of the world and in the determined ends that it assigns to historical evolution and to human activity, the particular aspirations and interests of one of the antagonistic social classes, and it attributes to these aspirations and interests an absolute value by transposing them on to a rational and moral level.

We can distinguish among ideologies three main tendencies, which correspond to the different stages in the evolution of social classes:

1. The reactionary ideology of the *decadent* classes: denying all essential value to present reality, it escapes from life by a return to the past, by renunciation and death.

2. The conservative and justifying ideology of the *dominant* classes: condemning the past, it halts social development in the present, to which it gives an absolute value, by making the particular traits which characterise it the expression of eternal reason.

3. The *revolutionary Utopian* ideology of the yet insufficiently

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developed classes: it denies, like the reactionary ideology, all essential value to the present, but it turns away from the past and sets itself to the task of determining dogmatically the general shape of future reality.

These three fundamental tendencies of ideology are present in all the manifestations of spiritual life—art, literature, philosophy, ethics, religion—but it is in those fields in which ideology tends to determine and directly to rule the activity of men that the primary role played in its formation and constitution by the defence of class interests becomes apparent.

The present essay will concern itself with the influence of the class struggle in the formation of certain literary tendencies, more especially as leading to decadence in literature.

I. Literary Criticism

Modern literary criticism falls, broadly speaking, into two great opposed tendencies which, from the fact that they to a greater or lesser degree deliberately omit from their considerations the essential factors, economic reality and the class struggle, do not succeed in giving a complete explanation of the main tendencies of modern literature and its principal creations.

The first tendency is primarily concerned with the personality of the writer and of the milieu which directly influences him. By limiting critical study in this way to the writer's personality and his milieu, in the narrow sense of the word, it succeeds in explaining the writer's sensibility, his sentiments, his ideas—in a word, his psychology and general conception of the world, but it does not explain in what way or to what degree this is the expression of his time.

The other tendency, which is connected with the name of Taine, is opposed to this. Setting out from a determinist conception of the world, it considers literature as the necessary resultant of three fundamental factors—race, the milieu, the moment. But because it pays insufficient attention to the division of society into classes and to the active role of man in social evolution, its conception of race, the milieu and the moment remains vague and indeterminate, and shows itself incapable of explaining the originality, the particular genius, of different writers.

In reality only a very close connection of literature with the

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epoch in which it appears will give us the true explanation of a literary work, by showing what is its source of inspiration.

Every epoch, indeed, imposes on writers certain themes expressing the differing position and needs of different sections of society at that particular moment. The themes proper to the classes in decay will be those negating reality by arbitrary acts of will, by renunciation, evasion and death. In periods of economic and social stability or stagnation we shall find utilitarian themes, lacking in ideals or stormy passions. The themes of classes in the ascendant will express the hope, joy and faith in life proper to periods of development and expansion.

Often these themes will be found existing side by side where all three social groups occur in one phase in the development of society.

Each author can only be explained by placing him in relation to such tendencies by deriving his special character from the theme he works in and the class it represents. Of course, each author, according to his own temperament, his talent and the influences that he has undergone, will give his own special interpretation to these general themes. Thus, in order to understand any particular writer, it is necessary both to give an account of the distinctive features of his period and of the particular social stream in which he moves, and to analyse his individual psychology, his personal talent and the particular environment in which he has lived.

II. The Themes of Decadent Literature

In a period of economic and social decay, the common tendency among writers who express its general characteristics in their works is to place themselves outside concrete reality, removed from practical action, from economic and social activity. They are thus of necessity led to an egocentricity which is expressed, maybe, in a utopian and abstract effort of the will which attempts to impose its law on the world, or maybe in an evasion of reality in dream, renunciation and death. These two tendencies, which can be observed in present-day literature, reflect the decadence of the bourgeois ruling class, which, after having exhausted the possibilities of fruitful action which allowed it, in the ascendent period of capitalism, to conquer and transform the world, is now a prey to the contradictions and crises which undermine and irretrievably ruin it.

Reacting against a hostile reality, under whose weight it refused

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to succumb, the decadent bourgeois class, in the literature that it inspires, sometimes opposes to this reality the Will, conceived as an absolute power, capable of transforming the world to its satisfaction, and we find Nietzsche's Superman, whom all Fascist literature idealises and acclaims; sometimes, giving way to a feeling of discouragement, lassitude and disgust, it sets out to find, beyond present reality, which it holds responsible for the tragic nature of its destiny, an illusory reality, a symbol of death and nothingness.

The Theme of Renunciation and Death

It is this second aspect of decadent literature that we propose to analyse.

The pessimistic view of the world, proper to the whole decadent class, is expressed in the literary field, on the one hand, by a philosophy which tries to give it a theoretic justification and, on the other hand, by the works of different writers each of whom expresses his personal interpretation of this general feeling.

Let us first turn to the world view of a social class which has failed to adapt itself to changing reality, as expressed in our day in economic confusion and social chaos. Such a class, incapable of directing its destiny, becomes decadent and comes to hold a philosophy turning men from external reality and endeavouring to demonstrate the unreality and irrationality of the world. Denying all value to the world, this philosophy condemns man's practical activity as based on illusion and as leading only to destruction. It directs him away from reality to contemplation and renunciation, as in the pursuit of inaccessible and unreal goals.

Whatever may be the particular form it assumes, this philosophy is essentially inspired by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which denies the possibility of knowing the real world, because we only see it through the forms of our own thinking (thus we do not know whether space and time really exist, space and time being merely ways in which the human mind is compelled by its own structure to think). But over against the scepticism of all theory Kant affirmed that the *practical* reason, as he called it, by which he meant the moral will, could indeed relate man to reality, and then Kant laid on man the task of elevating himself in wisdom and dignity.

But in our own day this philosophy, in its decadent form, affirms that reality is wholly inaccessible to us, condemning the reason, not only as an instrument of reason, but also as a guide to action, describing it as only a source of illusion and error and

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therefore wholly useless. Thus does false reason separate man from all possibility of action. Indeed all attempts to control and organise reality are doomed to issue only in the creation of illusions, out of all relation to ultimate reality.

This complete "otherness" of the external world, impenetrable to man, raised like a wall against which his reason and will are broken, creates in him a feeling of agony and despair which of necessity cuts him off from real life.

III. The Roots of Existentialism

By means of this approach, we believe it possible to get to the roots of the literary movement known as existentialism, which is a characteristic form of bourgeois decadence. We shall proceed to examine a German writer, Rainer Maria Rilke, who, preceding Jean Paul Satre, most clearly reveals the tendency in question, this feeling of malaise and agony which is experienced by the man who is cut off from reality, isolated from life and action, so that he longs only for death and annihilation.

A poet of dreams, disquietude and death, Rilke expresses in his work both the agony of the weak man who is unable to take root in life and the decline and fall of a social order.

Weak, sickly and over-sensitive, he withdrew even from childhood into himself and sought, turning aside from action, a refuge in solitude and a support in dreams.

Wearied of life, without having tasted it, he extolled death in his earliest poems, and it is death which remained the central theme of his work, and from which he derived the deepest harmony of his being.

From the first life appeared to him as a menace and a danger, as a long period of suffering and waiting from which one can only escape through dreams. This escape by means of dreams is associated with escape through travel, where he seeks a country and a climate which responds to his temperament, never to find, however, the environment which finally satisfies his soul.

The world offers him neither the refuge nor the health for which he waits; the idea of death continually presents itself and imposes itself on him.

His view of the world is from then on that of misery, sickness and death, of which every individual is for him a particular manifestation. He sees no other means of health than of deliberately

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accepting death and of welcoming it as the necessary complement and consummation of life, and as the only way of escaping his obsession.

Only he who has penetrated the meaning and value of death really knows life, since death is not only the source of life, which springs from it as day comes out of night, but constitutes also its full flowering, its fulfilment, because through it we reach a higher existence and unite ourselves with God.

This attitude of Rilke is explained, not only by his temperament, but also by social causes. A weak and sickly man, he could not find in himself any reason to live, neither could he find any cause for hope and action in a society where he found himself isolated.

This detachment from the world led him naturally to an individualism and egocentricity which tended to reduce everything to the ego and which corresponds with his social position of the *petit bourgeois déclassé*. A characteristic passage from *The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge* throws light on his position with regard to society. Isolated in Paris and on the point of succumbing to his misery, he protects himself, with the sure instinct of his class, from social collapse. He notes that in all his misery he maintains a well-cared-for appearance, clean nails and cuffs, which connect him with the bourgeois class, in contrast to the poor with whom he is compelled to rub shoulders; obliged by his wretchedness to mix with the people, he does not share in their labour, and because of this does not understand them, seeing only the sadness of their condition and not the social potentiality and hope that they have in them. We find also no cry of revolt in his works, but only a vague and useless pity, which tends to become even a rather regrettable sympathy with poverty itself and a recognition of its great value, for, removing man from worldly goods, it allows him more easily to reach simplicity of soul and purity of heart.

This failure to adapt himself to the social environment, which separates him from action, leads him to consider reality from a contemplative point of view. The world not constituting a field of action is for him only the object of delicate feelings and rare sensations, which he finds pleasure in sharing with a few choice spirits, who have nothing else to do on earth other than admire the relics of the past.

This powerlessness to act and create increases in him the impression of the continual waste of force and life, the feeling of disintegration and separation, which had its roots in the very weakness

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of his nature. This feeling which oppressed and tormented him, explains his agony when faced with life and is the very heart and inspiration of his work.

He conceived man as being a prey to death right from his birth, as a being whom life wastes away and uses without anything coming to revive him—expressing by this, on the ideological level, the deep vice, the essential defect of present society, the fact that the life is drained from the working class by the utilisation of their labour power, while the wealth, the very life itself, which they thus create, cannot return to them because it is not theirs, because it is appropriated.

As a contrast to this type of "diminished" man (as he was himself), drained of life and love, Rilke opposed the spiritual being who, in an act of infinite creation, ceaselessly recovers the life which goes forth from him, and thus knows a calm and blessedness that man does not know.

This conception of a spiritual being corresponds very exactly with that which Karl Marx conceived of man. By his social activity, man externalises his being, his power to work, in order to transform the world; but in a normal society he recovers his being and recuperates his powers by assimilating in return the world thus transformed. By this action and reaction man is progressively united with nature, which he integrates in himself, humanising it, adapting it to his needs and to his mode of life. From this fact there is not a continual waste of powers, with nothing to compensate for it, nor a separation, an antagonism between man and the external world, but a constant interpenetration by a reciprocal adaptation. Instead of opposing, like Rilke, the dream to reality or trying to adapt reality to the dream—attitudes equally contrary to the true nature of man—it is necessary to integrate oneself in reality in order to transform it. It is such action alone which allows man to affirm life and to discover for himself a *raison d'être* other than the beyond, or death.

This world of Rilke—a world of illusions, where life is unreal and man is compelled to take refuge in dreams or in recalling a vanished past, a world in which death is the consummation, is the perfect expression of a declining bourgeois society.

A parallel to Rilke's longing for death is the romanticism which, instead of being an affirmation of life, as it was originally, attributes importance only to the past, regardless of the significance of social development. The past is the permanent source of all that is and

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the sole criterion of worth. The present only possesses value to the extent that it conserves and perpetuates the past, which is dead and finished. Life as it exists now has no meaning in itself, but only in what came before it. Is not this too a turning towards death as the germ and the completion of reality?

This pessimistic vision of the world, this picture of decay and collapse in everything around it, recurs in various forms in the work of all contemporary writers, since they all depict the decay of bourgeois society. We may instance Mauriac, Jean-Paul Sartre, Thomas Mann, and John Galsworthy. Thus Mann in *Buddenbrooks* analyses, not the bourgeoisie in its period of advance when it manifests the joy of creation and social development, but the progressive degeneration of a family of the upper middle class, and the ruin of the business that it had founded.

IV. Conclusion

In the condemnation which they thus express of the two great forces of human life—reason and action—this decadent philosophy and its literature represent the antipodes of the Marxist conception of the world.

In fact, Marxism refuses to conceive of an essence of things distinct from their concrete existence, a reality behind things, just as it does not conceive of the idea in itself as outside of men; it declares in principle the fundamental rationality of reality, and the possibility for human reason, directing action, penetrating the very essence of the world and becoming more and more deeply integrated in it in order that it may change it. On the other hand, this decadent philosophy and literature, expressing on the ideological level the disintegration of the decaying class in its relation to reality, affirms in a metaphysical way phenomenal reality and its essence as two distinct entities. Thus, affirming the fundamental heterogeneity between essential reality and the reason, they were led to make of that element, which is irrational, unknowable and inaccessible to man, the essential element of reality. For them, then, existence has a character both illusory and uneasy, and, instead of exalting the forces of life and action in man, they depress and degrade him by the feeling of anguish and nothingness that they sow in him.

The Ship and Society

BY CHARLES GIBSON

IN his article, "Social Implications of the Three Ages" (MODERN QUARTERLY, Spring, 1946), Professor Childe showed how the structure of the earliest societies was based upon the stage of technological development of the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages and listed the tools invented in each age. Similarly, the means of production determine the character of feudal, capitalist and socialist societies. This process, however, is not a simple, mechanical one in which the tools, having mysteriously materialised, mould society to their best advantage. Each new tool, or each improvement of an old one, grows out of past experience, and in many cases, after certain changes in the means of production have brought about a change in the structure of society, the new form of the latter reacts upon the tool and strives to bring it nearer to perfection—perfection, that is, within the limits of the existing relationships of production. In so doing, it eventually "over-perfects" the tool, whose full potentialities can then only be realised in a different, and higher, form of society.

This interaction between the means and relationships of production is well illustrated in the history of the ship, which, although not listed by Professor Childe, is a tool as much as the axe, bellows or capstan. It differs from other tools, however, in that it is not used for primary production. (Fishing is not really an exception, for the primary tools there are the line, net and trawl.) The product of the ship is trade—the transporting of the products of one place to some other where they are exchanged. In addition, its growth is to some extent dependent upon the development of other, primary, tools, e.g. the adze and welding machine, and for this reason shows the interaction of society and the tool very well, at the same time conforming to the same dialectical laws observable in the history of society generally.

Once man got beyond the casual use of floating tree trunks, he made himself boats of cylindrical-shaped pieces of bark stripped from trees. Later, when his tools improved, he was able to hollow out the trunk itself into a canoe, whilst in areas devoid of large trees he lashed bundles of reeds together to serve as a raft. These forms corresponded roughly to the Old and New Stone Ages; but with the Bronze Age came a large expansion of trade, brought about by the need to transport mineral ores from the mining areas to the alluvial valleys in which the earliest civilisations were situated, and, as much of the bulk carrying was done by sea, vessels larger than dugouts, bark canoes or reed rafts were needed. By their very nature, these craft are limited in size, but there is relatively no limit if the boat is built of *separate* pieces of wood. The

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Bronze Age therefore evolved (whether from the reed raft or dugout does not matter here) the boat built of individual planks to meet its own demands. At the same time, the new Bronze Age tools, such as the carpenter's saw and the axe-adze, probably made its production possible by permitting the more accurate fashioning of planks.¹

Bronze Age and Iron Age civilisations, such as those of ancient Greece and Rome, were slave societies, because, in the last analysis, of the character of the means of production. This fact affected the subsequent development of the ship once the plank-built boat was established. The earliest vessels were naturally paddle or oar-driven until the Bronze Age produced the sail. In its first form, however, this was suitable only for running *in front of* the wind. It could not solve what was to become the crucial problem for the ship—to be able to sail *against* the wind. It is obviously impossible to sail straight into a breeze, but by sailing at an angle to it, first to one side, then to the other, it is possible to make eventual progress in that direction. (In some boats nowadays it is possible to sail within twenty-five degrees of the wind.) The slave civilisations never succeeded in doing this. Right until the end of the Roman Empire, the main means of propulsion for warships were oars, and even the freighters—in which the waste of space and food on oarsmen were uneconomic—used them when the wind was unfavourable. The galley was the dominant type of ship in the Mediterranean from earliest times up to the sixteenth century, but this is not to say that no improvements on the first Egyptian ships were effected. Considerable advances were made in constructional methods, particularly in the Iron Age; the Romans added a second mast to their freighters, the *artemon*, which sloped forward over the bows at an angle of about forty-five degrees and under which they slung another small, square sail; and considerable specialisation of purpose was achieved, basically in the division of ships into long, narrow war vessels and tubby cargo-carriers; but never a method of sailing against the wind. Even a bourgeois historian has correctly placed the reasons for this: “the geographical conditions of southern Europe and *the abundance of slaves*”² (my italics). The calmness of southern waters and the always near proximity of land, which permitted ships to beach and rest their crews, favoured the galley, while slavery removed the social incentive which could have prompted an enquiry into labour-saving methods.

This enquiry had to come from people without abundant slaves and with fresh minds unhindered by outworn customs and traditions. These people were found to the north and south of the Mediterranean Basin. From the south came the lateen, a triangular-shaped sail which runs *along* the line of the ship and not across it like a square one. This sail

¹ James Hornell, “Genetic Relation of the Bark Canoe to Dugouts and Plankbuilt Boats” (*Man*, 1940, p. 141).

² E. Keble Chatterton, *Sailing Ships*.

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was developed by the tribes of Southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf and by the Polynesians, who needed it for colonising the Pacific, which suggests a common origin somewhere in south-east Asia. It probably started as a square sail tipped on its side,¹ the forward vertical edge then being steadily cut down until it disappeared entirely, leaving a sail well suited for sailing *into* the wind. When the Arabs of Central Arabia swept out to conquer the Mediterranean area they quickly realised the value of sea power and, although themselves at first unversed in sea lore, they took the best from the seafaring races around them, combining Syrian shipbuilding with the lateen sail of their kinsmen to the south.² Thus introduced to the Mediterranean (in the seventh century A.D.), the lateen soon displaced the square sail, even on the galley, but, once established as a great conquering race, the Arabs retained the old practice of using the rowed ship for war. Meanwhile, the typical merchantman developed as a two-masted, lateen-rigged ship, in lines still very much like a Roman freighter.

The big step forward had been achieved, but in an area where geographical and social conditions prevented the full realisation of its potentialities. (The *rowed* warship did not disappear until the weapon of the new middle class, the cannon, destroyed its value by making close fighting unprofitable.) It is significant that the invention of the modern stern rudder came from the Hanseatic League in the early thirteenth century, not from the Mediterranean, despite the greater importance of the latter area at that time. Previously steering had been effected by means of oars over the quarter (that portion of the ship's side immediately forward of the stern), a method unsuited, for reasons too many and varied to explain here, to a sailing ship. This indicates that, despite the lateen sail, sailing—as opposed to rowing—was still a matter of minor importance in the south; but not so in the north.

There, even though ships were in many ways inferior to their Mediterranean contemporaries, for some centuries they had been capable of sailing *into* the wind. In 56 B.C. Julius Cæsar described the ships of the Veneti, a tribe of Brittany, as being taller and more stoutly built to resist waves and rocks than Roman ones, and, when they tried to flee, as "turning to that quarter in which the wind was," suggesting an ability even then to sail close-hauled. This may not be its meaning, but a superior ability to heave-to is also mentioned. By the end of the Viking period, it would certainly seem that oars were the less important propulsive power, even though the Viking ship still carried only one mast and a square sail (but rigged somewhat differently to its southern counterpart). Firstly, it is difficult to imagine men *rowing* across the North Atlantic to Iceland, Greenland and North America. Secondly, the

¹ Such a sail still exists on the Upper Nile.

² For a description of Arab craft and a brief history, see Hornell, "A Tentative Classification of Arab Sea Craft" (*Mariners' Mirror*, January, 1942).

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rowers in the long, narrow Viking warship were free men, not slaves, and therefore, unlike the slave oarsmen of a southern galley, took part in the actual fighting. Obviously, it would be unwise to tire them with excessive rowing. In the broader trading vessels (*knorrs*) oars were used even less. Evidence from the time of the Norman Conquest shows considerable reliance upon sails (the ships on the Bayeux Tapestry have no provision for oars) and from the early thirteenth century almost complete reliance, as witness the invention of the stern rudder and the bowsprit. The latter was like the Roman *artemon* in form, but, instead of carrying a sail, it was used to haul the windward lower corner of the mainsail further forward because, by so doing, the ship could be made to sail closer to the wind. (Note that the Romans do not seem to have thought of this.) Feudalism in northern and western Europe produced a single-masted *sailing* ship which could cope with the weather and the lack of slave labour, and it is interesting to note that in the course of transition to sail the differentiation between war and merchant ships, which had existed in Viking times, disappeared, the warships becoming merely merchantmen requisitioned in time of war.

In both north and south, society had produced a ship in its own image; but by making trade easier these ships encouraged an increase in production and strengthened the merchant class, which had already gained power in the Italian city states and the Hansa towns. In western Europe the sea-borne wool and wine trades aided the embryonic capitalist class to start the accumulation of capital which spurred them on in the search for a route to the East that did not lie through the territory of Italians or Saracens. It was realised that if such a route existed it must be sought across the Atlantic or round the south of Africa. In the latter direction, the Portuguese probed and probed until Diaz finally rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1486. Six years later Columbus, hired by Spain, discovered the West Indies, and in 1498 da Gama reached India by sea. These voyages were totally different to any made earlier in history. If the ancient Phœnicians did circumnavigate Africa, it took them about three years, during which time they stopped at least twice, long enough to sow and harvest a crop. There is more similarity to the famous Viking voyages, but these were made in stages (Iceland—Greenland—America) and with the aid of oars. The "Great Navigations" were voyages of many thousands of miles out of sight of land made by *sailing* vessels (da Gama scarcely saw Africa until he reached its southern tip, having sailed almost across to Brazil in order to make use of the westerly winds of the South Atlantic). Such voyages could not have been made with the old types of ship, and the record of the fifteenth century is therefore one of experiment and trial to produce a new one.

It is significant that this new type was finally established in the ship

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used by da Gama in 1498. Basically, it was a development of the old mediæval sailing ship, particularly in hull form, but instead of one mast it had three, and whilst the two forward ones carried square sails the aftermost carried a lateen. Under the bowsprit was a small, square sail, the first known use of a water sail since the disappearance of the Roman *artemon*. The bowsprit and lateen enabled the ship to sail sufficiently close to the wind to make reasonable progress in long tacks across the Atlantic and to manœuvre in confined waters whilst the square sails were well suited to running in constant breezes such as the trade winds.

This new ship was considerably larger than its predecessors. Whereas before 1400 English ships rarely exceeded 100–200 tons burthen, a list of ships requisitioned for an expedition to Acquitaine in 1451 contained twenty-three of 200–400 tons, whilst Henry V possessed one King's ship of 1,000 tons. England was by no means the foremost maritime nation of the day, and the increase in Portuguese and Spanish ships was even greater. Portuguese carracks of 1,500–2,000 tons were common in the East Indies trade by the middle of the sixteenth century. This increase in size originated as a response to the expanding trade of the fifteenth century, but in any case only a big ship could carry the stores necessary for such long journeys as the "Great Navigations." Once the tradition of single-mastedness had been broken, da Gama's six-sail,¹ three-masted rig spread rapidly to even the smallest craft, and even in the eighteenth century was still being used in its original form by many merchant ships. As ships, particularly warships and merchantmen in monopoly trades, such as the East Indies, increased steadily in size, additions and improvements were made to the rig without fundamental alteration until near-perfection was reached in the full-rigged ship of Nelson's day. During the nineteenth century a similar degree of perfection in hull design, with little, if any, alteration in sail rig, was achieved in the clipper ship, sail's greatest—and last—response to the threat of steam propulsion.

The history of the full sailing ship is also linked to that of cannon. The use of guns at sea is first recorded in 1356, but their widespread adoption took place only during the fifteenth century, when the three-master was "growing up." At first they produced a renewed differentiation between war and merchant ships, although at a much higher level than in Viking or Phœnician ships, but the incessant wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reversed this trend. Merchantmen were forced to carry more and more cannon until the East Indiaman of 1790 differed from a 64-gun warship only in her flatter bottom and lighter guns. Differentiation had once more decreased, only to reappear with industrialisation, until to-day it exists to a higher degree than ever before.

¹ From forward to aft: water sail, main-sail, main top-sail, main-sail, main top-sail and mizen-sail.

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The three-masted ship was typical of pre-industrial capitalism. As the latter grew out of feudalism, so the former grew out of the mediæval one-master, called into being by the new form of society which was being born, and which it then nourished with the riches of the East and West; but this nourishment provided the basis for the Industrial Revolution and the existing ship proved neither large enough nor fast enough to cope with the new volume of trade which sprang from machinery. From about 1830 onwards the iron steamship, child of the Industrial Revolution, steadily ousted wood and sail, and to-day the steel power-driven vessel is characteristic of modern capitalism. Moreover, by the assistance it is giving to the primary means of production, it is preparing its own supersession, along with capitalism as a whole.

This history of the ship has had to be brief, and many interesting points have been omitted. Nevertheless, the following conclusions can be drawn: that each distinctive phase of social history has produced a characteristic type of ship to suit its needs which, at the same time, has reciprocated by helping to determine the character of that phase; that each type of ship has produced an increasing volume of trade until the latter has become so great that it has forced a qualitative change upon the former; that these qualitative changes usually reintroduce, in a more advanced form, features which have existed previously, but have died out. (As a further example of this, ancient Rome was the first state to develop considerable specialisation of purpose in her merchant ships. This feature re-appeared importantly in the thirteenth century [Hanseatic ships], the seventeenth century [Dutch ships], and late nineteenth to twentieth centuries. To-day there are more specialised ships than general cargo carriers.) I feel sure that a study of the history of other tools would lead to similar conclusions.

What of the future? Modern productive forces have outgrown the framework of capitalist production relations and are preparing the transition to socialism, when the full unleashing of productive power will greatly increase the volume of world trade. It is doubtful if the ship in its present form could cope with this, even were it not faced with competition from the air (in a purely physical, not commercial, sense), but atomic power, jet propulsion, big advances in submarine design and other technical improvements can produce a fundamental change which will fit it for its new tasks. What form that change will take I should not like to say, but it will be qualitative, not merely quantitative. Along with it will come another—the complete abolition of the difference between war and merchant ships, as Socialism removes entirely the need for war. This will be a return to the sole original purpose of the ship—the production of trade.

The Modern Economists and the Labour Theory of Value

BY FRANK VERULAM

Introduction

BETWEEN orthodox and Marxist economists there has been, until recent years, a great gulf fixed. This is not surprising when one considers the very different problems with which each were concerned. The orthodox economists were primarily concerned with equilibrium analysis, with the determination of prices in a static society in which the factors of production were *assumed* to be fully employed. Marx, on the other hand, was bent on discovering "the law of motion of capitalist society," so that his concern was not with "equilibrium," but with "change," and his analysis was essentially dynamic.

The significance of "Keynesian economics" is that it also is concerned with a real world in which unemployment is not assumed away. It is true that Lord Keynes himself was trying to elucidate the workings of the present economic system in order to make it function more smoothly, whereas Marx's elucidation was directed to show that it must increasingly be torn asunder by its own internal contradictions. Nevertheless, within those limitations Lord Keynes was trying to discover the how and why of unemployment, and to the extent to which he succeeded it is not surprising that his analysis bears a family relationship to that of Marx. To that extent, the gulf between Marxist and non-Marxist economists has been bridged, and there is now some common ground between the two, even if it be largely ground for debate.

Lord Keynes himself did not claim any affinity between his theories and those of Marx, but some of his followers have done so. (This is perhaps because they have been less concerned to bolster up capitalism and more concerned to change it, and so have not been so repelled by the *purpose* of Marx's analysis.) Consequently, a school of "modern economists" has grown up who claim that the trouble with Marx was not that he was posing the wrong problems, but that his intellectual tools were too crude for his purpose. In the words of their leading exponent, Mrs. Joan Robinson (quoted approvingly by Mr. G. D. N. Worswick in his article in the first issue of *THE MODERN QUARTERLY*), "if there is any hope of progress in economics at all, it must be in using academic methods to solve the problems posed by Marx."

The labour theory of value comes in for particularly severe criticism, and is condemned by Mrs. Robinson as a mere "incantation" which is irrelevant to Marx's argument. In this she is echoing a similar criticism made by Mr. G. D. H. Cole in his Introduction to Volume I of *Capital*

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(Dent Edition), where he accepts the theory of surplus value, but rejects the labour theory of value as a "useless construction in the air." Yet is clear that Marx himself regarded it as the keystone of his argument. In view of this clash between the "modern" and Marxist economists, who in other directions have a certain measure of common ground, the time would appear opportune for a re-examination of the significance of this theory.

Such a re-examination is made easier by the appearance of a book by an American author, Mr. Paul M. Sweezy, entitled *The Theory of Capitalist Development*,¹ which has attracted considerable attention among both Marxist and non-Marxist economists. This book covers the whole field of Marx's economic doctrine, but in this article we shall be mainly concerned with the part which sets out and discusses the labour theory of value. I will attempt briefly to summarise Mr. Sweezy's exposition.

Economics as a Social Science

Mr. Sweezy starts off with a discussion of what economics is about. Economics, he tells us, is a social science, which means that it is one of the sciences concerned with the study and understanding of those "definite and more or less stable relations" which exist between the individuals in a society, and their changes in the course of time. Since "its subject matter is drawn from the field of the production and distribution of the goods and services which people need and want," he concludes that "economics studies the social (inter-personal) relations of production and distribution. What these relations are, how they change, and their place in the totality of social relations would seem to be the indicated subjects of enquiry."

He argues that orthodox economists have taken the economic terms used in everyday life, drained off their social content, and turned them into universal categories. Thus "wages" become the reward of labour whether the labour be that of Robinson Crusoe, of a peasant proprie or of a hired factory worker. This criticism is directed mainly against Professor Robbins, and the "modern" economists may claim that it does not apply to them.² Yet Mr. Worswick's statement that "economic propositions are concerned with the relation between quantities" would appear to indicate that the "moderns" have not yet completely emancipated themselves from the influence of the orthodox tradition. It is true that many economic propositions are expressed, and usefully expressed, in this form. Nevertheless, basically they are concerned to elucidate the social relations existing between *persons*. Those relations may have certain characteristics which are capable of quantitative

¹ Published by Dennis Dobson.

² Mrs. Robinson, for example, makes a similar criticism in her *Essay on Marxian Economics*, p. 2.

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measurement; the quantitative relationship can then be used to give precision to the qualitative, but it does not replace it. To attempt to do so leads inevitably to "draining off the social content."

For example, the fundamental relation in capitalist society is the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists. This can be expressed quantitatively in a number of ways, as, for instance, by the relative shares of wages and profits in the national income. Yet to concentrate exclusively on the numerical ratio of those shares may easily lead to illusions about the extent to which it is possible to redistribute the national income while retaining unmodified the basic relations of exploitation, of which those shares are the quantitative expression. It has led Mr. Worswick to an economic analysis which is completely at variance with his conclusions. The analysis shows that "the capitalists should be as much in favour of such a [full employment] policy as the workers." Unfortunately, they are not, and there is "an unexplained residue in the analysis of capitalism by the modern economists." The unexplained residue is the basic relationship of exploitation. It is the great merit of Marx that he starts off by explaining just what this relation is and how it arises, and he does it by means of—the labour theory of value!

Marx's Method

Mr. Sweezy prefaces his examination of Marx's theory of value with a discussion of his method. He points out that the analysis in the first part of Volume I of *Capital* is conducted at a high level of abstraction, and the development to the concrete is only completed in Volume III. Marx's justification for this procedure is that abstraction is to the economist what microscopes and chemical reagents are to the scientist. It enables him, as Mr. Sweezy puts it, "to isolate certain aspects of the real world for intensive investigation." For such a procedure to be helpful one must know what is being abstracted, i.e. what problem is being investigated and what are its essential elements.

The problem that Marx is investigating is the law of motion of capitalist society. It is important to realise that this *is* his problem, and that much of the economic analysis that has occupied the attention of academic economists lies outside his purview.

What are the essential elements in this problem? In order to live, men must produce the means of living, and in the course of doing so certain social relations, based on the productive process, develop which divide them into distinctive social groups. Each mode of production is characterised by its own specific production relation. Thus in a slave society the characteristic relation is that between the slaves and the slave-owners; in a feudal society it is that between serfs and feudal lords; and in capitalist society it is that between workers and capitalists. It is well

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known that Marx found the key to social change in the way in which the development of man's power to produce is helped forward or hindered by the prevailing production relation. To unravel the law of motion of capitalist society, therefore, it was necessary for him to isolate and analyse its characteristic production relation, that between workers and capitalists, and the reactions between this relation and the development of the productive forces.

The Qualitative-value Problem

What is the relation between capitalists and workers? The capitalist does not *own* his workers, as the slave-owner owns his slaves. He buys the worker's power to work, his labour power, for a specified period. He buys it on the market for a money payment in the same way that he buys his raw materials. The capitalists, as a class, own the means of production without which the workers cannot produce and therefore cannot live; while the workers, who own no means of production, have to sell their labour power to the capitalists in order to get the money with which to buy back from the capitalists the wherewithal to live. Thus the relation between the two classes takes the form of an *exchange* relation. Workers and capitalists exchange labour power and means of subsistence, with money functioning as the medium of exchange. It follows that in order to understand this particular exchange relation it is first necessary to analyse exchange relations in general. Marx therefore starts by analysing exchange in its most elementary form, in a society of simple commodity producers, where production is carried on by small handicraftsmen and peasants, each owning their own simple means of production, and exchanging the products of their labours. This is the starting point of Vol. I of *Capital*.

In such a society, Marx argues, commodities (a commodity is an article which is produced for exchange) will tend to exchange in the ratio of the socially necessary labour times required to produce them. It is this thesis which constitutes Marx's answer to the exchange problem or, as Mr. Sweezy terms it, the quantitative-value problem. But there is another aspect to be considered, which he terms the qualitative-value problem. Mr. Sweezy points out that Adam Smith considered the propensity to exchange as inherent in human nature, and so treated exchange of commodities as a universal and inevitable form of economic life which preceded and gave rise to the division of labour. He was only concerned with the quantitative aspect of exchange, since for him there was no other.

Marx pointed out that communities have existed in which there has been division of labour, but no exchange of commodities. Furthermore, there is division of labour inside a modern factory, but the individual workers do not exchange their products. Thus commodity production is

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not a universal and inevitable form of economic life, but one which arises in some forms of society and not in others. In other words, exchange is not just a "quantitative relation between products: hidden behind this, as Marx was the first to see, there is a specific, historically conditioned, relation between producers."¹ The analysis of the latter is what Mr. Sweezy calls the qualitative-value problem. He continues: "The great originality of Marx's value theory lies in its recognition of these two elements of the problem and in its attempt to deal with them simultaneously within a single conceptual framework. The same considerations, however, account in no small degree for the difficulty in understanding the theory which is almost invariably experienced by those brought up in the main tradition of economic thought."

It is because his primary concern is with the social relations existing between the producers that Marx, although he makes the usual distinction between use value and exchange value, considers that "use value as such lies outside the sphere of investigation of political economy."² He could not, therefore, develop a subjective theory of value, since such a theory would be irrelevant to his purpose.

Exchange value, on the other hand, is the "outward form of the *social* relation between the commodity owners, or, what comes to the same thing in simple commodity production, between the producers themselves. The exchange relation as such, apart from any consideration of the quantities involved, is an expression of the fact that individual producers, each working in isolation, are in fact working for each other. Their labour, whatever they may think about the matter, has a social character which is impressed upon it by the act of exchange."³

It is this social quality—the fact that the commodity embodies the activity of part of *society's* labour-force—which Marx describes by the term *value*. Under conditions of simple commodity production, this social quality is displayed concretely as *exchange value* or, as Marx puts it, "exchange value is the phenomenal form of value." To quote Mr. Sweezy again, "it was this analysis of the social characteristics of commodity production, and not an arbitrary preconception or an ethical principle, which led Marx to identify labour as the substance of value."⁴ Hence Marx's conception of value is not, as Mrs. Robinson would have us believe, purely a matter of definition. On the contrary, it is the expression of a fundamental fact of commodity production which both orthodox and "modern" economists tend to overlook—the fact that, as Marx put it, "magnitude of value expresses . . . the connection that exists between a certain article and the portion of the total labour time of society required to produce it."

The social relation underlying exchange appears to the producers not as a relation between themselves but as one between their products, i.e.

¹ Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 25

² Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*, p. 21.

³ Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

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as a relation between *things*, and therefore independent of the producers' own wills. The producers find themselves governed by mysterious market forces which they cannot control, but can only follow blindly so that, in Marx's words, "the process of production has the mastery over man instead of being controlled by him." The result is "a social system which has sway over man [and] educates him to the point where he has the capacity to control his own destiny. At the same time it blinds him to the means of exercising the power which is within his grasp and diverts his energies increasingly into purely destructive channels."¹ The decisive step in social control is thus to substitute real, conscious relations between producers for the "phantastic" form in which they appear in commodity production. The need for such a substitution receives a dim recognition in the current demand for a manpower budget.

The Quantitative-value Problem

Mr. Sweezy argues that two conditions are necessary for commodities to exchange in the ratios of the socially necessary labour-time incorporated in them. The first is simple commodity production, where the means of production are so simple that differences in the depreciation allowance in respect of them can be ignored. The second is competition among producers, in other words the existence of a market, coupled with the freedom of producers to move from one line of production to another. Furthermore, in connection with the wider problem of the way in which society's labour force is divided among the different lines of production, it is also necessary to take account of the relative demands for different products, as Marx himself clearly recognised. That his treatment of this aspect appears somewhat cursory is explained by the facts that (a) effective demand is determined far more by the distribution of incomes than by consumers' needs, i.e. it is the outcome of the existing class relations, and (b) above the bare physical needs, consumers' wants reflect the technical level of development, rather than *vice versa*; hence they are only passive elements in the process of social change and throw no light on the law of motion of capitalism.

Both simple commodity production and capitalist production, although they are unplanned, are not just chaotic. The importance of Marx's law of value is that it "summarises those forces at work in a commodity-producing society which regulate (a) the exchange ratios among commodities, (b) the quantity of each produced, and (c) the allocation of the labour force to the various branches of production."² "Only as an internal law, and from the point of view of the individual agents as a blind law does the law of value exert its influence here and maintain the social equilibrium of production in the turmoil of its

¹ Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

² Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 52-3.

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accidental fluctuations."¹ Without such a law the distribution of the labour force would be purely a matter of chance; there would be no more reason for the actual distribution than for any other of the thousands of possible alternatives.

Marx first shows how the law operates in the conditions of simple commodity production and then how it is modified in a capitalist society. This latter development is worked out in Volume III of *Capital*, where he shows that under capitalism individual commodities no longer exchange at their values, but at their prices of production, and he demonstrates how the latter are derived from the former. Both G. D. H. Cole and Mrs. Robinson appear to think that because under capitalism prices and values are not related in direct proportion, therefore, "according to Marx's own argument, the labour theory of value fails to provide a theory of prices."² But this is sheer nonsense. It is a commonplace of scientific method to demonstrate how a law works in a simple situation, and then to work out the modifications in a more complex situation when the simplifying conditions are removed. Furthermore, as Engels has pointed out, "the Marxian law of value holds generally, to the extent that economic laws are valid at all, for the whole period of simple commodity production, that is, up to the time when the latter suffers a modification through the entrance of the capitalist form of production. Up to that time prices gravitate towards the values fixed by the Marxian law and oscillate around these values, so that the more fully simple commodity production develops, the more do the average prices of long periods uninterrupted by external violent disturbances coincide with values within the limits of error. Thus the Marxian law of value has general economic validity for a period lasting from the beginning of exchange, which transforms products into commodities, down to the fifteenth century of the present era. But the exchange of commodities dates from a time before all written history. . . . Thus the law of value has prevailed during a period of from five to seven thousand years."³

Capitalist Production and Surplus Value

The first distinction between simple commodity production and capitalist production is that under the latter labour power itself becomes a commodity and is bought and sold on the market. The second distinction is that whereas under simple commodity production the basic purpose of exchange is to obtain use values, under capitalism the basic purpose is the *expansion of value*, or, as the capitalist would put it, to make a profit. Marx symbolises this distinction in his two formulæ,

¹ *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 1026.

² Joan Robinson, *Essay on Marxian Economics*, p. 20.

³ Engels, Supplement to Volume III of *Capital*, included in *Engels on Capital*, p. 106.

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C—M—C, and M—C—M.' In simple commodity production, the producer sells his commodities for money (C—M), with which he buys the commodities of other producers (M—C). The latter are bought, not in order to be resold, but in order to be consumed, so that they cease to be commodities and pass out of the sphere of circulation. In capitalist production, however, the starting point is money, which is used to buy commodities, including labour power, (M—C), to be turned into other commodities, which are sold for a greater sum of money (C—M'), so that the capitalist makes a profit of M'—M. This is possible because labour power has the peculiar property of being able to create more value than is needed for its own production—in other words, the worker can produce more in a day's labour than is needed for his own maintenance (and that of his family). This surplus value belongs to the capitalist because he has bought the workers' labour power, and is the source of the capitalist's profit. Thus the working day can be divided into two parts, during one of which the worker is in effect working for the capitalist, and in the other for himself. The ratio of the two Marx defines as the rate of exploitation.

The capitalists are only able to buy labour power, and so to retain for themselves the surplus value it creates, because the workers themselves have no means of production of their own. An essential prerequisite of capitalist production is therefore the "freeing" of the great mass of commodity producers from their means of production so that they become propertyless and have to sell their labour power in order to live. In his chapter on "Primary Accumulation," Marx showed in detail how this expropriation was brought about in Britain, particularly through the Enclosure Acts, which divorced the peasants from their land, and the savage Vagrancy Acts, which forced them to hire themselves out for work on pain of branding or worse.

Thus the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists is the direct result of the capitalist-labour relationship, which itself is based on the expropriation of the labourers; in other words, the essence of that relationship is *exploitation*, although the exploitation is indirect and not direct, as in the case of slavery or feudalism. It is this key fact that the modern economists, for all their refined intellectual tools, are unable to explain. Marx's theory of value both explains it and shows how it developed out of simple commodity production. (Incidentally, it may be noted that it would be difficult to find in academic economics anything so concise as the summary of the fundamental characteristics of, and differences between, simple commodity and capitalist production embodied in the two formulæ, C—M—C and M—C—M'.)

Hence the lacuna—the "unexplained residue"—in Mr. Worswick's analysis which we noted above. His explanation is that unemployment divides the workers and so enables the capitalists to "retain economic

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power"; but he does not explain what this "economic power" is, or why the capitalists should want it (since "there are no inherent *economic* contradictions in such a full-employment capitalist system"). Marx's analysis shows that this "economic power" is precisely the power to exploit—in other words, to continue the basic capitalist-labour relation. The capitalists recognise this: hence their opposition to any conception of full employment which would tend to deprive them of their whip hand. As a writer in *The Times* expressed it: "Unemployment is not a mere accidental blemish in a private enterprise economy. On the contrary, it is part of the essential mechanism of the system, and it has a definite function to fulfil . . . that it maintains the authority of master over man. The master has normally been in a position to say: 'If you don't want the job, there are plenty of others who do.' When the man can say, 'If you don't want to employ me, there are plenty of others who will,' the situation is radically altered."¹ That is why the capitalists view with such horror Sir William Beveridge's definition of full employment as "more jobs than men." The White Paper objective of a "high and stable level of employment" they might stomach, but full employment—never. It would undermine the basic social relation on which their profit-earning depends.

Mrs. Robinson agrees that "Marx's method of treating profit as 'unpaid labour,' and the whole apparatus of constant and variable capital and the rate of exploitation, keep insistently before the mind of the reader a picture of the capitalist process as a system of piracy, preying upon the very life of the workers": but she argues that "His terminology derives its force from the moral indignation with which it is saturated" and that "no point of substance in Marx's argument depends upon the labour theory of value."² But his analysis of the "capitalist process as a system of piracy" is not only a point of substance; it is *the* point of substance which provides the key to the correct understanding both of the law of motion of capitalism and of the political action necessary to change it. The labour theory of value provides the basis of that analysis, as it provides the basis for Marx's admitted "penetrating insight and bitter hatred of oppression."³ Marx's concepts, in fact, are penetrating and precise just where those of the modern economists are blurred; in explaining the social relations of capitalism and how they have arisen, which is essential to a real understanding of the nature of capitalism.

Conclusions

Marx's theory of value enables us to understand the general social and economic relations which condition the detailed economic problems

¹ "Planning Full Employment," *The Times*, January 23rd, 1943.

² Mrs. Robinson, *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, pp. 26-7.

³ Mrs. Robinson, *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, pp. 26-7.

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with which academic economists are largely concerned. It can readily be admitted that Marxist economists can learn much from the researches of "modern" economists and statisticians, and, by applying these within the framework of Marxist economics, they can make a contribution to the detailed problems in which both Marxist and "modern" economists are interested. For the latter, more "refined" (in the sense of more measurable) concepts than those available to Marx may often be useful to supplement his fundamental economic analysis, but we certainly cannot afford to throw his analysis overboard. "Modern" economics, *by itself*, can be used just as well by Liberals as by Socialists (as witness Sir William Beveridge, the *Economist*, or the White Paper on Employment Policy), precisely because it does not analyse and explain the basic social relations of a capitalist society. Furthermore, the lack of such an analysis leads easily to the implicit assumption that the existing relations are essentially the "right" ones. Thus in the current controversy over wages policy it is all too readily assumed that the current distribution between wages and profits must be accepted, and that therefore wages can only be increased as productivity increases. Similarly, much of the argumentation about the "British way of life" is really little more than a demand for the perpetuation of the freedom of the capitalists to continue their exploitation of the workers. Marx's analysis puts the question bluntly: whose side are we on, the worker's or the capitalist's? Modern economics, because it slurs over the economic antagonisms of a class-divided society, permits "middle-of-the-way" Liberals to burk the real issue and to concentrate on "patching up," rather than on overcoming the root evil, the exploitation of the great mass of the population by a small minority. Thus full employment is regarded as an end in itself rather than as a means of strengthening the working class in their struggle against the capitalists, as a step on the road to Socialism. Those modern economists like Mr. Worswick who do not regard full employment as an end in itself are forced to base their arguments on political or ethical considerations which appear to contradict their economic analysis.

The "gap in Socialist strategy" is not, as Mr. Worswick argues, the lack of a full employment policy based on "modern" economics. The real gap is the lack of understanding of the antagonistic class relations in a society based on exploitation, an understanding which only Marxist economics provides. This lack is particularly noticeable in the realm of external affairs, where an appreciation of the way in which capitalist domination gives rise to, and is replaced by, imperialist domination is unfortunately almost completely absent.

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THE MECHANISM OF EVOLUTION

By J. B. S. HALDANE

PROFESSOR TEISSIER'S account of the Mechanism of Evolution¹ is so excellent a summary of the neo-Darwinian point of view, and I agree so completely with most of it, that I think it worth criticising in detail, the more so because since Teissier and I share the same biological background and the same philosophical views, it is quite likely that he may accept at least some of my criticisms.

I do not think that his title is any better chosen than my own title of *The Causes of Evolution* for a book on the same topic written fourteen years ago. My own title was too pretentious; his is too modest. I think that the processes which he describes, though they have a mechanical aspect, yet transcend mechanism. In the first place, the units in the processes are not themselves mere machines. Secondly, the processes have the uniqueness characteristic of history, and which we deny when we speak of mechanism. Of course, Teissier and I, in our mathematical work, have overlooked this uniqueness. The effects of selection on oaks and snails can be described in the same terms, just as can the economic effects of an increased demand for bread or billiard balls under capitalist economics. But in each case the actual result of selection is a unique historical event. Both he and I have been trying to formulate a causal analysis of evolution, rather than to reduce it to mechanism.

My second point is much more serious. It relates to human selection of domesticated animals and plants. He states that this always occurs in three stages. An exceptional individual appears by chance (or more accurately as the result of events at present outside human control and largely outside human prediction) which "seem to merit preservation." It "is chosen for breeding," its descendants examined, and those which show the same character kept as parents for future generations. Finally, a race is produced all of whose members show the character in question, and this is kept pure.

This is a correct account of the origin of most modern races of such organisms, though not a complete one. I believe it to be wholly untrue of their first origin. Primitive men collected the seeds of wild wheats. They found that if they scattered them, they obtained a crop next year. It has been suggested that they first scattered them, as food, over the graves of the dead, and that this gave rise to the idea that a human death was needed to ensure the success of a crop, thus originating the

¹ *La Pensée*, Nos. 2 and 3, 1945, *MODERN QUARTERLY*, Nos. 3 and 4, Vol. 1, New Series.

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notions of human sacrifice and the transformation of the victim into bread, which still haunt religion. Now, wild plants vary in many directions. Some have a genetical constitution which causes them to produce more seeds than the average, but in spite of this their descendants do not form a larger proportion of the next generation than those of the normal type, because they lack other qualities needed for survival. In particular, our cultivated wheats do not survive in competition with wild plants, apparently because they can only produce an adequate root system in the absence of competition. They grow very well on cleared ground, but are ousted by competitors in a meadow. However, once they are grown on ploughed or hoed fields or gardens, the many-seeded varieties have a great advantage; and within a few years the wheats cultivated by primitive men must have given a much higher yield than the wild plants. If our ancestors noted the fact, they presumably attributed it to their own magic or the influence of gods or spirits.

The above theory is, I think, proved by a simple fact. One can buy commercial seed of many meadow grasses. A seedsman gathers seed from a plant in a meadow, sows it in bare earth, repeats the process for some years, and obtains a stock of which he sells the seed. Plants grown from such seed yield much more seed than ordinary meadow grasses, but are much more easily killed by grazing animals. In fact, meadows formed from commercial seed are apt to be unsatisfactory for some years until natural selection by the teeth and hooves of grazing animals has had time to reverse the unconscious human selective process. This fact was discovered by Stapledon of Aberystwyth, who was able to produce races of meadow grass with the qualities needed by the stock farmer, but yielding a good deal less seed per acre than the usual commercial strains.

In the same way, domestic animals were selected for fertility. A wild jungle fowl, even under domestic conditions, will only lay a dozen or so eggs per year. In Nature she could not possibly raise fifty chickens, but this is quite possible if she is protected from enemies and provided with food. Besides fertility, animals have also been selected for tameness, not by any deliberate process, but probably because the wilder ones escaped or were killed off as unmanageable. Finally, domesticated plants and animals are overcrowded as compared with wild ones and therefore more liable to infectious diseases. There has been, and still is, a steady but quite unconscious selection for immunity, which must certainly have produced secondary effects.

I doubt whether conscious selection began until the domesticated plants and animals had so far transformed human society that they had become one of the main subjects of man's interest, and men and women began to study their differences. In particular, I think that at a time when men were already beginning to breed from favourite individual

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dogs, horses, or even bean plants, and to plant or graft cuttings from favourite trees, they would never have thought of picking out an individual wheat or barley plant as a parent of part of the next generation.

This is shown by the frequency of weeds in primitive crops, and the fact that rye, which is a weed in temperate wheatfields, appears to have replaced wheat in the sub-arctic zone by unconscious selection, since it is more resistant to cold.

Professor Teissier has, I think, fallen into the same error as Rousseau concerning primitive man. Rousseau thought that society was the designed result of a social contract. Teissier thinks that the rapid and striking changes which have certainly occurred in animals and plants were the direct result of human volition. Darwin, of course, took the same view. I think that, until quite recently, the influence of man on his domesticated animals and plants is adequately described in Engels' words.¹ "The ends of the actions are intended, but the results which actually flow from these actions are not intended; or when they seem to correspond to the end intended, they ultimately have consequences quite other than those intended."

A good example of the unintended result is seen in the banana. The fruit trusts insisted on a standard banana suitable for export. They got it. So did a fungus which attacks the roots of this particular variety. Too uniform a population is always particularly liable to epidemic disease.

For primitive men, laws and customs were something given. So far as we know the ancient Greeks were the first men who had the truly revolutionary notion that laws, and even constitutions, could be changed at will by a rational process not necessarily involving bloodshed; and it was only in our own time that Lenin and his colleagues remodelled an entire social system according to a rational system of political and economic thought. The deliberate modification of domestic animals probably began in historical times, and the deliberate production of wholly new types of plant, such as the domestic strawberry, a hybrid of European and American species, in the eighteenth century, at the time of the American and French revolutions. Only in our own time have the scientific principles of breeding and state-making been understood and applied.

The reason for the very rapid evolution of domestic animals and plants was not, in my opinion, that men wished them to evolve as they did, but that they put them in wholly new environments where they were subjected to new and intense selective forces. In many cases the evolution was in accordance with human wishes. In many others it was not. It is doubtful if our planted trees produce better timber than those of natural forests, though Sylvén and other Swedish workers have just

¹ Feuerbach, p. 58.

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begun to select trees scientifically for this purpose, and even to induce heritable changes in them. Dechambre believes that the ancient Egyptians of the Old Kingdom had many more species of domesticated animals than their modern descendants, or even their descendants of the Middle Kingdom. If this is so, it is probable that those which did not alter markedly in the direction of increased tameness, fertility, and yield of milk, meat, and so forth, were discarded. It is even possible that deliberate selection only began when men had noticed the differences produced by unconscious selection between domestic breeds and wild members of the same species, and between domestic breeds in different lands. Similarly, the study of foreign laws and customs by traders seems to have been a real stimulus to constitutional change in ancient Greece.

I have perhaps laboured this point unduly because I think it of the greatest importance that we should not overrate the wisdom of our ancestors by attributing to it the origin of things or customs which actually arose without any conscious planning. If we do so in the case of domesticated organisms, we may also do so in the case of political, economic, or religious practices, with serious results.

But it is equally important for the student of evolution. Consider an animal such as the sable, which is just being domesticated. It is said to be very difficult to breed sables in captivity; on the other hand, the demand for them will be very great for many years unless the tastes of our own species change. This means that few of the captured individuals breed, perhaps even few of their immediate progeny, but that any heritable characters making for fertility and viability under artificial conditions have a very large selective value, so that the descendants of a few pairs may have increased to millions within twenty years. Hence evolution of physiological traits making for fertility and viability in captivity is likely to be very rapid. Just the same must have happened on the comparatively rare occasions in the past when a species colonised a habitat which none of its like had colonised before. When our fishy ancestors left the water in Devonian times the first amphibia must have had immense difficulties, and doubtless most of them died without breeding. But they had no competitors, no predators, and probably fewer parasites than their wholly aquatic ancestors. Those which could live on land must have multiplied enormously, and the evolution of just enough adaptations to make this possible—in particular, the change of the fins into primitive legs—must have been very rapid. In fact, we have no record of this change, which may have taken place as quickly as the changes in domestic animals since Neolithic times. Once there was direct competition, change was far slower, because selection was directed to escaping predators, competing for mates, and so on, as well as to adaption to life on land. Thus we have records of such changes as the movement of the nostrils from the lower to the upper surface of the head, an obvious advantage to swamp-dwellers, but not a necessity.

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So I question Teissier's statement that "man works more swiftly than Nature." It is certainly true in the great majority of cases. It may be untrue in some critical cases which have been of vast historical importance.

A few minor criticisms may be added. Teissier states (p. 38), "physical qualities are always partly genetic in nature." This is true, but rather misleading. For it is not always true of the differences between individuals, which are what count for natural or artificial selection. Mouse A is heavier than mouse B of the same age. This may well be because it has had more to eat. In fact, if both had been given just the same diet, B might have been heavier than A. Experimental selection shows, however, that if we take a hundred mice from a mixed population in a uniform environment the heavier ones will, on the whole, differ from the lighter in respect of genetical factors making for weight. But if we took our heavy mice from one population, and our light ones from another which was worse fed, there might be no genetical basis for the difference. The point is not trivial when we come to compare different human groups, for example the pastoral and agricultural tribes of East Africa, or different classes in a capitalist society.

I am perhaps biased in favour of my own theories, but I think Teissier could have sharpened his argument concerning evolutionary trends leading to extinction, and in particular the development of horns and other weapons beyond the stage at which they were of any value to the species. He correctly points out that these horns are often "weapons for the duels of males," and that "such an evolution must almost inevitably lead to a catastrophe for the group which indulges in it." I think we can generalise, and say that any adaptations which merely increase the fitness of individuals in the struggle against other individuals of the same species, and not in the struggle against other species and inanimate Nature, are harmful in the sense that they tend to decrease the total numbers of the species in question and increase its liability to extinction. This is not only true of overt struggles such as the struggle for mates. Man develops more slowly than most mammals, both before and after birth.¹ Thus cows are larger than men, but are mature at two years. Clearly, natural selection would make such slowing down very difficult in an animal such as the pig or rat which produces large litters. A member of the litter which developed much slower than the rest before birth would be born as a premature embryo. One which grew more slowly afterwards would suffer the usual fate of "runts." In fact the existence of competition within a litter closes one possible avenue of evolution which has in fact proved fruitful.

I disagree with Teissier that it is "well established that in every wild species the majority, if not all, individuals are heterozygous for a certain number of genes." A few wild species are self-fertilised. In others

¹ Cf. Medawar's article in *MODERN QUARTERLY*, Vol. 2, No. 1.

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brother-sister mating is the rule. It is likely that such practices are unusual just because it is advantageous that most individuals should be heterozygous. However, this question will only be decided when a careful comparison has been made of the adaptability of two related species, one outbred and the other inbred.

Two minor points may be noted in Teissier's discussion of the birth of species. The various breeds of dog can, as he says, be easily crossed, and the hybrids are usually vigorous. But those between the St. Bernard and Great Dane commonly develop paralysis of the hind quarters. In fact human selection has begun to produce a difference of one of the kinds which are found between species. And the edentates are not strictly limited to South America, as Teissier states. Even if we restrict this term to the order *Xenarthra*, one armadillo has got as far north as Texas. Some ground sloths got a good deal farther north, but were exterminated. Certainly the edentates have only recently (geologically speaking) had the chance to invade North America, and it is significant that the only successful invader has been a species which found no competitor in its peculiar mode of life.

I differ from him more seriously in his statement as to what happens when two related species, evolved in isolation, meet again. He says that there is a struggle, and "one of the races must inevitably win—unless the species remains split into two groups differing enough in their tastes and needs to be able to live at the same time without bothering each other too much." Certainly one species may supplant the other. But several alternatives are possible. There are two subspecies or species of crow, the black carrion crow, *Corvus corvus corone*, and the grey-mantled hoodie crow, *Corvus corvus cornix*, which hybridise in Nature. The hoodies occupy most of Europe, including Ireland and northern Scotland, but not England, and a little of Asia. The frontiers between the species runs through central Scotland, from Kiel to Genoa, from the mouth of the Yenisei to the Altai Mountains, and thence to near the Aral Sea. They do not struggle along the frontier line, but hybridise. There is a belt about 100 miles wide where crows of mixed type are found, and even the birds in a single nest may differ. Similar cases occur in other birds and rodents. I mention this fact because the inevitability of a struggle between related species or varieties is part of the Nazi doctrine, whereas in fact there is no biological reason why the different human races should not behave to one another as well as do the races of crows.

I hope that Professor Teissier will pardon these criticisms. I make them because his article is, in my opinion, so far the best recent short summary of the present position of the Darwinian theory that I hope that it may be reprinted in a more permanent form.

THE HERO IN HISTORY

By E. HOBSBAWM

IF the twentieth century has done nothing else, it has certainly provided the historian with a wealth of material for the study of the individual as a factor in history—a subject on which there has been much mystical, much journalistic and very little scientific literature. I am afraid that the latest discussion of the problem, Sidney Hook's *The Hero in History*, will disappoint those who expected an adequate treatment of the subject. It is an interesting piece of political special pleading rather than an attempt to investigate a problem which is not, incidentally, strictly that of the title. For what Hook discusses is not merely the role of the "great man"—the "event-making" man, as he calls him—but more generally the role of the accidental, i.e. not immediately predictable, factors in history of which the "outstanding personality" is only one specialised case. As the problem is fundamental for any historian who pretends to scientific method, his inadequacies are worth some consideration.

The book spends much time discussing and rejecting various theories on the subject. The Carlylean view of the individual "hero" as the real motive force of history is, naturally, soon dismissed (though Hook appears, in a most unconvincing argument, to accept something like it in the field of the "Heroes of Thought"—artists, thinkers, etc.; but as he does not grant them a major political rôle as such, the point does not affect his main argument). He next discusses the views of "social determinists," who, in his view, supply the great majority of the social scientists to-day. The strict Hegelians and the followers of Spencer are rapidly dealt with. There follows a long discussion of the Marxists, or, rather, of one paragraph from Engels' letter to Starkenburg and a selection from Plekhanov's *Role of the Individual in History*.

Now, Marxism is, by Hook's own admission, by far the most serious contender on the field. While it has always sought to discover the laws of historical development, believing that history is a science, capable of enabling us to make predictions, Marxism is neither mechanist nor fatalist and takes full account of the importance of "accidental" factors. (We may note in parenthesis that this admission that Marxism takes such things into account is quite a new development in anti-Marxist polemics. A. L. Rowse has not yet reached this stage in his latest book.) On the face of it, therefore, it would seem that Marxism provided just the framework for a scientific study of the problem. This Hook denies; a view which logically forces him to show that "its concessions are hopelessly at odds with its basic position. Where it paid adequate attention

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to the work of great historical figures . . . its historical monism went by the board. Where it interpreted [their] historical activity . . . as 'expressions' of convergent social pressure or merely as 'instruments' of class interest, it often abandoned its scientific approach for the mystical a priorism which was part of the Hegelian heritage." In other words, he must reduce Marxism from a dialectical method which finds no difficulty in combining precise laws of social development with quite a wide scope for the "unpredictable" factors to something like mechanist determinism. As the recorded views of Marxists hardly permit such an interpretation, he is therefore driven, on the one hand, to forget standard Marxist theory and practice on the subject—the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, for example, and the majority of the Engels letters on historical materialism—on the other hand, to launch out into what one may call the "higher criticism" of the Marxist classics. Thus he ingenuously suggests that Plekhanov started his pamphlet as an orthodox Marxist, broke away (honest man that he was) halfway through, only to return to orthodoxy again at the end. This method of criticism, which has lately come into fashion, has many advantages. No doubt it will be logically developed by hypotheses about "pseudo-Marxes" and "proto-Engels" and "Lenins II" in the approved style.

It is fortunately unnecessary to discuss Hook's criticisms in detail here. His main target, Plekhanov's brilliant little work, has recently been republished, and can therefore speak for itself. Nevertheless, the type of analysis in which Hook indulges is not likely to give the reader unfamiliar with Marxism a clear idea of how Marxists have approached the problem under discussion. A short sketch of this may therefore not be out of place.

The term "accidents" is, of course, merely convenient shorthand. "Fortuity," says Plekhanov, "is something relative. It appears only at the point of intersection of inevitable processes." In its widest sense, therefore, they are merely things which cannot be directly predicted from our knowledge of the laws of history and of a given situation. (It is worth pointing out here that the philosophical problem of determinism, whatever one's views on it may be, does not actually enter into historical discussions.) Now, Marxists are far from denying the importance of "fortuity," let alone its existence. It is clearly of historical importance whether a Roosevelt or a Truman is President of the U.S.A. But as scientists their attention must be directed primarily to the discovery of regularities and laws; as revolutionaries they want to learn from history how to utilise the controllable and predictable factors rather than how to expect the uncontrollable. Thus while they rejoice that the Soviet Union has been successively built by two such authentic "great men" as Lenin and Stalin, they have never built their hopes for the future on the appearance of highly exceptional individuals, or wasted time in elaborating a technique for predicting their appearance. Marxist

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historical theory has in this connection commonly concentrated on two questions: first, to what extent "fortuity" is in fact limited by the operation of predictable factors; and second, the much more speculative problem of how far "fortuity" can divert the course of history. That problem, as a matter of fact, is so speculative as to be capable of only the most tentative discussion; hence there is no value in attempting to discuss Hook's frequent and lighthearted excursions into the field of "What would have happened if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter?" in the limited space available here.

The most general limitation of fortuities is summed up by Plekhanov, who distinguishes between "General Causes" (the development of productive forces), "Special Causes" (the given historical situation, which is, of course, in the last analysis derived from the general causes) and "Individual Causes," i.e. "the personal qualities of public men and other fortuities"; these cannot bring about changes in the operation of the first two, which determine their trends and limits. Within those limits, however, the substitution of one individual cause for another would certainly result in very different developments.

Yet the "individual causes" need not always be regarded as purely fortuitous. To confine ourselves to the case of personality: the individual is largely moulded by his environment, so that the direction of his abilities, his desires, wishes and ambitions are largely specific to it. Moreover, the possibility of their utilisation—in other words, the frequency of their appearance on the public stage—may well be subject to laws, perhaps even open to statistical expression, though the practical difficulties are enormous and the laws still very obscure. For instance, the comparative likelihood of a great tenor appearing in Italy rather than Britain can be fairly accurately stated, and perhaps—tentatively—even predicted. But more complex phenomena, such as the high rate of literary talent among Southern Irish Protestants from 1870–1925 (or thereabouts) or of artistic talent in Renaissance Italy, will only be open to prediction when we know more about the inter-relation between talent and society. Even in individual cases we can often determine the conditions under which alone a certain type of talent or person will reach his full development. Thus Wickham Steed pointed out before the war (which gives the opinion greater weight) that it would require, not merely a world war, but a peculiarly desperate and simple situation to bring out Mr. Churchill's great but extremely limited gifts.

Moreover, if fortuity is shot through with predictable and regular elements, so is the possibility of its effect on history. Thus it is evident that the accidental played a very much larger part in the diplomacy of German dwarf states from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries than in that of France and Britain; that the full development of a Jewish genius was more likely after emancipation than before it. Theoretically, therefore, historical predictions, like weather forecasts (there is some

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similarity between the sciences) can take into account a good deal of the fortuitous. Moreover, as Marx pointed out long ago, "accidents are compensated for by other accidents."

Yet while Marxists hold that many examples of "accident" are only apparent, and are really the expression of underlying regularities—such as the appearance of some "great men" at certain historical junctures—they do not deny the existence of fortuity, the importance of "great men," or, what is historically not dissimilar, of the exercise of good leadership and political initiative. For the Marxist view of the "great man" is that he cannot change the broad course of history, but that he can speed up (or retard) its development: the greater his understanding of the trend of historical development and his willingness to move in this direction, the more lasting are the results of "greatness" likely to be. Similes are notoriously misleading; yet one may, all due precautions taken, get an idea of the Marxist view from Mark Twain's picture of the old Mississippi pilots, who knew every inch of the swirling, ever-changing, lengthening and contracting river and could discover at any moment the quickest way to reach their destination. One might extend the simile, and compare great men equipped with the science of Marxism—a Lenin or a Stalin—with pilots who know not merely every inch of the river, but also something about the geological laws which cause its bends to be cut off or its bed to be shifted, and of the existence of yet further harbours beyond the river mouth. In this their work is likely to be more lasting than that of a great man like, let us say, Roosevelt, who makes up for some inadequacies of knowledge by a "nose" for the river, an ability to throw his rudder round instinctively and a burning desire to get downstream after all; or a Bismarck, who uses his immense knowledge to steer dead against the current. It is to be noted, incidentally, that the Marxist view of great men is interested mainly in those of their characteristics and functions which can, by the use of scientific understanding, be achieved by less gifted men acting together to change the world.

The Marxist technique provides no automatic guaranteed answers—a fact that surprises Hook—to most of the problems at the normal level of history writing; that is to say, at a level of detail, on which the statistical laws with which every science operates are effective only as a "general trend." But it undoubtedly provides a method, and this Hook rejects for a sterile eclecticism. "Historical enlightenment is not furthered by approaching cultures as wholes," he thinks, because he can discover no generalisations about them more helpful than the Chinese sages. "Man is born, suffers and dies"—a confession of impotence. He deprecates H. A. L. Fisher's complete rejection of any general law; but the best he will himself allow (if I understand him correctly) is the possibility of forming "chains of consequences," none of which need be linked with each other. No wonder his own conclusion about the role of "heroes"

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boils down to something like: "Sometimes they can divert the cause of events, sometimes they can't." This is hardly worth writing a book about.

Yet in fact this is not why the book is written. Hook clearly rejects Marxism, not because it is a worse social science than his own—it demonstrably is not—but because he wishes to avoid drawing the conclusions which are now commonly admitted to follow from it. In the old days, when German Social-Democrats were still prepared to derive "Western Socialism" from Marx, this was not yet necessary. To-day, however, when men like Leon Blum have declared themselves no longer Marxists, Marxism must be rejected by anyone who asks Hook's question, "Does the evolution toward Collectivism inevitably mean also an evolution toward totalitarianism?" (i.e. Communism) wanting to hear the answer: "No." It is to get this answer that he has, I think, written his book. As one might expect, it has led him to a regrettable lowering of the standards of social science.

E. J. HOBSBAWM.

MILNE

BY HYMAN FRANKEL

I AM glad that Professor Haldane noted my omission. In fact, it was not accidental, but dictated by the need for economy in presentation. As, however, his reminder has raised what I feel to be a point of some importance, may I reply with the following observations.

Milne's theory began as a critique of the mechanist tradition in physics, which was responsible for the unsatisfactory explanations of the newly observed phenomenon of the expanding universe. Both Newtonian and Einsteinian cosmology see the universe as a static existent: in the former the heavenly bodies rotate in accordance with the dictates of God and the inverse square law; the latter abolishes what was in fact Einstein's own great discovery, the principle of the relativity of motion, in order to build a static universe in which motion plays little or no part. When Einstein's disciples tried to adapt his curved space-time to account for the recession of the nebulae (expansion of the universe), the results were really weird and wonderful. In its final form (*q.v.* Eddington's *The Expanding Universe*), the universe was "running away" and will eventually explode into unconnected fragments. On the other hand, Milne's *t*-scale universe is not hurling to destruction, but merely expanding at a uniform rate.

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The significance of this theoretical conflict is already fairly obvious; and I concur with Haldane in the great importance which must be attached to Milne's remarkable achievement. But the beauty of it does not, as Professor Haldane remarked, lie in the dialectical unity of t and τ scales, but in the shattering of the mechanistic approach to the question of the structure of the physical universe and its replacement by a dialectical theory.

Why cannot Einsteinians formulate a working cosmology? The answer, as I indicated in the first draft of my article, was supplied by Christopher Caudwell, whose uniquely acute analytical mind, using the instrument of Marxism, perceived that Einstein had in fact continued the bourgeois scientific method of abstracting the active subject from Nature. What science the savage practised was interwoven with life, with activity upon and within Nature—was, in short, part of life. Not so with the bourgeois. As he became divorced more and more from active participation in the actual productive process, he persistently saw Nature as there for his enjoyment, as outside himself, as separated from the subject, which was himself. Consequently, the cosmologies of both Newton and Einstein are abstract, purely objective, lifeless; in neither does the observer actively enter. But man is in the universe, not outside it. He must formulate a theory of which he himself is an active part.

Such a theory—and this is what Milne has done—starts from the postulate of equivalence, viz. that any two "observers" occupying different positions in space may correlate their respective observations of the universe. Plainly, such a postulate implies a relativistic view of the universe, as emerges clearly from the whole subsequent development of his so-called "kinematical" theory of relativity. Milne then goes on to explain that the static universes of Newton and Einstein can be identified with an alternative time-scale (τ), if the concept of correlation of observations is abandoned. Matter in the universe then ceases to be dynamic, evolutionary, dialectical, and, in the true bourgeois tradition, appears mechanical, without history ("absolute time has no beginning") and static.

This is the significance of Milne's revolutionary conception.

Yours, etc.,

HYMAN FRANKEL.

Notes on Russian Artists

KONSTANTINOV, FEDOR

This artist specialises in woodcuts. He has illustrated editions of Horace, Ovid, Dante and Shakespeare. Two illustrations from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales will be found in the text of Jack Chen's article. Konstantinov was born in 1910 of peasant stock and received his early education in a textile engineering school. He entered the Academy of Mining Engineering and at this time commenced to draw. In 1930 he entered the Institute of Fine Arts in Moscow, from which he graduated in 1935.

A further example of book illustration is seen in A Laptev's The Ant. Russian fables, folk tales and fairy stories are the inspiration of much first-class work of this character.

SOIFERTIS, LEONID

Studied art at Kharkov University. Illustrated Ilf and Petrov's Twelve Chairs and The Little Golden Calf. During the war he went to the front and made sketches of day-to-day war scenes in the beleaguered towns of Odessa and Sevastapol and in the Caucasus. His Sevastopol sketches, many of which were shown in the London Exhibition of Soviet Graphic Arts, are ranked by many critics among the best things produced during the past war. The sketch On the Spree was made in the Russian Zone of Germany.

SEROV, VALENTIN (1865-1911)

The last representative of Russian realist tradition. A pupil of Kepin he completed his art education at the St. Petersburg Academy. He is best known as a portrait painter, but he also painted historical scenes and landscapes and was a master of drawing. Girl with Peaches, in the Tretyakov Gallery, is an outstanding achievement of late Russian bourgeois realism in paint. The Serov tradition is strong in contemporary Soviet painting.

TSIPLAKOV, VICTOR

A promising young painter, one of nineteen young graduates who exhibited for the first time at the recent All-Union Art Exhibition in the Tretyakov Gallery. Alexander Kamensky describes Gorki on the Volga as revealing both thoughts and craftsmanship. "The image of the great writer in the early days of his career, the years of his wanderings and first romantic poems, are portrayed with subtle skill. We see the huge figure with its shock of hair flying in the wind. Gorki is standing on the bank of the Volga; it is not his romantic appearance and pose, but the tense concentration, the strength and vigorous force stamped in the face that lend such power to the portrait."

Our Contributors

Jack Chen, who is Chinese, was born in Trinidad. Later he went to Moscow with his father, who had been Minister for Foreign Affairs under Sun Yat-sen. He lived in Moscow for ten years, five years of which were spent at the Polygraphic Institute. He then taught art in China and later visited America and England with an exhibition of Chinese Art. In 1944, wrote the book *Soviet Art and Artists* published by Pilot Press. At present is *Daily Worker* correspondent in China.

Maurice Cornforth studied philosophy at London University and then at Cambridge. Wrote paper in *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society* on "Is Logical Analysis a Useful Method in Philosophy?" Was for some time a district organiser of the Communist Party and also a county secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers. His book, *Science versus Idealism*, will be published shortly.

Margot Heinemann, student and research student, Newnham College, Cambridge, 1931-5. Member of staff of Labour Research Department since 1937. Author of *Britain's Coal* (Gollancz, 1944) and of a book to be published this spring on wages structure and policy.

N. J. Klugmann, student and research student, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1931-5. In British Army from 1940 to April, 1945, serving after 1942 with military organisations working in liaison with the Yugoslav Partisans. April, 1945 to July, 1946, Executive Assistant to Chief of U.N.R.R.A. Yugoslav Mission.

A. A. Zhdanov is Chairman of the Soviet of the Union and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He was in complete charge of civilian defence of Leningrad during the siege and in February, 1946 (on his fiftieth birthday), he was awarded the Order of Lenin for his outstanding services to the Soviet people in peace and war.

A. Cornu wrote a treatise on the youth of Marx in the 1930's. At present is in charge of research at the French National Centre of Scientific Research.

Charles E. Gibson served in the Royal Navy for six years and became interested in the history of naval architecture and strategy. He has a book on *The Story of the Ship* in preparation.

Our *Communications* are from: *J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S., Hyman Frankel*, and *Eric Hobsbawm* who was educated in London and at Cambridge where he is now researching at King's College.

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