

The Revisionism of Sidney Hook

By EARL BROWDER

IN *The Communist* for January, Comrade V. J. Jerome opened up a very interesting and valuable discussion of the fundamentals of Marxian theory in the form of a critical examination of the writings of Sidney Hook. Comrade Jerome traced in great detail some of the essential departures of Hook from the principles of Marxism, and came to the conclusion that Hook's interpretation of Marx represents a systematic revision in the direction of the philosophical doctrines of the American bourgeoisie, notably the instrumentalist philosophy of John Dewey.

For American Marxist-Leninists, the question of relationship to the specific American forms of bourgeois philosophy is a crucial one. Marxism-Leninism is the ideological armory of the rising proletariat in mortal combat with bourgeois society. It is the weapon for the destruction of the principal instrument of the bourgeoisie for the enslavement of the toiling masses; namely, the control over the minds of the toilers, the control over their very methods of thinking, exercised through the press, church, radio, schools and in the last analysis by the various philosophical systems which they seek to impose upon all thinking minds. The fundamental struggle between Marxism-Leninism and all systems of bourgeois philosophy has the same sharp, deep-going character as the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class for the control of society. It is the class struggle on the philosophical field.

It is essential, therefore, that the issues, which have been so sharply raised in Comrade Jerome's valuable article, shall be followed up with all thoroughness in all their ramifications and details. It is further necessary that out of the detailed examination we shall bring forward in the clearest possible manner the large central issues involved in this ideological battle. Our interest lies in establishing these issues with the greatest objectivity and clarity. We want to deal with real issues and not with imaginary or manufactured ones. We want to conduct the struggle on the plane of precision and clarity and not upon that of an exercise in opprobrious epithets. In this respect the writer wishes to disassociate himself from the tone and method used by Comrade H. M. Wicks in reviewing *The Communist* in the *Daily Worker* of January 10. There we had an example of a certain harmful misconception as to what constitutes "strength" in ideological struggle.

Comrade Jerome's article, on the other hand, is a serious, well-documented preliminary examination of the battlefield wherein must be fought out the struggle against Hook's revisionism. In the main this article establishes its point quite firmly. Certain secondary questions may require further examination and restatement, with some small corrections (which we will deal with later) as a necessary accompaniment to the further development of the polemic.

Sidney Hook has submitted to the editors of *The Communist* a reply to Jerome's article. This reply is divided into two sections: First, an indictment of Jerome's method of interpretation of Hook's philosophical thought, and, second, a brief positive exposition of his own understanding of Marxism. It must be said that in the second part of Hook's reply, he effectively proves the thesis of Jerome's article which in the first part he disputes; namely, the thesis that Hook's philosophical thought represents a fundamental revision of Marxism.

In order to fully document the discussion, we are at this point including the first section of Hook's reply to Jerome in full as submitted and then will proceed to answer it point by point:

"WHO HAS BEEN UNMASKED?"

"*In crucial moments, stupidity is a crime against the Party.—Marx.*"

"*Our theories are not dogmas but guides to action, said Marx and Engels.*"—Lenin.

"*There is a dogmatic and creative Marxism; I accept the standpoint of the later.*"—Stalin.

"V. J. Jerome in an article in the January issue of *The Communist* seeks to expose me as a revisionist of Marxism. In his attack, he violates every principle of Leninist accuracy by tearing sentences and phrases from the context of my writings, thereby giving the reader an impression of my views which is the *precise opposite* of what I actually wrote. I do not object to honest criticism. Criticism by all means. But not a criticism based upon deliberate misquotation, distortion of meaning, disregard of qualification, and statements build up by pasting scraps from different sentences together.

"In this memorandum, I shall content myself with doing two things. I shall give some illustrations of Jerome's method of interpretation, and then briefly state my own position.

"In an article written some years ago ('Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx', *Symposium*, 1931) I sought to show that the German social democracy despite its lip-allegiance to Marxism

*The second section will be reproduced in the continuation of this article in the March issue of *The Communist*.

had abandoned its revolutionary content. *The struggle for the 'people's state' was substituted for the struggle for proletarian dictatorship.* This non-Marxian conception of the state contributed to the great betrayal of 1914. I wrote:—

“Once more the *Volksstaat* of Lassalle (who had derived his conception of the state from Hegel—a conception excoriated by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*) reappeared as an undertone in the discussion, especially in Bernstein's defense of the worker's *Vaterland*. Marx had written in the *Communist Manifesto*, 'The proletariat has no fatherland.' Bernstein added, mistaking a symbolic truth for an objective description, that since the worker had become enfranchised as a citizen this was no longer true. His duties as a citizen, his duties to the nation, were distinct from his duties as a member of a particular class. And it was with the heavy consciousness of their duties as citizens that the German Social Democracy voted the war budgets in 1914 for the defense of the potential *Volksstaat* in the actual *Vaterland*. This was not a capitulation to Bernstein but a fulfillment of its own reformist past. Wilhelm II's proclamation, 'Ich kenne keine Parteien mehr; ich kenne nur noch Deutsche,' was applauded to the echo by all parties to the Burgfrieden.

“With the collapse of the German Empire in 1918 *die Republik*, still a *Volksstaat* only *in potentia*, replaced *das Vaterland* in the affections of the German Social Democracy.' ('Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx,' *Symposium*, 1931, pp. 341-42.)

“How does Jerome report this passage? He selects only one sentence—whose very phrasing indicates that it cannot be understood by itself—and cites it as evidence that I am defending Bernstein! Here is the sentence:

“And it was with the heavy consciousness of their duties as citizens that the German Social Democracy voted the war budgets in 1914 for the defense of the potential *Volksstaat* in the actual *Vaterland*.' (*The Communist*, January, 1933. V. J. Jerome, 'Unmasking an American Revisionist of Marxism.' p. 70.)

“And here is how Jerome interprets it:

“What clearer apology could one find for the Bernsteinized traitors to Socialism in the parties of the Second International?' (*Ibid.*, p. 70).

“What clearer evidence is needed of Jerome's intellectual dishonesty? If this were the only instance of distortion of my meaning one might set it down to obtuseness. But this crude method of converting my views into their opposite is characteristic of almost every citation which Jerome gives from my writings.

“In the same essay I attempted to analyse the position of different groups which claimed to have inherited the real spirit of Marx's teachings. I begin the theme with a few introductory sentences which Jerome quotes:

“Of itself, however, this diversity of interpretation is not an unusual thing in the history of thought. There has hardly been a single thinker of historical importance who has not paid a price for having disciples; who has not been many things to many men.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 52)

“He stops short with this quotation and pretends that this ‘aside’ is a ‘thesis.’ He does not tell the reader that just a few paragraphs later I explicitly state what the real meaning of the conflicting interpretations of Marx is: (in order to show where I placed the emphasis, I even italicized in the original the key sentence of the following passage.)

“These conflicting doctrinal interpretations of Marxism were not mere variations on one intellectual theme. *They were different patterns of social response projected by different groups in a struggle to dominate the socio-economic scene.* They were ways of making history innocently paraded as methods of reading history. They told more about the orientation of these groups to the living issues which agitated them than they did about Marx.’ (‘Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx,’ *Symposium*, 1931, p. 330.)

“Jerome coolly writes:

“Hook explains the conflicting interpretation of revolutionary theories in terms of a hidden eternal principle; the fate in store for those who engender disciples. By this theory, the suppression, the corruption, and the betrayal of Marxism are to be explained . . . as an organic failing in Marx, the begetter of disciples’ (‘Unmasking an American Revisionist of Marxism,’ *The Communist*, January, 1933, p. 53).

“And of a similar passage Jerome writes:

“This statement can have but one meaning. The burden of the distortions of Marxism must not be allowed to fall on the distorters; it must be lodged with Marx himself.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 52.)

“In order to cover up this ‘editing’ of my works, Jerome lards his exposition thick with the epithets of fascist and social fascist. If he can make the readers of *The Communist* believe that I am ‘an employer of the tactics of the Second International,’ he can prevent them from actually going to the original articles. And if he can count upon readers of *The Communist* not reading my articles, there is nothing he cannot accuse me of. This he proceeds to do, selecting those points which he believes will discredit me in the eyes of revolutionary workers.

“He refers to me as ‘a materialist’ who can reply to Lenin’s warnings against revisionist attempts to undermine materialism by smuggling in religionism. (p. 55) This would indeed be a serious matter—if it were true! The evidence? Jerome quotes one soli-

tary sentence—no, only part of a sentence—from an old article in the *Journal of Philosophy* for 1928:

“‘God is dangerous to the social revolution only if he is an active God.’ (p. 55.)

“The passage from which this phrase is torn emphasizes the pronouncedly anti-theological character of Marxism:

“‘. . . if ‘causal reciprocity’ between thought and thing is unquestioned, why the emphasis, it may be asked, on the derived character of thought? The answer again brings us to the pronounced anti-theological spirit of the whole of Marxism. Every proposition in this philosophy, as we have seen, is so phrased as to rule out the notion of an ‘efficient’ God. God is dangerous to the social revolution only if he is an active God—only if he creates the worlds. And for the Marxist there is no other than ‘a creating God.’ If one calls the Universe or Humanity God—as in the popular interpretation of Spinoza, Hegel, Comte, etc.,—why, that is merely an abuse of terms.’ (‘Philosophy of Dialectic Materialism,’ *Journal of Philosophy*, ’28 p. 148).

“Nor does Jerome stop with this. He seeks to arouse the readers of *The Communist* against me by charging me with ‘utter contempt for Lenin.’ To understand the utter absurdity of this accusation, some historical remarks are in order.

“When Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was translated into English, I was called in to assist with the translation. (See editor’s note to Vol. VIII of Lenin’s *Works*. Eng. tr.) No one could be found who knew Russian and English and who was at the same time familiar with the technical terminology of philosophy. When the translation was published, I undertook a review in a technical journal to bring it to the attention of American philosophers. Some of them had made an attempt to read the book and were appalled by the strong language Lenin uses. Nothing in Anglo-American philosophy was like it. They complained that this was not a book on philosophy, but a personal attack whose nature was revealed in the very style of the book. In order to prevent the distaste for Lenin’s style to serve as a pretext for ignoring his book, I thought it my duty to point out that Lenin’s style was in no way ‘personal’ in the philistine sense; that it grew out of the controversial literature of Marxism about which little is known in English, and that it was to be explained not by an interest in pure ideas as such but with the problems of social revolution. And so I wrote:

“‘Lenin’s book is full-throated polemic from start to finish. Its style is peppered with opprobrious epithets and will turn the stomach of any one who is unacquainted with controversial literature of Marxism. But the defects of Lenin’s style are the defects of a

tradition. Vogt and Duhring began it with vitriolic attacks upon Marx. Engels and Marx, in their replies, repaid them with interest in the same coin and a whole host of epigoni have aped their literary manners. Compared to Lenin, however, they seem to be mere stammerers. But beneath this peculiar mannerism something more significant appears. These men are not interested in the play of ideas for their own sake. They are vitally interested in the practical bearings of ideas upon the matter in hand—the social revolution.' ('Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism,' *Journal of Philosophy*, 1928, p. 141-142.)

"Instead of taking issue with me on other points in the review, where I express genuine disagreement with one aspect of Lenin's theory of knowledge, Jerome seizes upon two sentences in the passage and pretends that I am expressing my disgust with Lenin. The sentences are:

"Its style is peppered with opprobrious epithets and will turn the stomach of anyone who is unacquainted with the controversial literature of Marxism. But the defects of Lenin's style are the defects of a tradition.'

"And for the benefit of the readers of *The Communist* who do not know the complete passage, Jerome exclaims:

"Turn the stomach! Such is the profound disgust this pretender that calls himself a Marxian feels at reading the work of the greatest of the Marxians.' (p. 55.)

"Marx somewhere says that no one can aspire to true scholarship who does not possess fundamental intellectual integrity. It is not surprising, therefore, that where Jerome does try to play the scholar—always by quotation, never by argument—he reveals himself to be incredibly ignorant of the elementary commonplaces of Marxism especially of Marxian economics which he accuses me of ignoring. The situation would be deliciously comical were it not spread upon the pages of *The Communist*.

"In the *Symposium* article, in the course of my criticism of the German social democracy, I asserted that to mask its social-reformism, the German Party taught that Marxism was a mechanistic science of social development rather than the theory and practice of social revolution:

"This shift becomes more pronounced in the writings of the self-styled orthodox like Kautsky, Hilferding and a host of lesser figures. Marxism was no longer regarded as essentially a theory and practice of social revolution but as a science of social development. The official theoretical emphasis implied that it was not so much a method of making history as of understanding it after it had been made. It was offered as something *sachlich* and free from value judgments, determining action in the same way as a mountain slope determines the movement of a glacier. It was objective and scientific in the

narrow sense. It carried the authority not only of power but of knowledge. It tried to prove its position by popularizing the deductions from the labor-theory of value in *Das Kapital* rather than by underscoring the revolutionary philosophy of the *Communist Manifesto* in which the labor theory of value was not even mentioned.' p. 335)

"Jerome disregards the main point of the passage. He fastens upon the final parenthetical expression, quotes a fragment of a sentence which out of context makes no sense, and interprets as follows:

"To Hook, in fact, the economic teachings of Karl Marx and the doctrine of the class struggle are not component elements of Marxism. As proof positive that the doctrine of surplus value is not basic to Marxism, he brings forward the idea of '... the revolutionary philosophy of the *Communist Manifesto* in which the labor theory of value is not even mentioned.' (*The Communist*, p. 56).

"The world of meaning which Jerome reads into this sentence is breath-taking. All it asserts is that the Marxian theory of value in the form in which it is found in *Capital*, is not contained in the *Communist Manifesto*. But Jerome presses on to deliver his death-blow. He cannot be bothered with minor details to which every honest critic pays attention. Here is his chance to reveal his own scholarship and to catch Hook, the distorter of Marxism, red-handed in his falsification. The labor-theory of value is found in the *Communist Manifesto*! So Jerome asserts. A momentous discovery—if true!

"The question is not where is the labor-theory of value mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto*? but; where is it not mentioned? The letter and spirit of every sentence in the *Manifesto* refute the Hookian assertion . . .' (*The Communist*, p. 56).

"The evidence? A passage from the *Manifesto* which expresses the Ricardian theory of the subsistent wage, a doctrine which Marx and Engels later expressly repudiated, and which turned up to Marx' intense scorn in Lassalle's writings as the discredited theory of the 'iron law of wages.'

"What is the essence of these words but the labor-theory of value?' asks Jerome. And then follows the passage from the *Manifesto*. 'Hence the cost of production of a workman is restricted almost entirely to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and also of labor, is equal to its cost of production.' (p. 57).

"So! This from one who would represent himself as the defender of the pure Marxist doctrine against attempts made to dilute it with the ideology of fascism and social fascism! Jerome

is ignorant of the fact that the distinction between labor and labor-power is the cornerstone of Marx's economic doctrines as expressed in the *Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital* and that the passage he quotes is not Marxian but Ricardian. That this is not a 'Hookian revision' is attested by Engels' introduction to Marx's *Wage Labor and Capital* where Engels explains why he substituted labor-power for labor in republishing Marx' early writings. The *Communist Manifesto* was never altered because it was an historic document of the first importance. After he has read Engels' *Introduction*, Jerome would do well to read Marx' *Critique of the Gotha Program*, where Lassalle and the German social democracy are dealt with, and thus prepared, should turn to *Capital* itself, Vol. I, Part II, chapter VI, p. 189, paragraph 2 (Kerr edition). And while he is about it, he might as well read the whole book!

"So much for Jerome's knowledge of Marxian economics. As for his knowledge of Marxian philosophy—are we not entitled to suspect a man who uses his terms wildly; now in this sense, now in that, and who is incapable of drawing a *logical* inference from what he reads? And, finally, as for Jerome's intellectual honesty—let the reader judge by the samples I have given. If he wishes to convince himself further, I invite him to make his own journey of exploration and track down Jerome's citations by going to my original articles.

"I believe I have given ample demonstration that no person like Jerome—or anyone who takes him on faith—can be trusted to give an accurate report, no less a valid criticism, of any man's thought, and *a fortiori*, of mine. I do not consider my thought above criticism. On the contrary, I have waited for it for many years. All that I ask is that it be honest. In order to facilitate this criticism, in the following section I shall state my position, necessarily in sketchy fashion. A fuller account will be found in a forthcoming book written to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of Marx' death."

II.

What is the main characteristic of this reply by Hook? It is that Hook, in the most agile fashion, dodges or slurs over the main points of controversy. Instead of meeting the issues squarely, he takes refuge in the role of a misunderstood and abused person, the role of a martyr to stupidity. He complains of the "epithets of fascists and social fascist" seemingly under the belief that here we have possible application of that "principle" of instrumentalist philosophy which Hook stated in the following quotation:

"Marxism therefore appears in the main as a huge judgment of practice, in Dewey's sense of the phrase, and its truth or falsity

(instrumental adequacy) is an experimental matter. Believing it and acting upon it helps make it true or false." ("Marxism and Metaphysics," *The Modern Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 391.)

We are not in agreement with this pragmatic idea that we can make a fascist or social fascist of Sidney Hook merely by "believing it and acting upon it." It is our opinion that Hook's anxiety upon this score is groundless. In whatever direction he moves and in whatever camp he finally makes his home, he must look for the explanation within himself, and in the connection between his own thinking and acting and the social struggles of the day. And if it should chance that Hook some day becomes a consistent Marxist, it will be found that the "epithets" of which he complains have broken no bones. If they should play a role in the future development of Hook, it will be in the opposite sense to that embodied in the above quotation, i.e., if Hook should move toward Marxism and not away from it, they may help him to discard some of the ideological baggage which now weighs upon him and prevents such progress.

Now to the examination of some of the specific complaints by Hook of misquotation. Out of a long series of quotations he picks five which he claims are either distorted or show his own correctness as against Jerome. Let us examine the last one first as being the most important because most directly political. "The last shall be the first, and the first shall be the last."

Hook contends that Jerome, in denying Hook's assertion that the labor theory of value is not contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, merely exposes Jerome's "ignorance" of the fact that the theory of surplus value was formulated by Marx sometime after writing the *Communist Manifesto*. In this argument of Hook we are presented with some very interesting phenomena. Hook, the stickler for exactness, freely interchanges as synonymous the terms "labor theory of value" and the "theory of surplus value"! Without for the moment raising the question of the "fundamental intellectual integrity" of this juggling with two terms, it is certainly necessary to challenge Hook's "true scholarship" on this question.

What is the true history of the labor theory of value in relation to Marx' system? Perhaps we can prevail upon Hook to accept Lenin as an authority on this question. Lenin pointed out in his article "Three Sources and Three Constituent Parts of Marxism" that:

"His (Marx') teachings arose as a direct and immediate continuation of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and Socialism."

"It is the legitimate inheritor of the best that humanity created in the nineteenth century in the form of German philosophy, English political economy, French socialism."

"Adam Smith and David Ricardo in their investigation of the economic structure laid down the principle of the labor theory of value. Marx showed that the value of any commodity is defined by the quantity of socially necessary labor-time involved in its production."

Why, therefore, is Hook so indignant that Jerome should be so "unscholarly" as to quote from the *Communist Manifesto* that terribly "Ricardian" paragraph expressing the labor theory of value? Marx never claimed to be the originator of this theory. He took it over from the classical economists and developed it further. It is true that the full development came only with the distinction between *labor* and *labor-power*, and the theory of surplus value, in Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* which appeared in 1859. On the basis of this, however, Hook denies that the *Communist Manifesto* contains the labor theory of value. But of course it contained the labor theory of value, even though not in its final Marxian form, and of course this labor theory of value was an essential element in the *Communist Manifesto*. According to Hook, the labor theory of value only appears in Marx's system in 1859. But what then is the significance of Marx's pamphlet, *Wage-Labor and Capital*, which appeared in 1849? Does Hook insist that even *Wage-Labor and Capital* does not contain the labor theory of value? But of course it contained the labor theory of value, already so far developed that Engels in preparing this pamphlet for reprinting in 1891, was able to make it fully consonant with Marx's *completed* economic system by a few changes in the text. As Engels himself explained:

"My alterations center about one point. According to the original reading, the worker sells his *labour* for wages, which he receives from the capitalist; according to the present text, he sells his *labour power*."

But of course Hook knew these things when he wrote his reply to Jerome. He knew that the labor theory of value was a constituent part of Marxism as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*. Of course he knew that the development of Marxism after the *Communist Manifesto* was not by the *introduction* of the labor theory of value, but by its *further elaboration* in the theory of surplus value and the distinction between labor and labor-power. Of course he knew that Marx and Engels never "repudiated" the labor theory of value as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*, but developed it further and completed it as the keystone of their economic system.

We have for this the most authoritative statement—Marx' and Engels,' preface of 1872, to the *Communist Manifesto*. Hook is

aware of this statement, since he makes reference to the preface in his reply. The statement reads:

"Though conditions may have changed in the course of the twenty-five years since the *Manifesto* was written, yet the general principles expounded in the document are on the whole as correct today as ever. A detail here and there might be improved."

It is in connection with possible improvement in a detail here and there that the authors state further in the preface that:

"Meanwhile, the *Manifesto* itself has become a historic document which we do not feel we have any right to alter."

Certainly the principle of the labor theory of value is not "a detail here and there." When, therefore Hook seeks to make the authors' hesitancy to introduce any change refer to the labor theory of value, we have the right to question the frankness of his argument.

Hook further tries to obscure the question by saying, with regard to the disputed quotation from his article "Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx", that "all it asserts is that the Marxian theory of value in the form in which it is found in *Capital* is not contained in the *Communist Manifesto*." But that is not what he said in the disputed paragraph, the argument of which was directed to proving that the theory of surplus value is not a necessary part of the Marxian system because it did not spring forth fully-grown like Minerva from the brow of Jove.

So much for the "distortion," in the examination of which we receive additional light on the "scholarship" not to speak of the "intellectual integrity" of Hook in conducting theoretical polemics. We will deal more fully with this point in dealing with the second section of Hook's reply, where he restates his revisionist theory.

On this point all that can be conceded to Hook's criticism is that Jerome did not bring forth the historical aspects of the development of the labor theory of value in Marx' system. But Jerome was absolutely correct in attacking this point in Hook's writing, and in interpreting it as an attempt to separate Marx' method from Marx' conclusions. This is even more clearly brought out when we examine the more extended quotation offered above by Hook. There we see clearly reflected Hook's fundamental idea of a contradiction between "objective and scientific" knowledge, on the one hand, and "revolutionary philosophy", on the other hand. This is only another expression of the idealist trend of Hook's thought. In the above it shows itself in placing the *Communist Manifesto* against *Capital*. In another place it shows itself in his placing Lenin's *What Is To Be Done* in contradiction with his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. In each case it is a way of placing theory in opposition to action. In each case it is a denial of the objective

scientific validity of the revolutionary program of the Communist Party.

Now let us consider "distortion" number two, i.e., the quotation of Hook's characterization of Lenin's polemics against the idealists in *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*. Jerome clearly and correctly exposed Hook's acknowledged and unacknowledged "genuine disagreement" with Lenin and Marx on the theory of cognition. Here it might be said by the over-fastidious that Jerome proved too much when he interpreted this as expressing Hook's personal "disgust" with Lenin's polemics, because this is not a *necessary* but only a *possible* conclusion. And the *necessary* conclusion from the full paragraph as quoted above by Hook, is that it is an example of an apologetic attitude towards the characteristically Marxist-Leninist nature of the book under examination, its character as an energetic assault upon bourgeois philosophical systems. To apologize for the polemical nature of Marx' and Lenin's writings means to attack the essence of Marxism. Precisely the absence from Hook's writing of any attack against the bourgeois philosophies, precisely its replacement by a conciliatory attitude at best and in the worst case of the open identification with these bourgeois philosophies, serves as one of the best indications that Hook's Marxism is in reality a fundamental revisionism. Jerome would have made a stronger case against Hook on this point if he had ignored the irrelevant question of Hook's "stomach" and given more attention to Hook's mind where the disorder was more serious.

Now to "distortion" number three. Can it be said that Hook has improved the situation by giving the largest paragraph from which Jerome took the sentence about the dangerousness of the God idea? Hardly. It is quite true that in evaluating philosophical trends, Marxists have always gone behind the verbal form to find the true nature of the thought; and that they have found essential elements of materialist philosophy, and even the rudiment of a materialist system, embodied in the thought of idealist and deist philosophers. But can one jump, as does Hook, from this fact to the position that "God is dangerous to the social revolution only if he is an active God—only if he creates worlds"? By no means. One cannot do this, unless he abandons the ground of Marxism. It is not only a fully developed theology that is "dangerous to the social revolution", but also every fragment of religious ideology, even in its most attenuated form. Hook's refutation of Jerome, therefore, only serves to emphasize and round out the judgment, that on this question Hook departs from Marxism in a serious manner. That is, indeed, at the very least, opening the doors for "smuggling in religionism".

"Distortion" number four. Here Hook complains of a particular paragraph from which he is interpreted as ascribing to Marx himself the responsibility for the varying interpretations of Marx. Against this he quotes a different paragraph which, in a vague way, indicates another possible interpretation. Perhaps if these two paragraphs stood alone, it would be possible to concede a "Scotch verdict" to Hook on this question: "Not proved"! But unfortunately for Hook's rebuttal, this question has to be considered in connection with other things he has written. It would have been more to the point that Hook should explain the meaning in this connection of the quotation from his article reproduced in the January issue of *The Communist*, p. 66. There he said that "in Russia it (Marxism) is a symbol of revolutionary theology; in Germany, of a vague social religion; in France, of social reform; and in England and America, of wrong-headed political tactics." If in the light of this paragraph Hook wishes to refute Jerome's specific charge, it can only be by confirming the general charge that Hook had (and by implication still has until he publicly corrects himself), an understanding of Marxism in conflict with that of the Communist Party and the Communist International. But he cannot eat his cake and have it too. He cannot cry out against "distortions" and proclaim that our differences have been willfully created by us, for some mysterious reason, and at the same time maintain his own freedom to lightly-dismiss the Marxism of Lenin and Stalin as "theology."

And now the final "distortion"; namely, the quotation from the paragraph regarding the German social democracy vote for the war budgets in 1914. Here, if we were confined to the evidence given, formal justice would require a verdict for Hook against Jerome. Jerome's crime in this respect is serious, because he thereby detracted slightly from the full force of his attack against Hook's revisionism. The connection between Hook and Bernstein is more deep and fundamental (and at the same time more subtle) than can be disclosed by any interpretation of a crude endorsement of, or apology for, the voting of the war budgets. But this must not allow us to forget the *substantial* point under examination, that Hook insists that Bernstein's economic views "could all be retained with certain modification within the framework of the Marxian position." In other places Hook goes out of his way to praise Bernstein.

Jerome was fully justified in relating Hook to Bernstein. The true depths of this must be traced, however, in their common denial of objective scientific validity to Marxism, their common rejection of the goal of the proletarian movement as something that can be a matter of knowledge before it is reached, the exaltation of method over the product of the method, etc. It is not in the complicity in a particular historical action, or judgment of that action, that the

unity of thought between Hook and Bernstein is expressed, but rather in the fundamental direction of their thought on basic questions of philosophy, resulting in each case in efforts to revise the Marxian system.

So much for the first section of Hook's reply to Jerome. It is clear that Jerome's indictment stands. When Hook thought he was delivering a smashing "left hook" that would score an ideological knockout, he was swinging wide of the mark, and left himself more open for counter-attack than before. This may serve as an additional object-lesson in the futility of logical agility in conflict with the objective truth of the monolithic Marxian system. From the light exercise of countering these puny blows, we may pass on to more serious business.

(To be continued)