

politics

July, 1946

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TO OUR READERS

Please note that this is the JULY issue. The June issue has been omitted so that we can catch up to our publication date again. All subs will be extended one issue.

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The C. P. S. Strikes

TODAY, almost a year after the war's end, some 6,500 Americans are still being punished by the authorities for having taken a position of Conscientious Objection to the war. About 2,500 of these are serving prison terms; the other 4,000 are detained in Government camps at unpaid forced labor. These men are not "draft dodgers"; they are individuals with pacifist convictions *and* the guts to stand up for them against the State. What can we do to help them?

The number of men imprisoned for Conscientious Objection in World War II was *seven times* the number imprisoned for the same reason in World War I. We can bring pressure to bear on President Truman to grant immediate amnesty, with restoration of civil rights, to the 2,500 Federal prisoners. This can best be done through the Committee for Amnesty for all Objectors to War and Conscription, of which A. J. Muste is chairman, and which has a list of sponsors including such conservative figures as Ray Lyman Wilbur, Henry Luce and Max Lerner. Its address is: Room 1029, 5 Beekman St., New York 7, N. Y. (Phone: Beekman 3-0463). *Specifically, we can tear off the last page of*



THE FIRST SIX GLENDORA PRISONERS

L. to R.: John Atherton, Harold Holden, Edward Behre, Richard Stenhouse, Marvin Shapiro, Howard Goldstein.

this issue of POLITICS and circulate among our friends the Amnesty Petition reprinted on it.

The CO's in prison can't do much for themselves, but some of the 4,000 still held in Government camps have already begun to carry out the fine old Christian maxim: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves. A year ago, introducing a symposium on "Conscription & Conscientious Objection," I wrote:

"Four years' experience has shown many CO's that submission to conscription into CPS camps is as morally compromising as conscription into the Army, and that life in a CPS camp, where trivial and uncongenial tasks are performed under State coercion, is as psychologically stultifying as life in the armed forces . . . And so a widespread movement has developed among CO's in the past year to make the fight against conscription as important as the fight against war, with the result that the CO's have come into conflict with the basic political principle of the modern State: its coercive powers. This expresses itself in the slowdown and noncooperative technique . . . and in an increasing number of individual 'walk-outs' from CPS camps." (POLITICS, June, 1945).

Since then, the rebellion against the State has gone a step farther, to the stage of organized strikes. As James Peck's letter in this issue argues, the right to strike against the Government has suddenly become, with Truman's handling of the railroad strike and his threatened use of the Navy against the pending maritime strike, a major political issue. The mighty railroad brotherhoods were maneuvered by Truman into a position of striking "against the Government," but the handful of CO's knew exactly what they were getting into; they have challenged directly the authority of the Federal Government. Such a challenge must enlist the sympathy and active support of every radical.

¶ On February 2, ten CO's at the Minersville, California, CPS (Civilian Public Service) camp were arrested by U. S. Marshals because they had refused to obey a minor order of the camp Director. Minersville is the successor to the Germfask, Michigan, camp as the "Siberia" of the CPS system, the place where the recalcitrants and "hard cases" are sent. The campers there had carried on the glorious tradition of Germfask by engaging in a slowdown of epic proportions: ordered to throw leftover beans into the garbage pail, a camper did it one by one, had reached 600 (with onlookers converting it into a game by guessing the total) when the Director issued "specific orders" to dump all the beans at once; two campers took one full working-day to clean one table and two pots; it took two others two full days to get a cot moved one hundred yards. Such tactics were, naturally, extremely annoying to those in charge of the camp. Hence the arrests. The case has not come up in court yet, will probably be dropped by the Government before it does. It is being handled by the Minersville Defense Committee, 1830 Sutter St., San Francisco 15, California.

¶ The most important of the strikes is that at the Glendora, California, camp which began on April 24 and is still going on, and which is the biggest yet (82 strikers) to take place in CPS. More on this below.

¶ On May 1, 40 men at the Big Flats, N. Y., CPS camp started a demonstration strike, scheduled for one week only, supporting the Glendora strikers and also calling attention to the unjust treatment of CO's in general. Like the Glendora strikers, those at Big Flats used their leisure to send relief packages abroad (many went to names in our files). After the strike's end, six campers continued it on their own. They were arrested, kept in the Elmira jail for nine days, and are now released on bail. The Workers Defense League (112 East 19 St., New York City) is handling the cases; further information may be had from: Dick Hanson, CPS 46, Box 301, Big Flats, N. Y.

The Issues

The CO strikers, and the 4,000 non-strikers for whom they are sticking their necks out, have four main complaints, three of them as old as the CPS system, one dating from the war's end. They are, taking the new one first:

(1) Discrimination in Discharges

On May 1, 13% of the wartime draftees remained in the Army, while 56% of the CPS men were still detained in Government camps. That draftees should be discharged at a rate over four times faster than CO's makes no sense in practical terms: the Army is needed for overseas occupation duty, while the CO's are not needed to rake leaves in public parks. This discriminatory treatment is just one more instance of the animus of military brass hats against the CO's in their power.

(2) Military Oppression

Although the Draft Act specifically provides that CO's "shall be assigned to work . . . under civilian direction", the law has been violated, with connivance first of Roosevelt and now of Truman. The entire top bureaucracy of that part of Selective Service which runs the CO system has always been made up of regular Army officers—not a civilian among them. These generals and colonels and majors, fighting the war by standing guard over a few thousand CO's, have exercised on their

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charges the pettiness, stupidity and vindictiveness which the military mind (lacking healthier psychological outlets) vents on those who can't hit back. They have made CPS work as meaningless as possible, have successfully headed off efforts to pay CO's for work, have refused to discuss grievances and insisted on maximum penalties (often up to five years imprisonment) for refusal to obey orders. It must be added that the three Peace Churches (Quakers, Brethren, Mennonites) have spinelessly allowed the military to walk all over them in CPS administration.

(3) *Forced Labor Without Pay*

Congress clearly intended that CO's should receive pay for the work they did. Public Law No. 630 provided they should be paid "such amounts as may be necessary", so long as pay was not higher than Army rates. General Hershey's military bureaucracy, however, has never asked Congress for funds to pay CO's, and indeed has openly opposed such moves. For the work which they are forced to give the State, the CO's get only their room and board (and even that is paid for by the churches), which is an approximate definition of slavery. Their wives, children and dependent parents get no allotments at all.

(4) *Leafraking and Boondoggling*

Although the Draft Act provides that CO's "shall be assigned to work of national importance", most of them have spent three or four years digging duck ponds, clearing forest trails, pulling weeds, and doing other forms of unskilled manual "made work." When they have been allowed to work at significant jobs, as in the mental hospitals, they have made great and lasting contributions; which merely points up the senseless waste of talent and the cruel frustration of creativity in the other kind of jobs. The waste and frustration is all the greater because the average CO was highly equipped by education. Thus a survey of 1,242 men in Quaker camps showed that 49% had been students or professional men, 20% had held clerical or administrative jobs, while less than 10% were unskilled. Yet in those camps, 49% were performing unskilled manual labor.

★

From the above, two conclusions emerge. First, that the military bureaucrats, with the acquiescence of the peace churches, violated and are still violating the clear intent of Congress about the treatment of CO's. Second, that in every respect the Churchill Government in England, headed by a Tory, showed a more civilized attitude towards Conscientious Objection than the Roosevelt Administration. British CO's were under civilian, not military, control; they were given significant work to do, often being allowed to continue in their normal peacetime occupations; they were paid the going rates for the work they did.

The Glendora Strike

The biggest strike in CPS history began when the Director of the Glendora, Calif., camp announced that two men were being transferred to Minersville, refusing

to allow them a hearing or appeal, and even to state what the charges against them were. The next day 40 men went on strike. The Director refused even to meet with the strikers' committee. Two weeks later, the number of strikers had grown to 82. They used their time making up and mailing packages to European families (many of them supplied by POLITICS), using their own small funds plus whatever they could collect from people in neighboring towns. In the first month of the strike, they sent abroad 3,575 pounds of food.

As the strike dragged on, with no break in the ranks of the strikers, the authorities became concerned. They finally struck.

May 18: Federal officers arrest first 6 Glendora strikers, hold them in Los Angeles jail in \$5,000 bond each. Those arrested (whose pictures appear on the cover) are charged with "wilful refusal to obey orders of the Director." Other strikers and sympathizers picket jail; much publicity in local papers.

May 19: More mass picketing; arrested strikers start hunger strike to protest segregation of Richard Stenhouse in the Negro section of jail; publicity in papers about Jimcrow conditions in jail. Local radio station puts one of the pickets on the air. Fifty Los Angeles ministers, educators, business and professional men send telegrams of protest to Attorney-General Clark.

May 20: Judge Yankwich, over U. S. District Attorney's objection, reduces bail from \$5,000 each to \$500; all released on bail.

May 27: Victor Olson, a Selective Service agent, visits Glendora, confers with Director and with local D. A. Refuses to talk to strikers: "I do not recognize that there has been a strike." The same day, the strikers decide to broaden their objectives to include, besides the rescinding of the original transfer, the end of arbitrary military rule, pay for work done, allotments for dependents, accident compensation and death benefits, demobilization at the same rate as the Army, and no penalties against strikers.

May 29: U. S. Marshals arrive at the camp with two large busses, arrest 41 more strikers and take them to Los Angeles jail, where they are held in \$1,000 bail each. All begin hunger strike against Jim Crow policy of jail.

May 31: Judge Yankwich refuses to reduce bail. Sum is finally raised, and all 41 strikers are released on bail. No indictments have yet been returned against any of the arrested strikers.

This is as far as my information goes. My informant adds that "Selective Service has made some concessions on discharges since the strike began." We may expect further concessions to be made in treating CO's ("concessions" is Washington doubletalk for "justice") precisely to the degree that the Glendora strikers can carry on undiminished and effective their fight. Nothing makes more impression on the military and bureaucratic mind than a group that hits back and won't submit; if the CO's had staged a few such strikes years ago, instead of depending on liberal and church spokesmen to beg and wheedle "concessions" for them (concessions which they didn't get anyway), the whole CPS system

of payless forced labor might well now be a thing of the past. Even a single individual can win if he is determined enough: word just comes, for example, that Bent Andresen (see **POLITICS**, November, 1945), after nine months of complete non-cooperation in prison during which he has been forcibly fed through a rubber tube, has been released on his own terms (which were to promise nothing and sign nothing) by the Department of Justice. It is great news that so courageous a fighter for what he believes in has won this battle. And it shows that even a bureaucracy gives up when the resistance is too tough.

The Glendora strikers are not without friends. Two Senators (Langer and Downey) and six Congressmen have come out publicly for them. The Los Angeles branch of the American Civil Liberties Union is handling their legal case. But they need all the help they can get. Specifically, they write:

"We need money very badly both for the conduct of the now six weeks old strike and for the coming legal defense in court. Also anything your readers can do will be greatly appreciated by us all. Also, letters and telegrams to Congressmen asking for an investigation, and to Attorney General Tom Clark protesting his Department's handling of the strike would be most valuable to us at this time."

*I appeal to our readers to send bigger contributions than they can afford. **POLITICS** cannot afford \$100 and is wiring it today. Make checks payable to Allan Hunter, Treasurer, and send contributions to: Glendora Strikers' Defense Committee, 3302 South Grand Ave., Los Angeles 7, Calif.*

D. M.

ARE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIANS PEOPLE?

Government and private agencies are using every means to bring home to U. S. citizens the hunger pangs of Europe and Asia. Reaction to this campaign ran true to form in Los Angeles, where a group of University of Southern California students competed for a week on a wheatless, fatless diet. Winner was neatly-rounded Travis Jones, who had deteriorated to the extent of only one-tenth of an ounce during the week. Her award: the title, "Miss Famine."

—"San Francisco Chronicle", May 19.

A QUART OF PSYCHOLOGY FOR EVERY HOTTENTOT

Secretary of Commerce Wallace today startled the Senate small business committee by revealing that his emergency food collection committee has spent \$300,000 to collect only \$323,000 in cash contributions.

The drive ends July 1. To date it is \$8,677,000 shy of its \$9,000,000 goal . . . Wallace told the Senators the drive has "a great psychological purpose" in making Americans feel that they are helping feed the hungry. One Senator privately told reporters what the starving needed was not psychology but food.

—"N. Y. Daily News", June 7.

THE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

May Day Greetings! The Communist Party of Pietermaritzburg calls on workers of all races to vigorously combat all forms of racial iniquities which inevitably spring from the rotten policy pursued by the Government. Unity of workers is imperative to defeat the danger of Fascism and to pave the way for the establishment of a democratic South Africa (Ad in column 3, page 8 of the April 25 issue of "The Cape Town Guardian", South African Commie rag)

MACHINISTS WANTED. Qualified, semi-qualified, and Learners. Ideal working conditions. Strictly European females employed. Apply: Val-Hau et Cie, Dickens Road, Salt River. (Ad in column 1, same page, same date, same paper)

PARIS LETTER

The June Elections

THE voting of June 2 showed that government by the "Big Three" (socialists, communists, and the catholic M.R.P.) is less unpopular than was generally thought. The Government's bungling of the food supply caused many to expect a heavy vote for the minor rightwing parties, notably Herriot's Radicals and the P.R.L. (Republican Liberty Party). But the fact is the food situation is serious only in the big cities, which fare much worse than the countryside and the small towns. As for the peasants—they have made, and continue to make, an enormous amount of money. Consequently it was only in the Seine (Paris) and the Bouches du Rhone (Marseille) regions that the Big Three lost ground to the Radicals and the P.R.L.

It was also expected that the sacrifices imposed on the working class by the government would lose the communists many workers' votes. This has not been the case. On the one hand, the communists have a most thorough control of the C.G.T. On the other, the demand for a 25% wage-increase, launched by the P.C. and by the General Confederation of Labor just before the elections, seems to have been successful.

But, if the communists have not lost, they have not gained either, as far as the working-class is concerned. Already after the 1945 elections it had been noticed that all the important gains of the P.C. had been among the peasants, while in Paris, as well as in the other main centers, its onward march seemed to have come to a stop. This tendency has been confirmed. The main communist victories in the recent election were achieved in some of the most reactionary sections of the country, like Brittany and the North-East. This might indicate that the communist onslaught is nearing exhaustion. The party machine is in fact showing signs of fatigue. Some of its best cadres have fallen during the resistance, and the present propaganda-line is far from being favorable to the rise of a new leadership from the bottom. The attitude of the Party membership to the defeat of May 5 (the referendum) had been one of indifference. In fact, the first to be surprised by the gain in votes achieved on June 2 have been the communists themselves.

The Trotskyists could have gained some ground, had not their slogans (a social-communist government supported by the C.G.T.; defense of the Soviet Union against capitalist encirclement) been so completely idiotic).

As for the socialists, the most charitable comment on their defeat would be that he who insists on sitting between two chairs is most likely to end up by sitting on the ground. After the May 5 referendum, the socialists had thought it very shrewd not only to drop their communist allies as fast as possible but also to turn against them with a violence as extreme as it was sudden. And, in order not to be second to anyone in the use of demagogical expedients, they had organized a terrific campaign to extol the "triumph" of the Blum mission to Washington: defeat was the only reward of such frantic cowardice and stupidity. I do not think, however, that their defeat was caused by their treachery.

It is rather that the socialist party has remained what it was before the war: a kind of job-procuring agency for the profit of the gang. The communists too, when they get hold of some administrative position, have only one thought: to fill it with "comrades". But the communist militants think of the Party, while the socialists think of themselves. This is the reason why they have lost control of the C.G.T. This is also why Petain did not have much trouble with the socialist bureaucrats whom he found holding posts in the government administration (a heritage left there by Blum). Those fellows were quite content with being diligent servants of the State, and the only liberty they took was, from time to time, to be of service to a pal. Like the radicals, the socialists are consumed by nostalgia: their ideal remains the Third Republic, "la republique des camarades", a so much happier period. Such being the case, the socialists are poorly equipped for the competition against "the two most perfect types of militants now active on the French political scene: the communists and the catholic", as Andre Ullman puts it.

The defeat of the socialists was due not to tactical or (even less) ideological reasons, but to the intrinsic weakness of their party.

One thing must be clearly kept in mind, when discussing contemporary French (and possibly European) politics: critical judgment is today completely absent from the minds of the great majority of the people. There is no question of understanding what happens, but simply of taking sides. The rest is "technical business", and, as such, is left to the General Staffs of the parties. Such being the situation, after the due allowance has been made for material interests and emotional sympathies, victory is a question of party machinery and propaganda. If one wants to have a realistic image of France (and possibly of Europe) today, instead of thinking in terms of "democracy", "revolution", "reaction" and such, one should think in terms of civil war. The electoral campaign was characterized by the sharp contrast between the bitter struggle of the parties on one side and the profound indifference of the masses to political problems on the other. This reminded me of what I had seen during the liberation: while the Maquis had occupied a town and were shooting at the Germans in retreat, the terrorized population was shut up in the houses and wondered: "Why in heaven are those people trying to prevent the *boches* from leaving?"

As for the victory of the M.R.P., here is the scholarly comment by Raymond Aron in *Combat*: "It is a fact . . . certain historical ideologies are nowadays dead, while certain others are alive. The ideologies of the Radicals and of the P.R.L. are dead, that of the M.R.P. is a living one . . . People have again started to believe in Christian humanism, faith in man tied to faith in God and capable of inspiring a reconstruction of society based on both socialism and freedom . . . The most glorious perspectives are open to this party which is too young to be connected with the weaknesses of the pre-war period, and at the same time old enough to play with skill the game of combining government responsibilities and opposition." Francois Mauriac in *Figaro* also offers laurels to the victor. Mauriac is a Catholic, and has the right to feel happy about the victory of his party. But Aron's enthusiasm is simply another example of the contemporary intellectuals' propensity to see "spiritual forces" at play whenever they are confronted by material success.

The naked truth is that to insist on considering the existing parties as the expression of autonomous intellectual or social tendencies means to give up any possibility of understanding contemporary politics. It is the same as saying that Messrs. Truman, Bevin and Stalin "have their peoples behind them". Contemporary parties are first of all organizations, i.e. miniature States, with peculiar aims and specific exigencies: to them, ideas and men are nothing but material for strategic and tactical manoeuvring. The "Christian humanism" of the M.R.P. is worth exactly as much as the "democracy" of the communists: propaganda material.

Politically speaking, it is easy to show that the M.R.P. is a reactionary conglomerate. On the eve of the election, the reactionary P.R.L. withdrew its candidates in thirty departments in order to assure the victory of the M.R.P. against the "left". And many bishops and parish priests advised their flocks to vote M.R.P. rather than P.R.L. because this last "had less chances." But the fact remains also that in Paris itself, in the North, in the East, in the Loire, many workers have voted catholic. They are the exact counterpart of those petty-bourgeois and peasants who have voted communist.

The M.R.P. is much more than a "bourgeois party." It is the direct intervention of the Catholic Church into French political life. The fact is new and extremely important. The catholics are first-rate organizers, they have imitated, and perfected with a skill all their own, the communist technique of multiple infiltration. Their labor unions claim a membership of 800,000. Even if we contrast it to the 5,000,000 of the C.G.T., it is not ridiculous. But then, there are the several youth organizations among the workers, the peasants, the students. Besides them, there are the boy-scouts. All this constitutes a vast network kept in operation by fanatical and active cadres, and covering several million people.

This should not lead to hasty conclusions. The relations between these Catholic organizations and the M.R.P. are quite different from those between the C.P. and its "front" or "base" organizations. The organizations controlled by the Communists are also completely controlled by the Party, or nearly so. But the above-mentioned catholic organizations existed long before the M.R.P. And the M.R.P. itself is simply one of the many catholic machines. The Church is supporting it today, but it might drop it tomorrow. The counterpart of the Communist Party is not the M.R.P., but the Catholic Church herself.

The M.R.P. has another advantage, besides that of Church support. It is what goes by the name of "the spirit of the Resistance", or, to be precise, gaullism. The Resistance movements have never had any revolutionary character. To the extent to which they were able to develop a terroristic or military action, they were useful auxiliaries of the Allied armies. On the political level, their main characteristic was a brand of chauvinism as useful for the purposes of action as it was lethal for the intelligence of the individual. Once the war ended, what was left was a great mental confusion. Hence, the M.R.P. is perfectly justified in claiming for itself "the spiritual heritage of gaullism", i.e. the massive stupidity which, in every modern war, seems to be the necessary accompaniment of the explosions, and of which the sonorous and empty eloquence of the M.R.P. leader Maurice Schumann is a perfect symbol.

But there also are other connections, more concrete. The part played by the catholics in the resistance was

probably second only to that of the communists. The fact that the majority of the bishops have been collaborators is practically obliterated, in the mind of the ordinary citizen, by the memory of what so many individual Catholics and members of the low clergy have done during the occupation to help the Jews and other persecuted individuals.

Hence the paradox that, while the resistance is, to all practical purposes, dead, the two most powerful existing parties, the Catholic and the Communist, are also those who have played the most important role in "the struggle of the French people against the invader."

Behind all this, there is the fundamental fact that, for the first time in France, during the years 1940-1944 internal problems became a simple appendix of the international game. This is still true today: people are now for the Russians, for the British or for the Americans exactly in the same way as, during the occupation, they used to be for the Germans or for the Allies. The consequence is an extraordinary passivity among the common people. Because the common people cannot be but ignorant when it comes to the grand strategy of international politics, and they have no other choice except the one they had during the war: either to wait passively for the final outcome, or else (if one wanted to act) follow instructions from above.

What will be, in the immediate future, the relations between socialists, communists and M.R.P.? After the elections of October 21, 1945, we have seen the alliance of the socialists and the M.R.P. against the communists. After the fall of De Gaulle, the socialists became the allies of the communists against the M.R.P. Two equally ephemeral coalitions. After the referendum of May 5, the socialists deserted the communists, and it is unlikely that they will go back to the alliance now, when the two working-class parties have lost the majority in the Assembly. But to isolate the communists appears to be a dangerous operation. The communists have a formidable instrument for putting on pressure: the C.G.T. Nothing would be easier, for them, than to sabotage the industrial recovery that seems to be taking shape right now by unleashing strikes and agitation. The workers, who are the chief victims of the present "planned economy", would be only too glad to heed their call. Moreover, it is not for the fun of it that a Communist has been the Minister of Industrial Production for the last four months. And the administration of the nationalized coal mines is studded with communists. To try to expel them would mean trouble. Coal is vital stuff. And so there can be no question of governing without the communists; no anticommunist coalition would be viable.

Here we reach another paradox, namely that the only coalition that would be really strong is a Catholic-Communist coalition at the expense of the socialists. The two parties have nothing in common, of course. But there is one level on which they nevertheless agree, and it is the important one of foreign policy. It so happens that in the field of foreign policy, the Communist line is nearer to the position of the M.R.P. than to that of the socialists. In order to oppose the Anglo-Saxon game, and the danger of a Western bloc against Russia, the French C.P. supports the demands of the Quai d'Orsay and of the M.R.P. for a permanent occupation of the Rhineland, the annexation of the Saar to France and the detachment of the Ruhr basin from Germany. The socialists, on their part, are ready to accept Bevin's point of view (which consists in preferring a relatively stable

and self-sufficient Germany in the British sphere of influence to a ruined and dismembered one ready to fall into Stalin's hands). These kinds of questions have assumed such importance that it is not at all impossible to imagine Messrs. Duclos and Teitgen forgetting all of a sudden for the sake of the Ruhr, their disagreements on nationalization or on the school system. It is a mere hypothesis, and nothing more. But since the solution of the political problems does not depend any longer on human conscience and intelligence, but on the "Big Shots"—i.e. on political machines, anything is possible.

Simple human common sense, however, can still ask: "What is the meaning of all this? Granted that this be the game of the parties, what are their secret intentions? Is there a plan, any idea whatsoever, behind all this manoeuvring?"

Nobody any longer seriously believes that the communists want revolution and, even less, that they are preparing a coup d'Etat in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Their force has probably reached its maximum, and even if it became greater, it would never enable them to govern without the co-operation of the bourgeois parties. And the bourgeois parties, on their part, could never take the chance of trying to eliminate the communists.

What the political parties seem to have in mind is, in fact, rather than the conquest of power, the gain of such positions as would enable them to increase their force and to exert a stronger pressure on public affairs. "Ministries are fortresses"—says a newspaper. To the ministries one should add the labor unions, the nationalized enterprises, and the various police forces. Except for the socialists, it is not a question of personal ambitions. Personal ambitions exist, of course, but the interest of the party comes first.

In this competition for strategic and tactical advantages, everything happens as if each side were making preparations for an inevitable final struggle. But, it may be asked, what *kind* of a struggle? A civil war on a purely internal level is unthinkable. The civil war for which the party-machines are getting ready could only be the prolongation on the internal level of an international conflict. In the event of a war, the presence of Communist managers in certain strategic sectors of the economic set-up, or of clerico-fascist officers in the troops of occupation in Germany, could be of decisive importance. In the meantime, the predominance of this or that party, and the influence of the party bureaucracies on the political life of the country, have definite repercussions on the balance of international bargainings. These, in their turn, are nothing but preparations for war. There too, the only thing that matters is to get hold of certain strategic positions in view of the Third World War.

The armaments race has begun. And the parties, today, are nothing but arsenals.

Paris, June 14, 1946.

A. B. C.

MARIE ANTOINETTE, WE ARE HERE!

As a cub reporter on the Hearst-owned "Los Angeles Herald & Express" at \$34.79 a week, Phoebe Hearst, granddaughter of W. R., gets up early, drives to work in her Buick, gets half an hour for lunch, tries hard to please everybody. Her grandfather said he could fix it with the city editor to give her easier hours, but she said no. "I'm learning a different side of life, and meeting some strange people—interesting in their own little way."

—"Time", May 27.

Anti-Semitism at Sea

I WAS a member of the crew of the *SS Marine Perch*, one of the so-called "miracle ships" assigned to carrying Jewish refugees from Europe to America. From the newspapers, one gets the impression that these Jewish immigrants enjoy considerate and democratic treatment aboard our ships, and that we Americans are doing our utmost to make life easier for the survivors of Hitler's concentration camps. I feel it my duty to correct that impression. The impression I had last voyage, when we brought 550 immigrants from Bremerhaven to New York, was that there is a hell of a lot of room for improvement in the way we are "making it possible for these people to start life over in America." To show what I mean:

In the first place, about 95 of the best accommodations were given to repatriated "American" citizens who were returning to the United States after having lived in Germany since years before the war. I put "American" in quotation marks because most of them were people who wanted to live in Germany because they admired Hitler and preferred the Nazi regime to American democracy. They are now returning to America only because Germany—unfortunately, from their point of view—lost the war. Yet these people were given accommodations on the same ship with those who had suffered at their hands, with the result that fewer anti-fascists could be transported. Also, in the face of many protests by the Jewish passengers, these Nazi sympathizers were given most of the more comfortable accommodations, while the large majority of Jewish passengers had to accept quarters and eating conditions similar to pre-war steerage accommodations, although their American relatives had paid transportation costs far above the price of steerage. This situation was brought to my attention by a passenger, a Hungarian Jewish woman who had spent two years in a Nazi concentration camp. She wanted to know why she should have to sit at table with Nazi sympathizers who made contemptuous remarks about Jews and who loudly deplored the fact that Jews were being permitted immigration to America.

Among the crew itself, there were many who openly professed anti-semitic sympathies, according to statements made to me by other Jewish crew-members. One, for instance, who served meals in the officers' mess, told me that the ship's doctor, two of the nurses, and several of the ship's officers often made remarks at the dinner table to the effect that the Jewish passengers were slovenly, greedy, ill-mannered, and that it was a shame that they should be allowed into the United States where they would take away Americans' jobs, lower the cultural level, and steal all the money. I was also told that the treatment which the ship's doctor gave to those passengers who were sick was neglectful and in some cases unnecessarily brutal (for example, he dressed an infected leg wound by winding adhesive tape over the open wound). Many of the room stewards refused normal service to the passengers because they had no money to tip them—and some even threatened passengers that they would never receive their baggage at the end of the voyage if they didn't "come across with a few bucks." Many of the crew combined to make these refugees feel that they were still sorely in need of some refuge from anti-semitism.

To what extent these conditions can be controlled by administrative measures is hard to say, of course, but

certainly they could be at least improved if these refugee ships were devoted exclusively to the transportation of victims of Fascism, and if pro-Nazi Americans were denied passage on such ships; also if the crews were selected with an eye to using only those men who would treat the immigrants with sympathy and consideration, and if representatives of such agencies as the National Relief Service and Joint Distribution Committee were to make the voyages aboard such ships in order to see to it that the passengers are properly treated. (The very fact that there is usually no one aboard who can speak fluent German or Yiddish makes it especially difficult for the passengers, who are unable to express themselves when they need something or when they have an important complaint to make.)

In view of these facts, I and the other Jewish seamen who sailed on the *Marine Perch* feel that it should be brought to public attention that the methods of transporting European Jews to America can and definitely should be improved. After all, these people are going to become American citizens and they have a right to be treated as such.

R. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE: One fact should be added to R. S.'s account: the crew of the *Marine Perch* belonged to the *Seafarers International Union*, the East Coast partner of *Harry Lundeberg's Sailors Union of the Pacific*. The SIU and the SUP are the anti-Communist rivals of the *National Maritime Union*. They both have a disgraceful *Jim Crow* policy, refusing to ship racially mixed crews, confining Negroes to menial jobs on "white" ships. The NMU, on the other hand, draws no color lines and fights against racial prejudice. From what sailors have told me, I doubt if an NMU crew would have included "many" open anti-semites. The reason for noting this contrast here is precisely because POLITICS is anti-Communist.

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New Roads and Old Footpaths

"I enjoy moralising—another proof of decrepitude."

—DIDEROT

THE first peculiarity which strikes the reader of the "New Roads" series is the excessively abstract quality of the discussions. Now the thing about abstraction is that one always abstracts *from* something. What have the moralists abstracted from? They have not sought "out the long-range trends in the welter of daily phenomena," which was one of the aims of *POLITICS* as Macdonald described it over two years ago. By and large they ignore historical events—just as the editor had remained unconcerned for several months about Indonesia, about the strike situation in the country, and so on. *The moralists abstract not from events but from moods.* They feel something is wrong and they make it right by exerting belief in their abstractions, which (those peculiar to them) are all moral.

The scientific approach to moods of dissatisfaction is to search out their causes, which of course lie in the realm of historical events. Then the feelings of dissatisfaction evaporate when their causes are overcome. But the idealist can satisfy himself simply by affirming the opposite of what exists (I am not here concerned with idealism in the technical philosophical sense.) The really terrible result of accepting this easy kind of moral solution is that history, meanwhile, goes unanalyzed.

An excellent statement of the distinction between science and idealistic thought is found in a little book called *Greek Science: Its Meaning to Us*, by Benjamin Farrington: "the human activity we call science did not originate as a mode of thinking about things in order to be able to give verbally satisfying answers on any questions that may be raised, but as a mode of thinking about things so as to be able to manipulate them to desired ends."

Not only the idealist writers in *POLITICS* but Marxists as well are searching for new roads. But they will discover them by posing and investigating the new problems of history in a scientific fashion. They will not begin by divesting themselves of the best tools available, i. e. the ideas of the socialist heritage. In this way they will be safeguarded against the fate of the idealist critics of Marxism, who are now wandering down the old footpaths of Utopianism and moralism.

But not so, Macdonald. Pointing to the inadequacies of Marxism, he calls for "a drastic break" with the traditional ideas of socialism. It is now a value to be "ideologically homeless." There is a bitter wind blowing, and he has only a thin overcoat; so the thing to do, of course, is to throw the coat away! This is not the scientific method (it might even be claimed this is not the *rational* method) for discovering new knowledge. It is the method of idealism, which disdains "partial" knowledge and has intercourse only with "whole" systems (e.g. Chiaromonte.) At last Macdonald has accepted not a "lesser" but a "greater evil"! He is institutionalizing our lack of knowledge.

The common trait of the "New Roads" writers is to claim that all the genuine problems of socialism are moral in nature. This might be an interesting point of view if it led to an investigation of the conditions which determine moral behavior—which produce success or failure in achieving ends. Unfortunately, their "solution" of the so-called moral problem of socialism consists almost exclusively in the affirmation of some one value or other. This

solves nothing, because the real problem was never *what* values to uphold, but *how* to make them fruitful in history.

Rather than review in detail each of the idealist writers, which might be tedious to the reader, I will analyze only two of the more significant ones. But it is very important to remember that, as Macdonald pointed out in his preface to the series, the whole crew exhibits a striking similarity in attitude and approach. A moralistic, anti-Marxist strain of sloppy thinking runs through the writing of all these people.

(1) "Non-Violence and Revolution" by Don Calhoun; January issue.

This is the best of the articles in the "New Roads" series. It is an excellent, spirited defense of pacifism. But, as much as Calhoun tries to conceal and avoid it, the weakness of his position is the weakness of the idealistic method in general.

To begin with, it will be helpful to understand exactly what the issue is and what it is not. The point of conflict, for one thing, is not whether the revolutionary movement should employ the various techniques of direct action and non-cooperation. A little imagination regarding ways of conducting the struggle would, I believe, be very much in order. But the real issue lies elsewhere. It is whether violence shall be construed *a priori* as an inadmissible (not merely undesirable) means in any and all situations. A world without violence is certainly one of the ends of socialism. What I object to is the idea of creating this world by Utopian means—the act of wishing it into existence.

Nor is the issue "romantic violentism." Marx opposed Bakunin; Lenin dissociated himself from Blanquism; one of the earliest struggles of the Russian Social Democracy was against the terrorists of the *Narodna Volya*. The reason was not violence itself, but the romanticism of political activity which lacked the participation of the masses. No, the question is not "romantic violentism," but the logical realistic use of violence by the proletarians, their parties and their state.

Calhoun begins with two *practical* attacks on violence. The bourgeois state has what amounts to a monopoly of the instruments of violence: the bourgeois state is reactionary: therefore violence is reactionary. This is his first point. Rather absurd, I think. Second practical argument: when the socialist majority seizes power, there will be no need for violence because "counter-revolution" is only a phrase which led the Bolsheviks down the path of Stalinism. He says the capitalist minority will lack the power to make a counter-revolution. But he forgets the factor of the *Vendée*, which has figured so significantly in all the great revolutions. Perhaps he will say that if a *Vendée* exists, the time is not yet right for socialism. But we will wait a long time for a 100% revolution! . . . And we will certainly have fascism first.

Calhoun misuses moral terms (as do the other idealist writers—Herberg, Goodman, Constat, et al) by stating the opposite of what exists, and then employing this statement *logically* as if it were a matter of *fact*. So Calhoun says that human beings are always ends in themselves (this is patently false.) Therefore, to kill a human being for any purpose at all is to employ a means which destroys the end. But if human beings are *always* to be treated as ends in

themselves, then in situation after situation *all other values* than the preservation of life will have to be denied. In other words, this reduces itself, finally, to the proposition that life under any conditions is preferable to a joust with death. Calhoun arrives at this (and I am certain he does not desire it) by making one value an absolute, i. e. by viewing as a *fact of the mind* a value which is not fully a part of reality. *But only one unrealized value can be an absolute of the mind.* All others become subordinate. There are, however, many real situations in which they should *not* be subordinate. To make an absolute of a value is to do injustice to (a) other values and (b) real situations.

"The greatest weakness in revolutionary discussion of ends and means is the assumption that ends always exist in the *future* while means exist in the *present*." Human beings are ends: they exist now: therefore ends exist in the present—this is Calhoun's reasoning. But the point is that *revolutionary* ends do not exist now, they have yet to be realized. It should be clear that insofar as there is any reason for bringing about the socialism which does not now exist—to secure the conditions for the improvement of men—the present must be sacrificed to the future. Then he also says, "what happens to a human being now may be as important as what happens to one a hundred years hence." But if socialism exists a hundred years from now, and if it is important, then this statement is false.

"All the future is only probable," is Calhoun's next argument. Present death, however, is an irreversible fact. Using the probable nature of the future as a reason against killing in the present, is a bigger argument than he thinks. It applies equally to all irrevocable acts in the present—many of which, though non-violent, may have disastrous consequences if the future is incorrectly judged.

All along the line Calhoun has failed to substantiate his categorical imperative that violence may never be employed as a means toward a desirable end. And it seems to me that his failures tend to prove that violence cannot be avoided except by abandoning certain ends. (I understand that in Indian philosophy the highest state a man can reach is—the abandonment of all ends.)

We get a very clear view of the idealistic nature of the so-called non-violent technique when we note the distinction Calhoun makes between violence and compulsion. Compulsion is acceptable, while violence is not, because the former takes place "on a non-physical plane." *This is a significant distinction only if you accept the body-mind dualism of traditional idealistic philosophy.* Calhoun quotes Shridharani as saying that compulsion "must and does leave unscathed the primary necessities of the opponent's life." Now this is exactly the manner in which conflicts would be resolved in the classless society we envisage! But, as Dwight Macdonald *formerly* was fond of remarking in his polemics against lib-labs and reformists, we don't happen to be living in a Socialist Commonwealth.

Calhoun sees a great effectiveness in the fact that "trained non-violentists neither fight *nor* run" when opposed by force. I would like to discuss at length the proposition that to allow force to be used against oneself is not to practice non-violence, but to practice violence *only* against oneself (which is, pacifistically speaking, inadmissible if man is an end in himself in Calhoun's terms.) There is not, however, space enough. I will only remind the non-violentists that some four or five million Jews in Europe went "non-violently" to their deaths. The Nazis were not stunned, they were not even impressed, that these Jews did not resist. What did jar them quite thoroughly, however, was the bloody resistance of the gallant Jews of the War-

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saw Ghetto. Some 45,000—men, women and children—died heroically, fighting *violently* to the very end. Remember: four million died without armed resistance.

I would like to ask Calhoun a practical question: What leadership could the pacifists offer a revolutionary mass which insisted on employing violence? Would they acquiesce in the desire to use force, or would they respond as Ghandi did to the recent riots in Bombay? Ghandi's brilliant analysis: The events in Bombay can by no means be termed non-violent.

The best that one can say of an idealist is that he views the world in a "consistent" fashion. *But at what a price!*

(2) "On the Kind of Socialism Called 'Scientific'", by Nicola Chiaromonte; February issue.

I found this the least interesting of all the "New Roads" articles. While Calhoun is the best of the idealists, Chiaromonte is the most complete one. He employs with a deadly vengeance the idealistic method of purely verbal analysis. If the mechanical use of Marxist ideas can be quite dull, we see in Chiaromonte just how stifling the verbal exercises of idealism are. But, boredom aside, he nevertheless illumines further aspects of what idealism means.

It would be impossible in a short space, and fruitless under any conditions, to criticize in detail Chiaromonte's attack on Marxism. That is because he touches slightly on all the questions of human existence—raising them simultaneously with one great "disinterested" flourish. (This, also, is the manner of idealists: to call all things into question at once, which leaves no points of reference standing, and thus makes it impossible to solve *any* problems except by arbitrary or purely "logical" means.) So, again, I will try to stick to the self-imposed limits of my point of view, which is the method of idealism and the misuse of moral terms.

After "destroying" Marx and Engels, Chiaromonte arrives in conclusion at the point where they began—arrives at "a sense of Justice." He does not define his "idea of Justice," although he tells us it is very complex. He capitalizes the word and terms it an absolute—but this at best identifies its philosophical source. It certainly does not give the "idea" a historical or political content. But, if we turn back to the abandoned works of Marx and Engels, we see that their entire purpose was to show what specific meaning the idea of justice could have in history. (They considered it not of the highest importance what meaning the idea might have in the head of an isolated individual.) Their thought began its independent course with a critique of the idealistic (Hegelian) theory of right. It was then that they set out to understand the past fate and possible future fate of man's yearning for justice in actual, material history.

Because Marx did not conceive of values in absolute (non-historical) terms, Chiaromonte accuses him of never discussing morals or of dealing with them "ambiguously." But this is simply Chiaromonte's misconception. *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*, for instance contains a discussion of right and equality under socialism. (I know of no place where Marx is *not* talking about inequality under capitalism!) And in that same work, Marx offers this brilliant, *unambiguous* formulation of the general problem of morals: "Right can never be superior to the economic development and the stage of civilization conditioned thereby." To disagree with this statement, one must maintain that moral behavior differs from all other human behavior in that it is unconditioned by the historical environment. But this is only a delusion of the idealistic mind.

"A proposition is here considered true insofar as it cannot be proved to be self-contradictory. . . ." This is Chiaromonte's definition of truth, which certainly lies at the center of any method. Arriving at truth by means of this criterion can only be a process of arbitrarily defining words; it provides for no test in experience. In other words, you don't really *arrive* at truth, you *begin* with it. What Chiaromonte has defined is not truth but a certain kind of logic; and one, moreover, which is barred from discovering truth in contradictory statements. It is pre-eminently a logic which considers nothing but itself—just as Chiaromonte considers only the *idea* of justice, not its infinitely diversified forms in actual history or, what is the same thing, the factors in experience that condition it.

This attitude of "mind for mind's sake" is expressed on several occasions in the article. For instance: "the word 'idea' is here taken in its most simple and most elementary sense, namely a reality that exists in human consciousness, and *nowhere else*." (His italics.) If idea is a reality, and one that exists nowhere but in human consciousness, then it is neither simple nor elementary but practically unbelievable, *unless one assumes that human consciousness is the only reality and that it is made up of self-contained ideas*. Which is simply disguised Platonism minus the dignity of a separate realm of Ideas. In Chiaromonte's view there is no logical but only an arbitrary bridge between the individual with a monopoly of "ideas" and material history, which he calls a "dubious feast." In the old idealism man fulfilled himself by partaking of God; in this new variety he feeds upon himself and cannot be fulfilled.

I will state my own position without defending it. Men create their own environments. The ideas a man holds are pictures of modes of interacting with his environment. Consciousness is thus a function of this interaction; it is as much a part of the one as of the other. Ideas are objective when they judge correctly the actual state of the environment, i.e. when they form a part of it by leading into it successfully. They are subjective when they misjudge natural process, i.e. when it is impossible to act toward the environment as they define it. Thus ideas may also be subjective when they constitute proposals for modifying the forms of interaction of a larger group of men—because it is impossible to act on them. In other words, mind is social; and truth is a social definition, but it is subject to the verdict of experience. In these terms, ideas are forms of acts and there is no unbridgeable gap but rather a dynamic interrelation between man and man, and society and nature. I believe Marxism is consistent with this attitude.

Chiaromonte asserts that if we do not accept the ideas which individuals have about themselves and each other, we are assuming "*a priori* the complete unreality of consciousness. . . ." This is rhetorical trickery on his part. Consciousness is real, in the sense that it happens and is involved in acts, whether its contents are objective or subjective. An idea which misjudges the environment can be accepted as true by any number of men. To the extent that they act on it, it is quite real enough. But it can be infinitely significant to point out that it does not take into consideration all the relevant factors of the environment. The question is not of the reality of consciousness, but of whether it is objective or subjective. Consciousness is as real as the acts of men; it is not less real for being as right or as wrong as those acts are.

Chiaromonte misunderstands the relation of consciousness and environment because he has placed them in irrevocable separation. He has, to put it differently, become an intellectual victim of the present great antagonism between

idea and reality. In order to avoid the terrible feelings of frustration which we all suffer because we are unable to recreate our world, he accepts the brutal split between consciousness and environment—this horrible contradiction which experience itself has presented us with. However satisfying this may be, temporarily, in terms of confusion and frustration allayed, it can only perpetuate the evil which lies at the bottom of our entire predicament.

This is what idealism means: it is acceptance of the sinister belief in two spheres of existence. Whether the dualisms are called individual-state, nature-institution, good-bad, mind-body, or idea-history—is not so important as the fact of the dualism itself. Idealism is condemned, most of all, because it cripples analysis. *It takes the conflicts in reality and constructs out of them dualisms of principle.* By thus hypostatizing problems in the mind, it makes improbable—if not impossible—any solutions of them.

In his sterile questioning of Marxism, Chiaromonte even goes so far as to ask “why, for what essential and clear reasons, we should side with the oppressed against the oppressor. . . .” For the oppressed, this is the most absurd and academic of all questions. (And who among us is not oppressed?) Chiaromonte is led into this absurdity because he deals only with “ideas,” never with history itself. So he says, “Indignation . . . is a passion, not a clear idea.” And therefore it plays no part in argument! It is not the pure “idea of Justice,” it is merely an emotion against injustice!

And this, too, is a result of idealism, that emotions become “Ideas.”

* * *

Toward the end of March, Governor Dewey sent a message to the conference of a certain religious group in New York City. As the *Times* reported it, the Governor “asserted that religion is the antidote necessary to ‘a world beset by materialism.’” It should be clear that governors see a need for religion today because they have no intention at all of changing the “materialistic” world. Their religion amounts to little more than a cathartic interest in values which remain unrelated to the real experience of individuals. Religions have always accepted the dichotomy of matter and spirit; and in our time this has finally resulted in atrophy of the spirit and blindness regarding the potentialities of material existence.

Idealism is the intellectual offspring of religion. It engages in the same vicious mental play with moral abstractions. It separates itself in a similar way from the material world which our social system has denuded of moral meaning. Those radicals who have been victimized by the illusions of the idealistic method inject, of course, much more revolutionary emotion into their attitudes than do other idealists. But that is simply because they are radicals. It says nothing about idealism. The point is *what* to do with radical emotion; the question concerns method. Without the emotion of moral protest, the question never arises.

We radicals must, above all, be able to analyze society and history better than anyone else. *Better*, from the point of view of satisfying the unformed strivings of the mass of the dispossessed. (There is no really meaningful analysis without a purposeful point of view.) Analyze—teach—and finally lead. And what sort of analysis is it merely to note what is morally wrong in the world and then to demand that it be made right? . . . History has been irrational?—Then all men should be rational beginning now. Society is unjust?—So we demand “Justice.” The individual is trampled upon?—The individual is all! No, this is not the way. If history were not bigger than the individuals who make it, then it would be entirely *their* history and we

would have no more problems. Certainly none that could be solved. But men have been making history unconsciously; which is another way of saying that history has been making them. Consciousness of how history has been making man is the great *sine qua non* of all proposals to redirect that history in one way or another. This understanding of the factors which determine conduct does not immediately, in and of itself, change everything. But it makes such change possible.

Scientific method, not moral imperatives, will bring us to a full comprehension of historical process. I do not mean the social science of bourgeois technicians, which makes of “value-judgment” a sociological curiosity; not a science which is a substitute for values, but one which is a method for fulfilling them—a method which welcomes moral conviction and socialist faith to the test of experience.

The idealist will ask: Why science at all, if you admit the great importance of moral conviction? But this question makes sense only if one assumes a contradiction between values and scientific method. Actually there is none. What lies beneath the *apparent* contradiction is the opposition between man’s desire and the forces of the material world. The scientific thinker is preserved from approaching these forces in a naked and unarmed state because he has constructed a method out of the solved and partially solved problems of his past intercourse with them. The idealist, however, faces the new questions of experience armed with the fig-leaf of moral absolutes.

In his great history of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon wrote: “It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers.” It remains our highest dedication to demonstrate to the slaves of modern capitalist society their condition and their strength, and the fact that history is theirs for the making if only they will understand it.

NEW YORK CITY

DAVID T. BAZELON

Reply by Don Calhoun:

As I pointed out in my original article about the “Jap raping your grandmother” argument, the similarity between the arguments of revolutionary and reactionary violentists is so amazing as to be very likely more than purely coincidental. Now we have another example. In one of its first phases, this one was used by reactionary religionists to emasculate Christianity: in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus wasn’t really talking about the here and now world but about the heavenly Kingdom. And then it was used by the reactionaries and war-mongers to prove that peace is a fine ideal toward which we’re all of course working but in our methods of getting there we’ve got to be realistic. Now we come to the revolutionary version: non-violence is of course a splendid ideal, and in the Revolutionary Society of course that’s the way we’ll live, but while we’re on the way we’ve got to be realists, seizing the moment, not worrying too much about consistency or bothering too much about morality. Space forbids my taking up more than a few of the issues on which Bazon has thrown down the gauntlet.

(1) It is extremely important that a real revolutionary movement operate on the working assumption that violence is *a priori* inadmissible in any and all situations. This is not a claim that we have a telegraph line to the Absolute. We simply recognize that violence and

non-violence are antithetical systems, of which you can't pick up a piece of this here, and of that there. The Marxists always like to put themselves in the position of not *really* wanting violence and not *really* preparing for it, but merely picking up a machine gun or a stick of dynamite where and when it seems called for. If they really meant it this would be about the most irresponsible of all possible revolutionary attitudes. If you're going to be responsible you're going to decide your tactics in advance and prepare for them in the most effective possible manner. If you're seriously preparing a revolution you don't improvise on the spur of the moment. And serious preparation for violence means a whole orientation of life, of morality, of attitudes toward the military, etc., as I have pointed out. The important thing is that violence is a *system* which permeates the whole of life, and you either prepare seriously for it or you prepare equally seriously for something else.

(2) If the Marxists want to know why we seem to make such a horrible fetish of "a little violence" (negatively), we'd like to know why they make such a fetish of it (positively). The recent railway strike, to take one example, pointed up quite clearly the fact that only one additional factor is needed—the revolutionary mentality—to render the American economy and government helpless by exactly the kind of means (severing of transportation and communications, removal of a few key pins in the increasingly interdependent capitalist economy) of which I spoke in my article. And non-violently, for nobody believes that the government or the army could run the trains or mine coal. And this not on the assumption that anything like 100% of the people would support the strike. If we want to deal with reality, let's skip the overworked and romanticized history of the French and Bolshevik revolutions, and ask whether and wherein violence would be a revolutionary necessity in the concrete present.

(3) If there really are situations in which long-run values can be gained by killing people (which is dubious), then those values should be foregone. In very important contradistinction to Bazelon, however, in my opinion a morality which finds its source in the concrete individual as an end-in-himself is the only kind of morality which is NOT based on a "fact of the mind." It is a morality which says that if you avoid sloppy thinking (or no thinking at all) and really keep pushing your moral questions to their conclusion, the only justification for any social action which makes any sense is what it does to *concrete future and present human beings* (defined behavioristically and non-idealistically, if you please, as those animals possessing the peculiar potentiality for making noises which mean the same thing to themselves as to their fellow-beings). And when you come to weighing social actions against human lives, there just isn't any standard of measurement.

Now the alternative morality derives from Hegelian *idealism* via Marxist *idealism*. It reifies "society," particularly "the good society," "the socialist commonwealth of the future" (it's very important that it be of the future). It is for this bloodless, nerveless abstraction that everything is to be sacrificed. And if we ever do actually get down to human beings in the flesh, a human being a hundred years hence is worth more than one today (according to Bazelon) because he will be living within the "fact of the mind" called the socialist society.

It is because this kind of idealism (in the philosophical sense) is dangerous nonsense that I ask again: if in concrete situations human life is not going to come first, then on what is your system of social morality going to be grounded? I maintain that there is no non-mystical social morality possible which does not come back to the concrete human being as an immeasurable value. Irrevocable acts involving the death of people are therefore of a different kind—not merely a different degree—from other irrevocable acts with a different reference.

(4) The final and crucial question: What leadership could pacifists offer a revolutionary movement which insisted on using violence? It would depend on what is meant by insistence. If it means a Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyist movement wedded to the *idea* of violence, the philosophy of violence (*a priori!*), then I'm sure the answer is: next to none. Since, however, our Marxist-Trotskyist-Leninist friends are about as few and as ineffective as our pacifists, I don't think that's really the question.

The important answer is: If a mass movement of the left were to arise in the United States which was willing to look forward to the general strike as its main non-political arm, and which was *not* willing to pledge itself to forego violence in any and all situations (quite different from being wedded to the *idea*), then a left-wing pacifist group would join such a movement. It would see its particular role in spreading the philosophy of non-violence as a revolutionary technique and in *trying to root out the amoralistic violentism of the Trotskyist-Marxist position*. In concrete situations it might withdraw from violent action (as even good Trotskyists did, for instance, when violence broke out at the recent Gerald L. K. Smith meeting in Chicago), and try to get non-violent tactics employed (as when the lie-down across truck driveways was recently organized by socialists in the Chicago Ward strike). It would try to devise and practice such techniques among an increasing number of people.

The realistic fact is of course clear: there never will really be a revolution without some violence. But it makes all the difference in the world in terms of the revolution's success, short and long run, and in terms of what it does to people, whether that violence is sporadic, accidental, and regretted by both the leadership and the majority of the mass, or whether it is a planned expression of a program and a philosophy of how history moves, or is made to move.

Reply by Nicola Chiaromonte

If I understand him correctly, David T. Bazelon maintains that when somebody says that the least one can ask of a theory before accepting it is that it does not present some fundamental contradiction, he is an idealist who *begins* with truth instead of *arriving* at it; while if a man starts his search for truth by swallowing whole worlds of metaphysical presuppositions and, for example, assumes, the Bazelon way, that the one kind of thought which is absolutely incompatible with the true fabric of the Universe is the kind tinged with dualism, such a man is a realistic and scientifically minded person who patiently arrives at truth by way of trial and error, instead of just beginning with it. So, too, the person who claims that a real difference exists between the realm of ideas and the domain of history, human consciousness and material things, good and

bad etc., and insists on sticking to the difference, is an idealist and the victim of a "sinister belief"; while, on the other hand, the tough-minded character who claims that between such facts there is a "logical bridge", and that everything happens by way of a dialectical process, is a realist, a materialist, a sound thinker and a moral person. Furthermore, if a gentleman by the name of Marx says that "Right can never be superior to the economic development and the stage of civilization conditioned thereby", his is "a brilliant, *unambiguous* formulation of the general problem of morals". But, in case an ordinary citizen of the world objects that, if anything, those words contain a conspicuously *ambiguous* formulation of the irrelevance of morals to history, and that you cannot have it both ways, economic development as the measure of right and wrong *and* right and wrong as the measure of economic development, such a person will show nothing but a purely verbal interest in the question—as against the aforementioned gentleman, the concreteness of whose interest can be proved at any time by the fact that he denies that the question exists at all.

To continue, when you are so bold as to ask the question whether the norm of socialist action should be historical expediency (which means party, or State, expediency) or some notion of Justice, and to insist that, in your opinion, socialism either has Justice as a *norm* or is nothing at all, the answer of the Marxist brotherhood is: (1) that Justice is bunk, (2) that no person believed in it more than Marx. That is, because for Marx the norm was not Justice but the Historical Process. History *ueber alles*, History is the only absolute. And History is an absolute precisely because, as distinguished from Justice, it is not an absolute. Thus goes the Marxian logic.

I should like to indicate two definite senses in which the question of Justice, in connection with socialism, cannot reasonably be called a purely verbal one.

(1) In his commentary on the *Communist Manifesto*, Charles A. D. remarks that, after having demolished "bourgeois values", Marxian communism was logically confronted with the task of developing the "ideology

of the proletariat" on four fundamental points: (1) property; (2) the family; (3) the Nation; (4) moral and sentimental life. (To these, a fifth point might be added, namely the State). Had this task been performed, we would have had something like a Marxist Utopia or, if one prefers, some kind of a picture of what the Marxist means when he speaks of "social justice" and of a "better society". It would have meant dealing with definite social facts and definite intellectual difficulties, instead of just swimming with the current of the Dialectical Process. It would have offered the proletariat some matter for reflection and clear judgment, some notion of where they were being led. It would also have put some brakes on historical expediency. But the fact is that the task was never accomplished, and that on none of those questions has Marxism contributed anything but generalities. Property is collectivized, the family becomes proletarian, the State "dies out", the Nation is dialectically overcome, and so on. The Utopian would like the notion of "socialism" to be a little clearer than that.

(2) In his preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx announces that he definitely identifies the early Hegelian notion of "civil society" with the "material conditions of life", and that "the anatomy of civil society is to be found in political economy". Now, besides amounting to stating openly what the bourgeois does not always say but means, this amounts to a radical denial that there is such a thing as "civil society", insofar as the essentially diverse fact which "civil society" represents (i.e., the multiplicity of human relationships, norms, customs, ideas, culture, as opposed to and independent from any machinery of coercion, *raison d'Etat*, military ferocity, ecclesiastical dogmatism, material brutishness and such—which is what the young Hegel, and, more distinctly, the eighteenth century philosophers, meant by "civil society") is identified with *one* of its aspects. This the Utopian considers false, and the source of actual injustice. The Utopian in fact thinks that whenever you deny some aspect of human existence in theory you also maintain that it should be disregarded and suppressed in practice.

Escapism v. Marxism

IT seems that recently POLITICS has become the meeting ground of political escapist, of intellectuals in search of a magical formula which will solve the dilemma of contemporary society and give them a short cut to freedom. I confess that I would be willing to join in any possible escape from this society, and I would not disdain any short cuts—if the formula could be found. Unfortunately, there is no escape and there are no short cuts. And those who are looking for them should take as serious warnings the unsuccessful experiments of American radicals in the nineteenth century.

The formulas set forth are all based on the old utopian notions that any fantasy can be realized, that thought commands history, that we are only misled by wrong ideas, etc. They come into being now because of a desire which naturally springs up among an isolated intelligentsia, namely, to impose upon the world a more or less carefully worked out scheme which will "take everything into consideration."

And it is exactly the merit of the scientific socialism which these people scorn that it has recognized the limits of our possibilities! It offers us the great opportunity of abstaining from attempts which can *only* lead to failure and disappointment. (This is not to say that there are any absolute guarantees against failure.)

The hunt for a magical formula is understandable in a country where, because radical thought is not connected with a radical movement, the problems posed for the intelligentsia lack definition and a distinct content. If the intellectuals of such a country are not guided by a coherent social theory, they will fall almost inevitably into the errors of fanciful thought. But the fact that there is no socialist working class movement in the United States cannot be taken in justification of schemes which aim at creating a socialist world without the aid of a mass movement. It is bitter but it is the truth that socialism is impossible if the socialist idea does not take hold of the working class.

The power of the modern state can be overcome only by a vigorous mass movement. Moreover, to achieve true democracy a change in the attitudes and behavior of the mass is required. This must be accomplished in a political movement. Only through their own activity and experience can the people acquire the ability to govern themselves. This is what is meant by saying there are no short cuts.

The POLITICS "new road" builders have a certain affinity with the Bolsheviks. The basic error of the latter, as Otto Ruehle described it in 1920, was "that they thought themselves able to artificially construct what had to grow and mature." The radical intelligentsia may precipitate the process of growth; it cannot replace it with a formula of its own.

To argue from this point of view against the "new roads" writers would not be productive, since the argumentation would be occurring on different planes. Only Helen Constas' *Critique of Marxian Ideology* concerned the field of possible social action. Her errors, reflecting the lack of political discussion and experience from which young socialists suffer, are of interest.

I.

Starting with the idea that Marx' theory is relativistic, Constas claims that the superiority of the socialist idea cannot be demonstrated on this basis. Marx' concept of truth, however, is far from being relativistic. Throughout history, according to the Marxist viewpoint, there is a conflict between ideology and the revolutionary idea. As a protective covering necessary for its existence, the ruling class develops an ideology which obscures and perverts the truth.* Revolutionary ideas reveal the truth.

Socialism is not ideology; it is the consciousness of a practice that aims at changing the world. A mass interest in this aim can exist only in the ruled class. But class consciousness is a possible not an inevitable result of the social order which produces the proletariat. And the realization of it encounters many complex difficulties.

Lenin's conception of the intelligentsia as the agent of this consciousness grew out of the special (backward) conditions of the Russia of his time. According to the Marxian idea, class consciousness can be generated only through the political activity of the working class itself, in which, it is true, the progressive intelligentsia plays a part. In Russia the absolute monarchy had prevented the rise of a bourgeois society. The oppositional intelligentsia, however, had progressed farther than the thought of Voltaire and Rousseau; many of them were Marxists. They had kept pace with the West; Russian society had not. The Russian proletariat was enabled neither by its size, nor its economic position, nor its cultural maturity to transform Czarism into socialism. The Bolsheviks' attempt to replace the necessary process of growth by the efforts of an élite party proved to be a failure, as many Marxists had predicted.

Helen Constas goes much farther than the Bolsheviks. She pretends to believe that socialism, being merely a moral issue, could have been a valid program even in the days of Caesar or Charlemagne. Of course, this is not a serious belief; it is a caricature of the purely moral conception of socialism. In the times of Charlemagne, obviously, there was

nothing to be socialized. Socialism can never be viewed simply as a moral idea; it is too much more than that. It is man's attempt to achieve a rational domination of his social relations. An attempt of such magnitude, depending on many conditions, cannot be made at any time. In general terms, it requires a certain level of material and intellectual culture. As long as mankind remained the object of natural conditions to such an extent that the struggle for survival forced human groups to fight each other, and so long as the belief in man's dependence on superhuman agencies prevailed, not even the idea of a rational solution arose. And socialism — particularly socialism — cannot precede its idea into existence. Moreover, it is not sufficient that the idea of socialism appear in the heads of a few mature individuals; it must take possession of whole masses before its realization can be hoped for. Before the advent of the modern working class, there were no large groups with a decisive role in society to whom the socialist idea could possibly appeal.

The contemporary idea of social engineering is converted into an aspect of all of history in the mind of Helen Constas. She even asks whether slavery was required in order to create a leisure class! She ignores the obvious fact that social classes have never been constructed, but have simply happened. The primitive farmers who discovered the expediency of using prisoners of war as slaves instead of killing them, did not have the slightest intention of creating a leisure class, nor did they know it would come about.

Miss Constas finds the description of history uninteresting; her view is fastened narrowly on moral judgments. And so she overlooks the fact that the true moral judgment is included in the idea of dominating rationally the relations of men, i.e. of consciously overcoming a history in which things only happen, and which Marx therefore called the pre-history of mankind. On the other hand, Constas does not realize that the understanding of history is a precondition for the development of social consciousness. The unveiling of history as a (mere) history of class struggle, allied with the idea of a classless society, is certainly the strongest possible moral basis on which to build one's ideas. The great importance of the Marxian concept is exactly its clear introduction of the idea that a history in which mankind is only the object can be overcome. "One of the principal moments in previous historical development was the consolidation of our own creation into a real power over us, a power that outgrew our control, destroyed our expectations, and frustrated our hopes." In this sentence Marx has expressed the basic concern of his conception.

Constas criticizes Marx for not explaining the appearance of the first class society, the original sin. Engels, indeed, wrote a whole book on this question: although based on the best knowledge of his time, it is now obsolete. But new facts on the subject have only strengthened the Marxian conception of history. We have learned, for instance, that the feudal ruling class arose because primitive farming societies needed protection against nomads. Whether this feudal class was originally a tribe of nomads which "legalized" and stabilized its plundering of a certain area by becoming the protector of "its" farmers against other nomads, or whether it arose from within as a result of the special conditions of the migration of nations, it is nevertheless clear that it could become the norm for a whole epoch of history only because it fulfilled a task which this kind of society was not able to manage in any other way. The feudal class lost its position of power after it no longer performed a social function and had become merely parasitical.

* "Truth" is a notion which should be properly defined if used, but for the purpose of our discussion it may suffice to say that the truth is the knowledge of the inadequacy of the existing form of society as well as the cognition of the human potentiality to reach a higher stage of reason and freedom through free (i.e. revolutionary) action. In other words "truth" is here used as the cognition of the given and of the possibility it contains to get beyond it.

The writer of *A Critique of Marxian Ideology* is afraid that the institution of a ruling class is morally justified if it fulfills a social purpose. In this she misuses her moral sense. Class rule is possible only so long as we do not have a society piloted by the self-conscious activity of freely associated individuals. The moral critique of our past and present stems from the idea of such a free society. It is this idea of true democracy which makes the Marxian conception a *critical* theory of society.

She asks "was the bureaucracy a new class?" and "how did this fit in with the Marxist conception that every new class has a historical function?"

There is no doubt that Russia is an antagonistic society. The question of whether we should, however, call the bureaucracy a class in the same sense in which we term the bourgeoisie a class can hardly be answered by a simple yes or no. But this problem does not have much meaning for our discussion. What is important is that the Russian bureaucracy achieved power because there was a social function waiting for it. This was true because the weak Czarist bourgeoisie had perished as a class during the Revolution; and the working class was not in a position to bring about the socialist transformation without the help of the Western revolution on which Lenin had counted so strongly. What is more, certain Marxists were able to predict this development. Rosa Luxemburg's manuscript is known, and Otto Ruehle wrote in September 1920: "The most advanced capitalist production, the most developed technique, the best educated working class, the most abundant produce, are the indispensable prerequisites of socialist economy and therefore of socialism itself. Where did these preconditions exist in Russia? . . . A rapid development of the world revolution could have filled the gap. The Bolsheviks have done everything to make this possible. But this revolution did not take place. Thus arose a vacuum. . . ." This vacuum had to be inhabited and Ruehle foresaw that this could be done only by a bureaucratic dictatorship. (When feudal society no longer functioned, and the bourgeoisie was not yet sufficiently developed to take over, the bureaucratic rule of the absolute monarchy supplied the interim regime.) The fulfillment of this function does not conciliate us with the bureaucracy. Its power is the product of the failure of the socialist movement. The bureaucratic power has become a hindrance to the growth of international socialism. Socialists can be concerned only with overcoming the failure and the hindrance. The bureaucracy "necessarily happened" because no other group was able to execute a certain function. Our problem of replacing the bureaucracy cannot be solved by disregarding the facts.

A moralist once asked a German Marxist how he would have acted had he been in Stalin's position. The Marxist answered that probably he would have behaved in a not very dissimilar manner, but that the real difference lay in the fact that he was not in Stalin's position. In other words, the real moral issue is dealt with in the injunctions that we shall not surrender to the blind forces of history, that we shall not take part in a ruling class which "happens" because our drive toward a rational society is not yet strong enough, and that we *shall* keep on our own road. But if our critical theory of society is not developed enough to recognize those blind forces, then we will not be able to comply with the moral demand.

II.

Helen Constatas suffers from the belief that if the Soviet bureaucracy fulfills a function it must, therefore, be pro-

gressive—or at least she thinks this is the Marxist attitude. The errors of the socialist movement entitle her to this mistake. Her revolt against the myth of progress is not unjustified, but she puts the question in the wrong way.

The Marxist does not view the world from the perspective of isolated national development. That the Bolsheviks, because of their political concepts (criticized by Rosa Luxemburg and other Marxists) surrendered to the bureaucratic solution and sacrificed the international socialist movement, was their own fault. A fault which Trotsky, although he never fully mastered theoretically the problem of the Russian development, resisted with his fight against Stalin's notion of "socialism in one country." The industrialization of the country by the bureaucracy cannot be called progressive if we are able to prove that its political existence has impeded the international development towards socialism.

From this point of view the rise of bourgeois class society had a different meaning. The bourgeoisie not only developed mankind's productive capacity and disclosed the secrets of nature but furnished human life with a multitude of new aspects. The rising bourgeoisie developed the idea of personal freedom and gave the working class the chance to create the socialist movement. This did not, however, prevent Marx and Engels from exposing the brutal treatment of the workers, or from attacking the bourgeoisie for its methods of industrialization. If—to use Constatas' simile—the "boiling point" is a datum required by socialism, then Marxism teaches that this point cannot be reached without boiling the water. And in order for it to boil we need the fire of a political movement, we need moral indignation as well as political education—we need the idea of a new society, which can be developed only through a critique of the old one.

Economic development at the expense of freedom and reason is not regarded as progress in the Marxian theory. Progress is to be made only on the way out of the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom. Science and technique are prerequisites of the movement forward, since there can be no freedom without the mastering of man's natural surroundings; but the mere development of technique is not in itself progressive. Technique and science employed by a system which inhibits our efforts toward freedom have lost their connection with progress.

In contrast to the bourgeoisie, the Russian bureaucracy has not matured in the womb of the old society as a revolutionary force; rather it has developed because an attempt at a socialist solution has failed. The progressive tendency which Marx saw in capitalist society was that "the bourgeoisie itself supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie." The progressive element in bourgeois society was the growth of a socialist movement. But this is absent in the totalitarian state. The technical development which the bureaucracy has brought about in Russia is not progress in the Marxist sense, because the regime's methods of social engineering prevent the growth of all the human qualities necessary to reach the "boiling point" at which socialism becomes possible.

III.

There can be no disagreement with Miss Constatas' conclusion that the socialist movement needs a moral revival, and that only a movement in which democratic practice is deeply rooted can achieve its socialist goal. But it is not

the scientific method which is responsible for the lack of morality. Indeed, the foremost moral request of the socialist movement is for "responsible action," i. e. action based on the most highly developed insights into social relations. Our knowledge must permit us to foresee consequences.

If acting according to tradition was moral in medieval society, if early Protestantism and idealist philosophy saw in conscience or good intention the ethical basis of action—we should understand that these forms of morality corresponded (as Karl Mannheim has put it) to a stage in which the ethical and active person was bound to remain society-blind. A moral revival cannot mean regression to this stage. Socialist morality should be viewed in the context of an all-embracing conception of social development. We would have a separate moral problem to deal with only if the socialist goal could be reached by means which were in contradiction with socialist morality. A very important aspect of the dialectical method of thinking, however, is that means and ends cannot be separated. All means reflect the end which they serve. As Hegel has pointed out in his *Logic*, an end can be attained only when its nature has already penetrated the means. There has never been an immoral action of the Stalinists with which we disagreed solely from the moral point of view, but could have accepted politically. These actions were not immoral means toward an end which we favored; they served ends which we opposed, and oppose still.

In her critical zeal Miss Constatas denies that morality is class-bound. She forgets that the socialist movement derives great moral strength from its fight against the values of competitive society. It is in this fight, and primarily in the critique of the moral system organized around the idea of property, that the values of the coming cooperative society are being formed. To give one example, while it is a moral demand of capitalist society that everybody plow his own field, solidarity is a basic socialist interest.

Each of the ethical systems imposed by the ruling classes of history have included norms without which no human society could exist. But also, and chiefly, other norms which aimed at the maintenance of society in its given form. Our moral values derive from our political goal. If our aim is true democracy, then all our criteria are determined by this end.

There is no set of moral values independent from its social and political context. Norms are always related to a goal at which human beings are—consciously or unconsciously—driving. The managerial type of political organization, for instance, can justify the use of the lie as a means of political leadership, since anything which makes people serve "the end" appears as moral to them. Their means, however, can only lead us toward a bureaucratic society. ("For the bureaucracy," Marx wrote, "the world is merely an object to be manipulated".) The socialist can agree that everything is moral which serves the end—if the end is socialism. The lie cannot serve this end. It is impractical for the socialist movement because democratic control over the means of production cannot be brought about by an organization in which the members are merely the objects of the directors at the top. In the socialist movement the practical and the moral are identical.

This interconnection is not quite self-evident, it must be understood—and this leads us back again to the necessity of the scientific method of thinking. The man who desires to break with this method will find himself in conflict with the demand for responsible action; he may end up by being carried away in the stream of modern irrationality.

With the breakdown of bourgeois society the intelligentsia is beset by a crisis. The widespread lack of scientific orientation takes its vengeance. Confusion, panic and the failure of nerve are the consequences. Fifteen years ago, on the eve of Hitler's victory, Otto Ruehle wrote in his *Man in Escape*: "The late stage of capitalist development brings forth the first doubts in the efficacy of human reasoning itself, thus emphasizing sharply the first harbingers of the crisis. As the times are subjected to scientific investigation by searching intellects, they seem ever more barren and dead to the eyes of the living. This is why particularly the intellectuals gradually turn once more to long discarded interpretations. It becomes a fashion to construe, to interpret, to elucidate. Mechanism almost becomes a term of abuse, vitalism a title of nobility. Psychologists discover the subconscious which is presented as the great workshop in which life is fashioned. . . . The social atmosphere is filled with the musty smell of a world in decay: unemployment, overproduction, destruction of goods, dictatorships, wars. . . . In this atmosphere of senselessness in which the ties of logic and reason have been severed, guesswork, presumption and intuition hoist the flag. . . . The irrational is made a fetish, the illogical a revelation. . . ."

In the face of this frightful, embroiled and appalling force of irrationality, whoever speaks of socialist moral values must raise the banner of reason, logic and consciousness, which the bourgeoisie has dropped. Scientific orientation is a moral demand. He who ventures into politics without it becomes the captain of a rudderless ship; he endangers the lives of his crew.

SEBASTIAN FRANCK

Books

THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION. By Corliss Lamont. Harcourt Brace. \$3.00.

It is a well-known fact that the excessively frank and honest character of Communists the world over makes them peculiarly susceptible to the wiles of false friends and subtle betrayers. This was demonstrated in the famous purge trials, when it was shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that not only the rulers of the Soviet Union, but Communists all over the world (there is, of course, no connection between the two save that their common clarity of vision and selfless idealism inevitably lead them to arrive almost simultaneously at the same conclusions) had been completely deceived for two decades by a whole nest of the vilest reptiles.

It is therefore not surprising that Corliss Lamont should have been able to persuade many people that he is a "friend of the Soviet Union." And it is in this specious appearance of "friendship" that his true danger lies. Not for him the obvious anti-Soviet bias of a Eugene Lyons or a William Henry Chamberlin. No, his methods are far subtler—so subtle, indeed, that for a long time even this reviewer did not feel altogether certain that the damage Mr. Lamont did to the cause of the USSR was intentional, rather than the innocent result of an excess of zeal. For this is the peculiarly insidious quality of Mr. Lamont's method. (We may perhaps call it the Radek technique, after one of its most skillful practitioners. It will be remembered that Karl Radek, knowing that if he were to deny outright the charges

against him, the wise Soviet authorities would never have permitted him to spread his poison to the outside world, chose instead to confess to crimes so preposterous that nobody less innocent and guileless than a Soviet prosecutor could possibly fail to see that he was attempting to make the prosecution's whole case seem ridiculous.)

Using this Radek technique, Mr. Lamont has for many years been praising the Soviet Union in terms so excessive that no sane person could possibly believe them. By so doing, he has succeeded in raising doubts in the minds of many Americans—whom the more obvious anti-Soviet propagandists could not have influenced—as to the real virtues and achievements of the Soviet Union. Yet he seems so far to have succeeded in evading all suspicion in genuinely pro-Soviet quarters.

Emboldened by his past success, Mr. Lamont goes even further in the present volume. For here he actually includes a number of open anti-Soviet slanders, which are apt to pass unchallenged because of his reputation as a "friend of the Soviet Union." Indeed, his book has already been favorably reviewed in the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses*. The *Daily Worker* review was probably written in good faith by a Communist who trusted in Mr. Lamont's good intentions, since there is nothing in the review to indicate that its author had read anything in the book except the table of contents. For this the reviewer can hardly be blamed, for the book's general style resembles that of a Baedeker. In the case of the *New Masses*, however, one is forced to suspect that some more sinister factor is at work. For the reviewer to whom the book was entrusted—and who appears to have read it—is none other than the White Russian emigré General Victor Yakhontoff! Following on the publication in the *New Masses* of the Trotskyite deviations of Albert Maltz—how little his subsequent recantations can be trusted, we may learn from the examples of Zinoviev and Kamenev—this leads to the suspicion that there is something very rotten in the editorial offices of that periodical. This suspicion receives further confirmation when one remembers how long and faithfully it adhered to the banner of the notorious revisionist lackey of big business, Earl Browder, only deserting him after he had been completely exposed and discredited by Jaques Duclos.

Let anyone, deceived by Mr. Lamont's protestations of sympathy for the USSR, doubt that the true nature of his book is as I have described, I shall document my accusation. The only problem in so doing will be to select, from the numerous proofs available, those few which can be fitted into the compass of a short review.

To a careful reader, the true nature of this book might become evident at once from the dedication "To My Children"—so reminiscent of the traitor Kamenev's apostrophe to his sons in his last speech. Even more obvious is his reference (p. 29) to the expansion of Russian territory by "the great Russian steamroller," particularly when taken in connection with his description of Russia's interests in Manchuria—so recently reaffirmed and extended by Premier Stalin—as "imperialistic ventures." Again (p. 39), he makes the statement—strange indeed in a book ostensibly intended to extol the Soviet policy towards minorities—that "the Soviet policy signally failed as regards the German minority."

Repeatedly (e.g., p. 43, p. 140, p. 169, p. 206) Mr. Lamont quotes such notorious reactionaries—to use a mild term—as Louis Fischer, Anne Lindbergh, and John Dewey without exposing them. And he refers to the people of the Chechen-Ingush Republic—dissolved because of collaboration with the Nazi invader—as "virile and liberty-loving."

Does Mr. Lamont wish to imply that a love of liberty can show itself by a preference for Nazism as against Communism?

He subtly ridicules Soviet efforts to eradicate superstition in backward areas, quoting (p. 135) an account of how in one section of the Urals an elm tree, worshipped by the natives as a god, was elected to honorary membership in the Communist Party! Nor does Soviet justice escape his sneers as he describes (p. 79) the trial and conviction of an unwashed kettle and a dirty dress, and the commutation of their sentences on the ground of "the proletarian origin of the accused."

Like most anti-Soviet writers, Mr. Lamont repeatedly seeks to cast doubt on the genuineness of Soviet freedom and democracy. Thus (pp. 156-163) he lists limitations rendering nugatory most of the autonomous rights of the constituent republics of the USSR. And he particularly stresses the great powers of the centrally appointed Prosecutors, thus implying that the Soviet Union is actually a police state. Likewise (p. 181), he says that "literature, art, drama, journalism, science, and other expressions of culture . . . are subject to the general controls of Communist dictatorship and censorship in effect throughout the Soviet Union."

And perhaps most flagrant of all is Mr. Lamont's brazen defense of the traitors brought to justice by the efforts of Andrei Vishinsky and the heroic Soviet Commissariat of Internal Affairs. To these tools of Nazi-Fascism, these betrayers of the land of Socialism, these convicted spies, saboteurs, and assassins, he refers as "the many eminent Soviet citizens who came to grief in the trials and purges that accompanied this ruthless internecine quarrel."

It would be easy to cite passages illustrating Mr. Lamont's pro-Germanism, his disbelief in the Big Three principle, and his subtle use of quotations from Stalin to make that peerless leader appear ridiculous. Take for instance the quotation on the right of secession (p. 154), or the implication that the Soviet Union's zeal against anti-Semitism is not what it once was, which Mr. Lamont creates by using a 1931 quotation from Stalin denouncing it, instead of a more recent one. But space forbids, and the instances already cited should be quite sufficient to unmask Mr. Lamont and present him in his true colors.

There is a place for honest critics of the Soviet Union. (Indeed, the resources of Siberia have as yet scarcely been tapped.) But it would be difficult to include Mr. Lamont in this category. His subtle insinuations, sly innuendoes, and distorted half-truths can hardly be described as honest criticism. We must therefore demand that he make his position crystal clear. Does he, or does he not, carry his position to its logical conclusion? In short, *does he desire war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.?*

The Soviet Union can (at least with the aid of lend-lease and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts and Sciences) take care of its enemies. But it requires eternal vigilance to protect it from "friends" such as Winston Churchill and Corliss Lamont.

MAURICE GOLDBLOOM

THE MILITARY MIND IN ACTION

CHICAGO: Declarations that there is an urgent need for the extension of Selective Service and that talk as to how and where and why the next war will be fought is vicious were made today by Gen. Eisenhower . . .

INDIANAPOLIS: Declaring that for the first time in history a revolutionary new and dominating weapon, air power, had been perfected by the peace loving peoples of the world, Gen. Spaatz, head of the Army Air Forces, listed the following objectives of the air forces: . . . To preserve the peace . . . To win, in case of war, more quickly . . .

—"N. Y. Times", June 2.



The Root Is Man

PART TWO

(The first part of this article appeared in the May issue.)

THIS part of my argument I undertake reluctantly, for I have no philosophical training and don't feel at home in this field. Those more at home may perhaps dismiss what follows with Sheridan's criticism of a young politician's first speech: "The honorable member has said much that is sound and much that is new; but what is sound is not new and what is new is not sound." I have long thought, however, that our over-specialized culture would profit if amateurs were more daring in rushing in where experts fear to tread; and have acted often on that assumption. In any case, the course which our society is taking is so catastrophic that one is forced to rethink for himself all sorts of basic theoretical questions which in a happier age could have been more or less taken for granted. Questions which formerly seemed to me either closed or meaningless are now beginning to appear open and significant. Such questions are those of Determinism v. Free Will, Materialism v. Idealism, the concept of Progress, the basis for making value judgements, the precise usefulness of science to human ends, and the nature of man himself. (In this I am not particularly original, of course: a similar shift of interest may be observed among most Western intellectuals, the most recent example being the vogue of existentialism.) I do not propose to try to settle any of these vast questions here—indeed I am coming to suspect that most of them cannot ever be settled in the definite way I once assumed they could be. But it will be necessary to go into them somewhat in order to make clear the necessity, for those who still believe in the ethical aims of socialism, of adopting a "Radical" attitude.

Definitions

By "scientific method" I mean the process of gathering measurable data, setting up hypotheses to explain the past behavior of whatever is being investigated, and testing these hypotheses by finding out if they enable one to predict correctly future behavior. The essence is the ability to accept or reject a scientific conclusion by means of objective—and ultimately quantitative—

tests whose outcome is unambiguous: that is, there is recognized to be a universal standard *independent of the individual observer* which forces *every one* to assent to a given conclusion if it can be shown to meet the requirements of this standard. As Karl Pearson puts it: "The scientific man has above all things to strive at self-elimination in his judgements, to provide an argument which is as true for each individual mind as for his own. The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgement upon these facts *unbiased by personal feeling* is characteristic of the scientific frame of mind." (*The Grammar of Science*; Everyman edition, p. 11; my emphasis)

By "value judgement" I mean a statement that involves the notion of "Good" and "Bad" in either an ethical or an esthetic sense. Such a judgement is always ambiguous because it involves a qualitative discrimination about something which is by its very nature *not* reducible to uniform and hence measurable units; the "personal feeling" of the observer not only enters into the judgement but is the chief determinant of the judgement. It is impossible, therefore, ever to solve a moral or esthetic problem in the definite way that a scientific problem can be solved, which is why one age can build on the scientific achievements of all past ages, whereas it is notorious that in art and ethics no such progress may be observed. It is also impossible to *prove* an ethical or esthetic judgement in such a way as to compel everybody else, or even anybody else, to assent to it. This is not to say that communication, persuasion, and demonstration is not possible in this realm. It is, but along unscientific lines. In a word, there seems to be something intrinsically unknowable about values, *in a scientific sense*, although artists and moral teachers have shown us for several thousand years that knowledge is attainable by other methods.

An example may bring out the contrast. The modern detective story and the novels of Henry James share a common structural pattern: a mystery, a problem is proposed, and the dramatic interest lies in the reader's sense of coming to the solution of the mystery. With not too much straining, it might also be said that the problem is the same in each case: what kind of people are these "really," as James would say, which are the Good ones, which the Bad? The difference is that a detective-story writer reduces this to a question that is scientifically manageable: who pulled the trigger, who poisoned the medicine? So we always at the end get a solution of the mystery; we find that so-and-so is the criminal, and hence that, since the committing or not committing of a physical act is our only ethical criterion, so-and-so is quite definitely the Bad character. But in James, despite the most subtle and laborious analysis and despite a whole series of dramatic revelations, we find that the clearing-up of one ambiguity simply opens up several others, which in turn suggest other mysteries undreamed-of before the process of elucidation began, so that the onion is never, so to speak, completely stripped. For the heart of James' onion, unlike that of the detective writer, is unattainable, since the problem

he sets himself is ethical and esthetic rather than scientific, a problem of values which by its very nature can never be "solved" but only demonstrated. *The Golden Bowl* is an inquiry into the moral behavior of four people; at the end we are no farther along towards a final judgement as to who is Good and who is Bad than we were at the beginning—we have even lost ground, in fact—and yet we have learned a great deal about both the people and their ethics. The greater the artist, the more we feel this about his work, which is one reason Henry James is more interesting than Agatha Christie.

A thoroughgoing scientific approach, such as Marx's was in intention, sees the world as of one piece, all of it by its nature able to be understood scientifically; to the extent that it is not so understood, the imperfection of our present knowledge is to blame. This view sees value judgements as illusory in their own terms (since with sufficient scientific knowledge it is assumed they

could be shown to be simply reflections of some deeper scientifically-graspable reality—historical according to Marx, psychological according to Freud) although of course values are conceded to be real enough as phenomena.

My own view is that value judgements are real in both the above senses, that they are in fact our ultimate basis for action whether we realize it or not, and that they belong to an order of reality outside the reach of scientific method. There are *two* worlds, not one. I suppose I am, philosophically, a dualist; there is precedent for such a position, but the contemporary trend on the Left has been along Marxian or Deweyan lines so that one feels quite uncomfortable in it. At any rate, the crucial question seems to me to be not how we arrive at our values, or what consequences their realization will have, but rather what values we *should* hold. How may we tell Good from Evil? In Tolstoy's great phrase: What Should a Man Live By?

7. Scientific Method and Value Judgement

The question of what we base our value-judgements on, how we know what is Good and what is Evil, may seem remote and academic in an age which has witnessed Maidanek and Hiroshima. Confronted by such gross violations of the most modest ethical code, may we not take it for granted that there is general agreement that such things are Evil, and instead of splitting hairs about metaphysical questions like the nature of values, devote ourselves rather to the practical implementation of this universal agreement? In a word, when Evil is so patent, is our problem not a scientific one (devising Means to an agreed-on End) rather than an ethical one (deciding what Ends we want)?

This is "just common sense"—which means that it will not stand close examination. That extreme Evils are committed today, with no large-scale opposition, by the agents of great nations—this leads me to conclude not, with the liberals and the Marxists, that the peoples of those nations are horrified by these Evils, groaning under the bondage of a system which permits such things to happen, and waiting expectantly for a practical program to be put forward which will eliminate them; but rather that, on the contrary, these Evils are rejected only on a superficial, conventional, public-oration and copy-book-maxim plane, while they are accepted or at least temporized with on more fundamental, private levels. How deeply does modern man experience the moral code he professes in public? One recalls the encounter of two liblab American journalists with a Labor member of the British cabinet during the war. They asked him for "some sort of idea about what Britain was fighting for." The Laborite was puzzled. "Then he smiled and said that Britain, of course, could state the sort of aims we seemed to demand, of course Britain could get out a list of points. But he asked us what they would mean—they would be mere platitudes. He was intensely sincere and he could not understand why we should be shocked . . ." (*P.M.*, Jan. 30, 1941)

The fact that "everybody" agrees that war, torture, and the massacre of helpless people are Evil is not reassuring to me. It seems to show that our ethical code is no longer *experienced*, but is simply *assumed*, so that it becomes a collection of "mere platitudes." One does not take any risks for a platitude. Ask a dozen passers-by, picked at random, whether they believe it is right to kill helpless people; they will reply of course not (the "of course" is ominous) and will probably denounce the inquirer as a monster for even suggesting there could be two answers to the question. But they will all "go along" with their government in World War III and kill as many helpless enemy people as possible. (While the monstrous questioner may well become a C.O.) Good and Evil can only have reality for us if we do not take them for granted, if they are not regarded as platitudes but as agonizing problems. Thus the easy, universal agreement that war is Evil is a matter for suspicion, not congratulation.

The Limitations of Scientific Method

Scientific method cannot answer Tolstoy's question. It can tell us everything about a work of art or a way of life—its psychological and economic motivation, its historical significance, its effect on the beholder or the participant—everything except the one essential thing: is it Good? Scientific method can tell us how to reach a given End: the chances of success by one method as against another, the past experience of other people, the favorable and unfavorable factors. It can tell us what the consequences of reaching a given End will be. It can even tell us a good deal about why we in fact choose one set of values (i.e., one End) rather than another; that is, it can tell us all about the historical, economic, glandular, psychological and other measurable factors involved in value choices. All this information is important and useful. But science is mute on what is, after all, the central question: what values

should we choose, what End *ought* we to want? Science comes into play only *after* the values have been chosen, the End selected. For it, the End must always be "given", that is, assumed as a fact, a datum which scientific method cannot and should not "justify" any more than it can tell us why coal "ought to be" coal.

Many, perhaps most, scientists will agree with this limitation of the scope of scientific method—and with the more general proposition it rests on, that the world of value-judgement is intrinsically unknowable through science. So, too, will those at the other extreme: the religiously minded. It is the Progressives who deny this limitation; in this they follow their masters, Marx and Dewey, each of whom in his own way has made a Promethean effort to unify the two worlds by deducing values from scientific inquiry.

Is a Scientifically-Grounded Ethics Possible?

I have discussed this problem of values with Marxists and Deweyans a good deal of late. They generally begin by assuming as "self-evident" that Man ought to want Life rather than Death, or Plenty rather than Poverty; once some such assumption is made, then of course they have no difficulty showing how science can help us reach this End. But if the assumption is questioned, it soon becomes clear that it is based on other assumptions: that "Man" means "most people of the time and place we are talking about", and that the "normal" or "natural" as defined in this statistical way is what one *ought* to want. It is understandable that their answer should take a quantitative form, since science deals only in measurable quantities. But if what most people want is one's criterion of value, then there is no problem involved beyond ascertaining what in fact people *do* want—a question that can indeed be answered by science, but not the one we started out with. For this answer simply raises the original question in different form: why *should* one want what most people want? The very contrary would seem to be the case: those who have taught us what we know about ethics, from Socrates and Christ to Tolstoy and Thoreau, have usually wanted precisely what most people of their time did *not* want, and often met violent death for that reason.

But, it will be objected, surely it is possible to base an ethical system on human needs by investigating "human nature" through such sciences as psychology, anthropology and sociology. "Ideals need not be idealist," writes Helen Constanas (POLITICS, January 1946). "The ethical standards of socialism can be and are derived directly from the physical and psychological needs of human beings, and are therefore quite real and materialist. This is the only scientific base for socialism." This is a plausible and attractive idea; it is the approach of the main theoreticians of both anarchism and Utopian socialism (see below under "Ancestral Voices Prophesying Progress"). What could be more direct and satisfying a solution than to discover, by scientific inquiry, what human needs are and then to construct an ethical system that will give the maximum satisfaction to those needs? But how is one

to tell the "real" or "normal" or "good" human needs from the "perverted" or "bad" ones? As one extends the scope of one's investigation over large masses of people, the variety and mutual exclusiveness of human needs becomes ever more confusing; and as one intensifies one's vision into any single individual—one's self, for example—it becomes more and more difficult to tell which needs are "real and materialist" and which are not. One can only solve this question by constructing a metaphysical and scientifically unverifiable model of "real" or "true" human nature—i.e., what one's heart tells one men *should* be like—and applying this as a standard to the vast mass of contradictory data one's scientific labors have amassed. The only possible *scientific* model of human nature is, as we have seen above, the one arrived at by ascertaining what in fact most people have wanted most of the time. But an ethics based on this would not be an attractive one. Most people in the past and today have been conditioned by exploitative social institutions to want such things as to be fed in return for submission to authority, or to play God in their own family circle, or to despise the weak and honor the strong. If these unpleasant traits are held to be perversions of human nature, then one must ask on what scientific basis this finding is made; it is an odd conception of normality which expresses itself only in a few individuals and cultures throughout mankind's long history. Scientifically, the Machiavellians would seem to have the better of this argument.

The scientific moralist will reply with Rousseau that Human Nature is essentially good but that it has been perverted by bad social institutions; all that is needed, therefore, is to liberate humanity through good institutions. I don't object to this assumption if it is understood to be an assumption: a metaphysical, scientifically unverifiable value-judgement. In fact, as the title of this article shows, my own ethical belief assumes this. But as a scientific statement, it is by its very nature undemonstrable and is, I venture, not accepted by anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists. The extreme variability of Human Nature—in fact, the meaninglessness of the term as a scientific concept—is shown in Ruth Benedict's excellent *Patterns of Culture* (now available, by the way, in a 25c Bantam Books edition). Furthermore, if Human Nature exists within the realm of science, then it must be thought of as constantly changing under the pressure of changing social institutions, and since these are agreed to have been mostly very bad for several thousand years, the final result today must be something rather repellent.

The difficulties of this position are unwittingly illustrated by James T. Farrell, who puts forward *both* the scientific and the metaphysical positions simultaneously: "Marxism presents a position of social morality. The premise for this position is that the major evils in this world are the consequences of the exploitation of man by man. Human nature is affected by this exploitation, and so the human behavior that results in societies based on exploitation causes needless misery, suffering, injustice, brutality, war, bestiality, and in consequence, human nature is deformed—deformed for the worse. In this sense, we can say that there is implicit

in Marxism a distinction between a conception of human nature and human behavior." (POLITICS, March 1946). But if human *nature* as well as human *behavior* is "deformed" ("for the worse" adds Farrell, lest we assume he means deformed for the better, just as he speaks of "needless" bestiality, as against necessary bestiality) then (a) the distinction between them disappears, and (b) there is no *scientific* base for his assertion that "what is called for is change, the elimination of the conditions and circumstances which enforce the continued practice of the exploitation of man by man." For it would seem scientifically more likely that Human Nature by now has been so thoroughly deformed by millenia of exploitation that it is adjusted to exploitation better than to freedom.

In this inconsistency, Farrell is an apt pupil of Marx and Dewey. The confusion does credit to their hearts if not to their heads; they are at least *bothered* by the problem of values, even though unable to reconcile it with their scientific monism. The more consistent scientific-monists simply deny the reality of the whole problem. They argue that one has merely the illusion of value-choice: in "reality," one reacts to stimuli of which one may not be conscious but which there is no reason to suppose are intrinsically incapable of being understood through science. They maintain that, just as the advance of science has shown us that many phenomena which were once thought to be arbitrary and mysterious can now be explained scientifically, so in the future those areas of human motivation which now seem to us outside the sphere if science will be likewise brought safely under control.

This takes us to the philosophical problem of Free Will, which I don't feel competent to discuss beyond saying that *either* thoroughgoing answer to it seems to me absurd. If there is no Free Will, then there must be a cause for every result; but how does one arrive at a First Cause—what causes *that*? (Religion answers this with God, but this seems to me more an evasion than an answer.) But if there *is* Free Will, complete and unforced, then how can one explain the influence of scientifically determinable factors (glandular, sexual, climatic, historical, etc.) on every choice that one makes? One must conclude, and I do conclude, that although vast areas of human motivation are determined, there is a certain area—a vital core, so to speak—where we have a free choice. (A *determined* choice is a contradiction in terms.) So far as action goes, this core is the "point," since the rest is determined—i.e., we *react* rather than *act*. Whether Free Will exists or not, it thus seems necessary to behave as though it did: just as whether or not values exist independent of scientifically explainable causes, it also seems necessary to behave as though they did. Necessary, that is, if we aspire—as all socialists, whether of the Radical or the Marxian-Progressive variety, do aspire at least in theory—not to perpetuate the status quo (to react) but on the contrary to revolutionize it (to act).

On What, then, CAN We Base our Values?

Once we have divorced value judgements from scien-

tific method, we are embarked on a slope which can easily lead if not to Hell at least to Heaven. For if we assume that men decide what is Good, True, Just and Beautiful by a partially free choice, then the blank question confronts us: if our value-choices are not wholly determined by the scientifically understandable "real" world (I put "real" in quotes because what the scientists call the "unreal" world seems to me equally real), then where in the world, or out of it, DO they come from? The easiest answer is the religious one: that there is some kind of divine pattern, of other-worldly origin, to which our choices conform. This I reject for three reasons. The most important is that, even in adolescence, religion has never interested or attracted me. Here I stand with the young Marx, who wrote in his doctoral thesis: "Philosophy makes no secret of the fact: her creed is the creed of Prometheus: 'In a word, I detest all the gods'." Secondly, the religious answer seems to me another form of determinism, and hence is alien to Man and degrades him to a parasite of a superior power. Why should we recognize the overlordship of God any more than of History or Science or the Unconscious? Thirdly, the very fact that the religious hypothesis provides a solution to the problem of values is suspect, just as the Marxian hypothesis, for the same reason, is suspect: the "trick" in living seems to me precisely to reject all complete and wellrounded solutions and to live in a continual state of tension and contradiction, which reflects the real nature of man's existence. Not the object at rest but the gyroscope, which harmonizes without destroying the contradictory forces of motion and inertia, should be our model. Perhaps the most serious objection to Marxism is that, in this sense, it is not dialectical *enough*.

The attempt to give values either a religious or a scientific basis seems to me an attempt to objectify what is a subjective, personal, even arbitrary process. I think each man's values come from intuitions which are peculiar to himself and yet—if he is talented as a moralist—also strike common chords that vibrate correspondingly in other people's consciences. This is what ethical teachers have always done; it is the only way we have ever learned anything essential about ethics or communicated our discoveries to others; that it should appear such a mysterious business today, if not downright childish, is one of the many signs of the disproportionate place scientific method has come to occupy in our consciousness. For the fact that there is no scientific base for ethics does not mean there is no base at all (or only a religious one), any more than the fact that, as I also believe, it is impossible to decide scientifically whether a poem is any good or not means that there is no way to tell (or proves the existence of God). It simply means that there are two worlds and that we in practice live on two levels all the time.

Tolstoy gives three characteristics of a prophecy: "First, it is entirely opposed to the general ideas of the people in the midst of whom it is uttered; second, all who hear it feel its truth; and thirdly, above all, it urges men to realize what it foretells." Here we see the paradox: the great ethical teachers have always put forward ideas which the majority of the men of their time

think nonsense or worse—and yet which these same men also feel are true. The prophecy strikes through to *something in common* between the prophet and the very people who stone him to death, something deep down, far below the level accessible to scientific study (Gallup polls) or to rational argument.

This “something in common” cannot be the mores of the historical period in question, for it is just his own time which rejects most violently the prophet’s teachings, while for thousands of years after his death people in widely different social conditions continue to be deeply moved by them. How can one, for example, on historical-materialist grounds, explain the attraction Tolstoy in 19th century Russia or some of us today in this country feel towards the ideas of Lao-Tse, who lived in China in the seventh century B.C.? In this sense, we may say that Truth, Love, Justice, and other values are absolute: that, in addition to the variations in these conceptions which appear under different historical circumstances, there is also an unchanging residue which is *not* historically relative. The similarities between men’s values in widely different historical periods seem to me at least as striking as the differences which, following Marx, it has been customary to emphasize. The “something in common” seems to be related to the nature of the human beings who have inhabited this earth during the last five or six thousand years. (I am willing to concede that this “something in common” is historically relative to this extent: that an inhabitant of Saturn, who may well have six legs, no head and a body the size of a cockroach, probably would not understand Plato’s notions of Justice.)

To sum up:

1. The locus of value-choice (and hence of action) lies within the feelings of the individual, not in Marx’s History, Dewey’s Science, or Tolstoy’s God.
2. Free will exists; the area of free choice, from the standpoint of action, is the only one worth talking about since the rest is by definition determined.
3. Moral values are absolute in two senses: (1) They are ends in themselves; if Truth is a value for one, then a lie is not justified even if it is in the class interests of the proletariat. (2) They have an element which is not historically relative, except in the sense of relating to human beings on this earth and not to Saturnians or Martians.

What Is NOT Asserted about Science

By this time, or perhaps long before, many a reader has thrown aside this article with some remark about “rejecting science” or “trying to change history by moral preachings.” Yet I insist that a dispassionate reading of the preceding pages will show that nothing of the sort is asserted. To quote: “Scientific method can tell us how to reach a given End, the chances of success by one method as against another, the past experience of other people, the favorable and unfavorable factors. It can tell us what the consequences of reaching a given End will be . . . All this information is important and useful. But science is mute on . . . the central question:

what values *should* we choose, what End *ought* we to want?” This seems clear enough: science is certainly competent to help us to behave more wisely, once we have chosen our Ends, but it cannot help us choose them. Or, put differently: it can improve our technique of action, but it cannot supply the initial impetus for action, which is a value-choice: I want this, not that. At that crucial initial moment in any action, the moment of choice, I maintain that science is incompetent, and that there is some intuition or whatever involved which we simply do not understand. It is not a question of “rejecting” scientific method, any more than of “rejecting” history in favor of moral absolutes; I used scientific method, or tried to, in writing this article, just as I do every time I cross the street (estimating the distance and speed of approaching vehicles, the width of the roadway, my own agility, etc.). As for history—I might reject it, but it wouldn’t reject me; one lives in history, whether one likes it or not, and one must take it into account. But to take into account the process of history in realizing one’s values is one thing, and to build one’s values on this process, as the Marxists do, is quite another. Just as it is one thing to use scientific method in realizing one’s values, and quite another to follow Marx and Dewey in denying any line of demarcation between the two spheres. The latter seems to me a metaphysical, even an unscientific point of view; and, more important, it makes it impossible to stand up against overwhelming odds for one’s idea of what is right. For I *do* assert that one’s values, if they are real in the sense of causing one to act on them even when the odds are against them (as is the case unhappily today), must be based on a free choice that takes place in an ethical sphere intrinsically impervious to scientific examination.

What is involved here is not the *validity* of scientific method, but rather its proper *scope*. An attempt is made to deflate the over-emphasis on science in Western culture of the past two centuries, to reduce scientific method to its proper role of means to ends that are outside its province. In short, a dualistic approach is suggested. But a dualist appears to a materialist to be merely a disguised idealist, whence the outcries about “rejecting science.” I don’t expect this explanation to still them. Since the great experiment at Hiroshima, I have discussed with many people the above question, and I have observed how deeply “scientised” our culture has become, so that otherwise coolheaded and rational persons react to the slightest questioning of scientific progress the way a Tennessee fundamentalist reacts to Darwin’s theories. Any suggestion, for example, that maybe we know more about nature by now than is good for us, that a moratorium on atomic research might lose us cheaper power but gain us the inhabited globe—the slightest speculative hint of such an idea is greeted with anger, contempt, ridicule. And why not? A god is being profaned.

At the POLITICS meetings last winter, most of the audience showed this cultural reflex. If a speaker said he doubted the value of scientific method in certain relations, he was at once attacked from the floor: “What! You want to junk science and go back to stone

axes?" Many listeners could not distinguish between the statement, "Scientific method has limitations", and the statement, "Scientific method is worthless." When I said, "Science cannot tell us what values to choose," someone rose to object: "Macdonald says science leads us to choose bad values."

Two other discriminations.

(1) It is, of course, not enough just to assert values; unless they are acted on, values aren't meaningful at all, and the concrete way they are acted on in a given specific situation is their reality. Put differently: it is true that if Truth, Love and Justice are not closely defined, both rationally and in actual situations, they are so vague that almost any evil may be committed, and has been committed, under their cover; ethical teaching and speculation is an attempt to define them partly by analysis partly by appealing to people to realize them here and now in their everyday lives. To say that Marx's demonstration of the historical shifts that take place in values, or Dewey's concept of experience are misleading when made the only approach to values is not to say that they should be "junked." In my opinion, they are great advances in our understanding (as is also Freud's exploration of unconscious motivation) which it would be a real cultural regression to abandon. What should be rejected is what seemed to these thinkers the main point: the reduction of all experience to their terms.

(2) There is another distinction which critics of the "New Roads" series have failed to make, and which I myself did not make in defining "progressive" and "radical" in Part I: that between two kinds of *scientific* approaches to socialism. As is shown by the excerpts from the great Utopian and anarchist thinkers in Section 9 below, they were just as insistent as Marx on giving socialism a scientific basis. Only where he, following Hegel, looked to history for this, they, following

rather the French Encyclopedists, looked to biology, psychology, anthropology. If Marxism is historical materialism, their theories might be called natural-science materialism. Engels, who vulgarized and distorted so much of Marx's thoughts, is responsible for the confusion here too: his famous pamphlet, *Socialism—Utopian and Scientific*, draws the line between Marx and the Utopians entirely in terms of historical theory; so that to this day, the friends and enemies of Marxism alike concede, wrongly, its claim to being the sole form of "scientific socialism."

Looking at the "New Roads" series in this light, one can distinguish those articles which state or imply that socialism cannot be based on science—Herberg's, Chiaromonte's, my own—and those which take the opposite view—Goodman's, Constat's, Votaw's, possibly Calhoun's. (It might be added, in view of the general assumption by our critics that we "throw overboard" scientific method, that after a careful reading of the whole series, I find that the only article which is not either dualist in the sense of this one or else actually scientific but in a non-Marxian sense, is Chiaromonte's.) Goodman's is the clearest example of "natural-science materialism", for he draws largely on the theories of Wilhelm Reich, who is making an extremely ambitious attempt to give values a biological basis—indeed, to show, as Marx did only on different grounds, the unreality and inutility of values. The reason that, to a Marxist, a scientific monist like Goodman and a dualist like myself seem to be saying the same thing is that, in different ways, we do come to the same practical conclusion: emphasis on the immediate concrete behavior of human beings rather than on the big collective abstractions of class and history. If there is a possibility of scientifically grounding socialism, I think it will be found along the Utopian and anarchist (and today Reichian) lines and not in Marx's historical emphasis.

8. Marxism and Values—Three Texts with Comments

Previous articles have shown from both a Marxist (Spratt) and a non-Marxist (Chiaromonte) standpoint how unsatisfactory and even self-contradictory is Marx's treatment of ethics. If I take up the theme again here, it is because I feel, and so apparently do many others today, that it is of central importance.

Text 1.

Truth, the cognition of which is the business of philosophy, became in the hands of Hegel no longer an aggregate of finished dogmatic statements which, once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart. Truth lay now in the process of cognition itself, in the long historical development of science, which mounts from lower to ever higher levels of knowledge without ever reaching, by discovering so-called 'absolute truth', a point at which it can proceed no further . . . Just as knowledge is unable to reach a perfected termination in a perfect, ideal condition of humanity, so is history unable to do

so; a perfect society, a perfect state are things which can only exist in the imagination. On the contrary, all successive historical situations are only transitory stages in the endless course of development of human society from the lower to the higher. (Engels, "*Ludwig Feuerbach*," p. 21.)

I agree that absolute truth is unattainable, that a perfect society can exist "only in the imagination," and that Hegel and after him Marx made a great intellectual advance in emphasizing the historical-relative aspect of truth. But I don't see why one must accept Engels' conclusion that there is no absolute truth outside the historical process. Engels thinks that because such truth can exist "only in the imagination"—the "only" is revealing, by the way—it must therefore be unreal. But why? The imagination is part of life, too, and absolute, unchanging truth may be quite real even if one grants the imperfection of humanity and the consequent impossibility of absolute truth ever being

realized outside the imagination. If there is a contradiction here, it is because human life is contradictory. And Engels himself is caught in the contradiction, for how can he speak of historical evolution from the "lower" to the "higher" without some criterion that is outside historical development, i.e., is an absolute existing "only in the imagination?" How can we test this alleged progression if we have no definition of "higher" that is independent of the process itself?

The passage from Engels, by the way, strikingly anticipates Dewey's concepts of "experience" and "knowledge as process," to which the same objections apply. On this whole question, Dewey is close to Marx.

Text 2.

To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog nature. This nature itself is not to be deduced from the principle of utility. Applying this to man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch. Bentham makes short work of it. With the driest naivete, he takes the modern shopkeeper, especially the English shopkeeper, as the normal man. (Marx, "*Capital*," V.1, p. 668, footnote.)

But where does Marx himself consider "human nature in general?" Does he not, on the contrary, constantly deny there is any such thing and constantly assert that human nature only exists "as modified in each historical epoch?" Does he not also arbitrarily take as "the normal man" not, true enough, the British shopkeeper, but at least the kind of man whose needs the French Enlightenment had assumed, for all sorts of historical reasons, it was the proper aim of social institutions to satisfy? (I'm not saying it wasn't perhaps as good a model as was then available; I'm simply pointing out that Marx, like Bentham, naively took as an example of human nature in general, without any critical examination, a historically limited human type.) Marx can see very well the fallacy in Bentham's making utility his value-principle without asking "useful for what?" But he is blind to his own similar failing.

Text 3.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religious, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science and law constantly survive this change. There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms . . . One fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common

forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder its development involves the most radical rupture with the traditional ideas of all of the bourgeoisie. But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism! ("The Communist Manifesto," Part II).

The argument which the authors put into the mouth of their bourgeois critic seems to me sound, and perhaps the impatient interjection, "But let us have done . . .," with which they break off their reply shows that they themselves were vaguely aware they had failed to meet it. Their reply is that what seem to be "eternal" truths are really truths that have been common to all past societies, and that the common character of these truths reflects the common nature of these societies, which have all been based on class exploitation. Since the future communist society will be classless, its concepts of Justice, Freedom, etc., will be different from and superior to those of past class societies. This would imply that the authors have a concrete idea of what this new communist morality looks like (else how do they know it will be either different or superior)? But of course they don't. Quite the contrary. The above passage is preceded by the famous section in which the authors meet the various charges that communism will ruin family life, abolish property, destroy culture, etc., by showing quite convincingly that only the bourgeois minority actually enjoy these blessings and that capitalism has already taken them away from the mass of people. They state repeatedly that it is only the *bourgeois* form of these things which communism proposes to abolish; in the communist future, men will for the first time experience *real* Freedom, *real* Justice, *real* morality—as against the past, in which such concepts have been perverted into ideological coverings for exploitation. This is indeed an important difference, but it is not the one we began discussing here. For what can possibly be the content of this future *real* morality if it is not the persisting core of past morality stripped of all class-exploitative perversions? If Marx and Engels are not simply projecting into the communist future those "eternal truths" they make such fun of, smuggling them in disguised as "the real thing," then what is their conception of that future communist morality which will be so much better than what we have known up to now that they devoted their whole lives to trying to realize it, and called on the workers of the world to ceaselessly rebel until it was achieved? How do we know the struggle is worth it unless we get some idea of what these fine new values are? To have "invented" a brand-new morality would indeed have been writing "recipes for the cook-shops of the future," and Marx wisely, and in line with his own historical approach, refrained from doing this. But the only other way to get any idea of what this future morality would look like was to project the "real" (read "supra-historical") core of *past* morality into the future, which is what Marx did without admitting it.

But why is it important that Marx assumed his ethics instead of stating them explicitly, so long as he did have values and admirable ones (as I agree he did)? Thus Sidney Hook, defending Marxism against the criticisms made recently in these pages, describes it as "a huge scientific judgement of value" (*New Leader*, Feb. 23, 1946). He means, presumably, that Marx's values are implicit in his whole work, that, as Marxists have put it to me, Marx constantly demonstrates in his analysis of capitalism what he means by Justice and Freedom, even if he does not formally define these concepts and work out their implications. This is even alleged to be a superior way to approach these questions. I deny this. Marx's failure to state clearly what his ethical assumptions were, and to devote as much thought to this kind of problem as the anarchist theoreticians, for example, did, has given his doctrine an ambiguity which anarchism has never had. Because he concentrated so ferociously on capitalism as the Enemy and denied so vigorously the validity of any general moral values, it is possible for the most inhumane and authoritarian class society in the world to make his doctrines the basis of its official ideology. No doubt some Stalinist pundit has already demonstrated that Freedom and Justice have a historical content in the Soviet Union which Marx was naturally unable to foresee, that they are indubitably very different from the bourgeois ideas of these things which Marx attacked (the most cynical apologist for the English factory system of 1830 could hardly have imagined anything so horrible as a Soviet forced-labor camp), and hence that—lacking any general principles on the subject from Marx—non-Freedom in Russia today is actually a historically higher form of Freedom and would have been so recognized by Marx were he alive today. That Marx would *not* so react to the Soviet Union I think may be taken for granted; but he certainly went out of his way to make it easy for such an interpretation to be made.

The Gotha Program episode suggests the dangers of Marx's practice of *assuming* his basic principles, and therefore neglecting to define them clearly. In 1875, the Marxists and Lassalleans united to form the German Workers Party, the parent of the Social Democratic Party. Although the Marxists were led by Bebel and Liebknecht, with whom Marx and Engels had been in close personal touch for years, they agreed to a programmatic statement which was decidedly unMarxian. Marx's criticism is just and penetrating; it exposes the philistinism, the lack of revolutionary insight, the narrow nationalism and above all the State-idolatry of the program. But why did he have to make it? How could his closest followers mistake so grievously his teach-

ings? The answer is that up to then Marx had not put down on paper with any concreteness what he meant by "communism" or what were the long-range aims of socialism, as he saw them. These disjointed notes on a long-forgotten program are still the closest approach we have to a discussion by Marx of these principles. No wonder Bebel and Liebknecht blundered, no wonder Marxists still disagree as to just what Marx "really" meant to say about many basic questions.

It is also significant that Marx and Engels, for tactical reasons, did not make public their disagreement with the basic program of their German followers. Engels explains why in a letter to Bebel (Oct. 12, 1875): "The asses of the bourgeois papers have taken this program quite seriously, have read into it what is not there and interpreted it in a communist sense. The workers appear to do the same. It is this circumstance alone which has made it possible for Marx and myself not to dissociate ourselves publicly from such a program. So long as our opponents and the workers likewise insert our views into this program, it is possible for us to keep silent about it." (What could be a more striking example of the pragmatic approach to communication: that the meaning of a statement lies in the effect it produces on the audience? Again, Dewey and Marx come close . . .) So it was not until 16 years later that Marx's *Critique* was first published.

Instead of the teacher who enlightens, the revolutionary who inspires by telling the truth however awkward the moment, Marx here as too often elsewhere appears as the *realpolitiker*, willing to engage in chicanery for an apparent political advantage. I write "apparent" because, as is often the case, this kind of pragmatic manipulation of the truth turned out to be most unrealistic. For we know now how the German Social Democracy developed, how timidly respectable it was, how grotesquely unfitted to make any kind of revolution. These tendencies were clear in the Gotha Program, and Marx saw them, yet he refrained from saying anything in public about them because the bourgeois "asses" could not see them. But the workingclass were also asses, since they "do the same"; and one might have expected Marx to want to enlighten *them* at least. How much difference it would have made is a question. If Marx had been bolder and more responsible in his handling of the Gotha program, if the clear definition of principles had appeared to him to be as important as the elaboration of scientific investigation, at least the bureaucrats who led the German Social Democracy to shameful defeat would have had more difficulty in appropriating Marxism as an ideology—just as would also the Stalinists today.

9. The Idea of Progress

The modern faith in Science is closely related to another great modern faith: the belief in Progress. This conception resolves the contradiction between scientific method and value judgements by asserting that there

are not *two* worlds—one of them conquerable by scientific inquiry and the other by its very nature accessible only to a radically different kind of investigation—but rather only one world, a world that is in theory com-

pletely understandable through the scientific method. If there is only one world, then there is no problem of values—indeed, values exist only as reflections of more basic factors. To the believer in Progress, however, this conclusion appears to mean that in the working-out of science *good* values are implicit. (The self-contradictions of this position have been examined in the preceding section.) For it can easily be shown that there has been enormous progress in science, and if scientific method can be applied to all of mankind's problems, then there is justification, almost a necessity, for seeing a progressive pattern in man's history. Not much progress can be shown, it is true, in precisely the spheres which some of us think are outside the scope of scientific method—ethics and art—though there have been brave attempts to demonstrate even this, as when Engels writes in the *Anti-Duhring*: "That . . . there has on the whole been progress in morality, as in all other branches of human knowledge, cannot be doubted." But if we assume, as does Marx, the most thoroughgoing of the prophets of Science and Progress, that art and morality are projections of some underlying reality which is accessible to science, then the problem solves itself easily enough.* Especially if we adopt Marx's particular underlying reality: the development of the instruments of production. For it is just in this field that science is most competent, so that we can console ourselves for present unpleasantnesses by a vision of a future in which science will have created us the splendid "materialistic base" for a glorious superstructure. The awkward thing, of course, is that science has more than done its part and has presented us by now with a materialistic base even grander than Marx ever hoped for, culminating in atomic fission; while the results are not, to say the least, glorious. But of that, more later.

Ancestral Voices Propheying Progress

It is important to recognize that, although Marx carried the notion of scientific progress so far that he was able to monopolize the magic term, "scientific socialism," for his own system, this approach was by no means peculiar to him but was rather that of Left political thinkers, bourgeois and socialist alike, in the 19th century. The only important exception that occurs to me is Alexander Herzen.

Practically all our "ancestors" were agreed on the notion of scientific progress. The French encyclopedists established this concept in the 18th century, and Con-

*With what exultation do the young Marx and Engels announce this reductive idea—the joy of system-builders who have dug down to the bedrock on which their system can be firmly constructed: "In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus *no longer retain the semblance of independence*." ("The German Ideology"; my emphasis in italics).

dorcet's *Historical Outline of the Progress of the Human Spirit* (1795) was its first great statement. The 19th century socialists—Utopian, Marxian and anarchist—who were the historical heirs of the Encyclopedists all tried to justify their political systems in scientific terms. In this, they were the children of their time. The only sceptical or hostile voices were those of political conservatives like De Tocqueville, of religious spokesmen—and of the poets and novelists. That something was lacking in the 19th century ideology of scientific progress could be deduced from the fact that it is hard to find a literary man of the first rank whose values were either bourgeois or socialist. Even Tolstoy, whose novels are perhaps the most successful examples of naturalism in art we have, came to reject in the most thoroughgoing way, the scientific and materialistic assumptions on which naturalism is based.

This is such a crucial point, and the claims of Marxism to be the one and only form of "scientific socialism" are today so generally accepted by both its friends and enemies, that it seems worth documenting it a little. Let us hear what the three great Utopians and the two most important anarchist theoreticians have to say on the question of science and progress:

ROBERT OWEN: . . . for the first time, I explained the science of constructing a rational system of society for forming the character and governing human nature beneficially for all our race . . . A knowledge of this scientific development of society was forced upon me by thirty years of extensive practice through various departments of the business of real life, and by much study to overcome the many obstacles which stood in the way of combining a scientific arrangement of society to *prevent* the innumerable evils inflicted by error on the human race . . . the first publication ever given to the world which explained, even in outline, the circle of the practical science of society to form a good and superior character for all, to produce abundance of superior wealth for all, to unite all as members of a superior enlightened family.

(*The Life of Robert Owen, by Himself*; New York, 1920, p. 322).

FOURIER: Our destiny is to advance; every social period must progress toward the one above; it is Nature's wish that barbarism should tend toward civilization and attain to it by degrees . . . It is in vain, then, Philosophers, that you accumulate libraries to search for happiness, while the root of all social ills has not been eradicated: industrial parcelling, or incoherent labor, which is the antipodes of God's designs. You complain that Nature refuses you the knowledge of her laws: well! if you have, up to the present, been unable to discover them, why do you hesitate to recognize the insufficiency of your methods, and to seek new ones? . . . Do you see her refractory to the efforts of the physicists as she is to yours? No, for they study her laws instead of dictating laws to her . . . What a contrast between your blunderings and the achievements of the exact sciences! Each day you add new errors to

the old ones, while each day sees the physical sciences advancing upon the road of truth . . .

(*Selections from the Works of Fourier*, edited by Charles Gide; London, 1901; pp. 51-54).

SAINT-SIMON: A new science, a science as *positive* as any that deserves the name, has been conceived by Saint-Simon: the science of man. Its method is the same as that of astronomy or physics . . . From our first meeting, we have repeated that Saint-Simon's conception was provable by history. Do not expect from us either the discussion of isolated facts, or delving into obscure chronicles. We shall bring to your attention only the general laws which comprehend all these facts—laws as simple and constant as those of biology . . . Saint-Simon's mission was to discover these laws . . . Mankind, he said, is a collective being which grows from one generation to the next as a single man grows throughout his lifetime. This being has grown in obedience to its own physiological law; and this law is that of progressive development . . . Cast away your fears, then, gentlemen, and struggle no more against the tide that bears you along with us towards a happy future; put an end to the doubt that withers your heart and strikes you impotent. Lovingly embrace the altar of reconciliation, for the time is come and the hour will soon sound when *all* will be called and *all* will be chosen.

(*Doctrine de Saint-Simon*—a series of lectures by Bazard, Enfantin and other disciples of Saint-Simon; originally published 1829; republished Paris, 1924; pp. 92-3, 158, 161, 178).

PROUDHON: With the revolution, it is another matter . . . The idea of Progress replaces that of the Absolute in philosophy . . . Reason, aided by Experience, shows man the laws of nature and of society, and says to him: "These are the laws of necessity itself. No man has made them; nobody forces them upon you. They have little by little been discovered, and I exist only to bear witness to them. If you observe them, you will be just and righteous. If you violate them, you will be unjust and wicked. I propose no other sanction for you."

(*General Idea of the Revolution in the 19th Century*; London, 1923, pp. 294-295).

There is a quantitative science which compels agreement, excludes the arbitrary, rejects all Utopian fancies; a science of physical phenomena which grounds itself only on the observation of data . . . There ought to be also a science of society—unambiguous, definite, based on the nature of man and of his faculties—a science which is not to be *invented* but rather *discovered*.

("De la Celebration du Dimanche"; quoted in *La Pensee Vivante de Proudhon*, edited by Lucien Maury; Paris, 1942, p. 7).

KROPOTKIN: Anarchism is a world-concept based upon a mechanical explanation of all phenomena, embracing the whole of nature—that is, including in it the life of human societies and their economic, political and moral problems. Its method of investigation is that of the exact natural sciences . . . Its aim is to construct a synthetic philosophy comprehending in one generaliza-

tion all the phenomena of nature—and therefore also the life of societies . . . Whether or not anarchism is right in its conclusions will be shown by a scientific criticism of its bases and by the practical life of the future. But in one thing it is absolutely right: in that it has included the study of social institutions in the sphere of natural-scientific investigations; has forever parted company with metaphysics; and makes use of the method by which modern natural science and modern materialist philosophy were developed.

("Modern Science and Anarchism"; in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, New York, 1927, pp. 150 and 193).

There are two striking similarities between the above quotations and Marxist doctrine: (1) the rejection of philosophical idealism and the attempt to put socialism on a scientific and materialistic basis; (2) a related optimism about history, in the sense that it is assumed that the more contradictory, irrational and humanly destructive social institutions are, the more surely will they be superseded by socialism.

The first similarity has been noted in Section 7 above. A few words here on the second. It may be that one of the reasons for the lack in our time of any socialist theoreticians that measure up to the giants of the 19th century is that society has become *too* irrational and humanly destructive. A minimum degree of human rationality is perhaps necessary in a social system for its opponents to criticise it effectively, just as disagreement is not possible unless the disputants have something in common; parallel lines do not conflict. Marx's expose of capitalist economics, or Proudhon's of representative government—such achievements were possible only because there was a certain minimum rationality in the institutions criticised, so that their defenders were compelled to stand on certain general principles. The difficulty in evolving a theoretical criticism of Bureaucratic Collectivism today may partly lie in the completely destructive, opportunistic and nihilistic character of the phenomenon, so that there is nothing to get hold of, so to speak. On the one hand, the fraudulent pretensions of The Enemy to rationality and human decency can be easily refuted—all too easily. But on the other hand, the power of The Enemy to maintain this fraud is far greater than it was in the last century. Thus we have social institutions which are more easily shown to be bad than were those in Marx's and Proudhon's time, and yet which show a survival power quite unexpected by those great but far too confident thinkers. The process of history, in a word, appears now to be a more complex and tragic matter than it appeared to the socialist and anarchist thinkers, who were, after all, children of *their* age, not of ours. The area of the unpredictable, perhaps even the unknowable appears far greater now than it did then. At least it does if we think in their rational and scientific terms—and we have not yet worked out satisfactory alternative terms. One thing is, finally, notable: since 1914, it has not been the Marxists who have made important contributions to historical thinking (although theirs is *par-excellence* a historical dis-

cipline) but rather non-materialistic and anti-socialist historians like Toynbee and Spengler.

The Metaphysics of Progress

As D. S. Savage has pointed out ("Socialism in Extremis", *POLITICS*, January 1945), those who build their political philosophy on the idea of progress tend to justify the Means by the End, the Present by the Future, the Here by the There. The Progressive can swallow war as a Means to the End, peace; he can overlook the unsatisfactory Present by fixing his eyes on a distant and perfect Future, as in the case of the USSR; he can justify the loss of the individual's freedom Here as necessary to a workable organization of society There. He is able to perform these considerable feats of abstract thinking because he, who makes so free with the charge of "metaphysician" and "Utopian", is actually the arch-metaphysician of our time, quite prepared to sacrifice indefinitely and on the most grandiose scale the real, material, concrete interests of living human beings on the altar of a metaphysical concept of Progress which he assumes (again metaphysically) is the "real essence" of history.

And what an assumption this idea is based on—nothing less than the daring hypothesis—which the Progressive advances as if it were the most elementary common sense—that the "real" nature of scientific advance is to benefit humanity. There are, it is admitted, certain regrettable by-products of this advance. The atomic bomb is one, and another is the new "germ spray" developed by our own scientists which promises to make The Bomb look positively benevolent. An unidentified member of Congress gives a lyrical account of its possibilities:

"They have developed a weapon that can wipe out all forms of life in a large city. It is a germ proposition and is sprayed from airplanes . . . It is quick and certain death. You would not have to drop a germ on every person in a city. One operation would be sufficient, for the effects would spread rapidly." (*N. Y. Times*, May 25).

According to the scientific metaphysician, this sort of thing is a regrettable by-product of Progress, a perversion in fact. He will point out that this lethal germ spray has also been developed, in the form of DDT, to rid mankind of those insect pests which caused \$5,678,945,001 worth of damage *in this country alone* last year. And he will conclude that the problem is to use it for Good instead of Evil, or more specifically, to spray it on insects but not on people. The solution of this problem is for us to become even more scientifically-minded than we are now, to extend the sway of scientific method over ethics; if he is a Marxist, he will call this approach "dialectical." If one suggests that perhaps there may be more Evil than Good in scientific progress, not in the sense that there is anything *intrinsically* (i.e. metaphysically) good or bad about such progress, but in the *historical* sense that up to now the Bad results of every technological advance seem to outweigh the Good ones, and that what with The Bomb and our new DDT-for-People this promises to be even more strikingly the case in the future—if one ventures

such a wild notion, his reaction is violent. One is told—and I speak from experience—that one is (1) an ascetic who rejects this-worldly, human satisfactions in favor of some kind of mortification of the flesh; (2) a Utopian dreamer whose value-judgement, regardless of its ethical merits, has not the slightest practical significance or chance of historical realization.

I think it can be argued, in both cases, that the shoe is on the other foot.

(1) Personally, I am not particularly ascetic. It is, indeed, just because I do value human, this-worldly satisfactions that I am skeptical about Scientific Progress. The real materialists today are those who reject historical materialism. For man's mastery of nature has led to nature's mastering man. The ever more efficient organization of technology in the form of large, disciplined aggregations of producers implies the modern mass-society which implies authorization controls and the kind of irrational—sub-rational, rather—nationalist ideology we have seen developed to its highest pitch in Germany and Russia. The one great power today whose culture is most materialistic, whose leaders proclaim themselves Marxists, where the crudest optimism of progress is rampant is also the one where the alienation of man from his own products has gone the farthest, the one whose citizens lead the lives of bees or of ants but not of men, the one whose soldiers, fresh from the land of materialistic progress and Five Year Plans, are astounded at the ease, luxury and comfort of life in Bulgaria and will commit any crime to possess themselves of a bicycle. So we, too, may perish in the next war because atomic fission is the latest stage of scientific discovery, and Progress depends on the advancement of science. But a simple-minded person might see in such modern truisms as that you must reach socialism through dictatorship ("Sure, the Soviet Union isn't democratic, but that's the only way a backward country can be raised to an industrial level that will support democratic institutions later on—just wait fifty years!") or that atomic fission holds ultimate promise of the Abundant Life—such a simple person might see in these propositions a similarity to that promise of a better life in Heaven on which the Catholic Church banks so heavily.

(2) It may be that the fact that Western intellectuals are showing more and more signs of what has been called "the new failure of nerve"—i.e., skepticism about scientific progress—is of some historical significance, for intellectuals often sense now what most people will believe later on. Is it fantastic to imagine that large masses of people may become, as life grows increasingly unbearable in our scientifically-planned jungle, what might be called Human materialists (as against the Historical and Progressive variety)? That they may conclude that they don't want electric iceboxes if the industrial system required to produce them also produces World War III, or that they would prefer fewer and worse or even no automobiles if the price for more and better is the regimentation of people on a scale which precludes their behaving humanly toward each other?

I would draw the reader's attention to the word "if" in the preceding sentence. I am *not* saying that it is

impossible to produce automobiles without also producing war and bureaucracy; I am merely proposing a line of action *if* this turns out to be the case. It is a complex question what is the maximum scale on which institutions can be good, and also of how scientific inquiry may be utilized for good ends. The answer will depend, first, on our value-judgement as to what is good; and second on the results of scientific inquiry into the ways, in a certain time and place, science and technology may be used to bring about this good. I suspect there is a point of technological development beyond which the bad human results *must* outweigh the good ones under any conceivable social system. But I am not at all sure this is true; and Paul and Percival Goodman, for example, have come to the opposite conclusion: that a conflict between technological efficiency and human good is theoretically impossible, and that where one seems to exist it is because our faulty culture leads us to a false conception of efficiency. They would argue, for example, that the saving in producing automobiles in huge plants like River Rouge is more than offset by the waste involved in the workers travelling long distances to the job, the huge distributive network necessary, etc. Their forthcoming book, *Communitas*, will demonstrate this thesis. It may be true; I hope it is. But my point here is that the harmony of industrial efficiency and human good is still an open question, not a closed one, as the Progressives assume.

In any case, so far as the advance of science in the present societies of the USA and the Soviet Union goes, it seems to me that, if the sword of science has two edges as the Progressives maintain, the "bad" edge is much the more likely to be used. Tolstoy puts it well: "If the organization of a society is bad, as ours is, where a small number of men dominate the majority and oppress them, then every victory over nature will inevitably only serve to increase this power and this oppression. And so it happens." This is a thoroughly historical-materialist idea and one might have expected it to occur to Marx. However, he was apparently so convinced of the metaphysical goodness-in-itself of scientific advance that he was blind to the materialistic fact that the anti-materialist Tolstoy can see clearly.

The Atomic Bomb, or the End in Sight

The bomb that vaporized Hiroshima less than a year ago also levelled—though some of us don't seem yet aware of it—the whole structure of Progressive assumptions on which liberal and socialist theory has been built up for two centuries. For now, for the first time in history, humanity faces the possibility that its own activity may result in the destruction not of some people or some part of the world, but of all people and the whole world for all time. The end may come through radioactive substances which will poison the atmosphere, or through a chain reaction ripping apart the earth's crust, releasing the molten rock in the interior. Most scientists say that *at the present stage of development* of atomic energy, this is not possible (though others say it is). But no one can say definitely what will happen in another decade or two of Atomic Pro-

gress. Scientific progress has reached its end, and the end is turning out to be the end of man himself.

What becomes of the chief argument of Progressives—that out of present evil will come future good—if we now confront the possibility that there may not *be* a future? In that once popular expression of the Progressive ideology of the last century, Winwood Reade's *The Martyrdom of Man*, the author writes: "I give to universal history a strange but true title: 'The Martyrdom of Man.' In each generation, the human race has been tortured that their children might profit by their woes. Our own prosperity is founded on the agonies of the past. Is it therefore unjust that we should also suffer for the benefit of those who are to come?" And what a future Reade saw rising out of the agonies of the present! He expected scientific progress to enable man to travel among the stars, to manufacture his own suns and solar systems, to conquer death itself. The progress has not failed, but it has brought universal death; instead of manufacturing new solar systems, man seems more likely to destroy his own little globe. And our sufferings, far from being for the benefit of those who are to come, are more likely to remove the first condition of their coming: the existence of an inhabited earth.

It is the materialistic Reade who today appears grotesquely metaphysical in his assumptions. So, too, Engels: "The process of replacing some 500,000 Russian landowners and some 80 million peasants by a new class of bourgeois landed proprietors cannot be carried out except under the most fearful sufferings and convulsions. But history is about the most cruel of goddesses, and she drives her triumphal car over heaps of corpses, not only in war but also in 'peaceful' economic development. And we men and women are unfortunately so stupid that we can never pluck up courage to a real progress unless urged to it by sufferings almost out of proportion . . . There is no great historical evil without a compensating historical progress." (Letters to Danielson, Feb. 24 and Oct. 17, 1893). So long as there was an indefinite future before us, this kind of Progressive metaphysics had at least the appearance of reasonability. No one could prove, after all, that after several centuries or even several millenia of sufferings, detours, and "temporary regressions," history would *not* finally lead humanity to the promised kingdom. It was thus logical—how sensible is another matter—to view the present in terms of the future. But now that we confront the actual, scientific possibility of The End being written to human history and at a not so distant date, the concept of the future, so powerful an element in traditional socialist thought, loses for us its validity. This bitter enlightenment, if from it we can learn to live in the here and now, may offer us the one possible escape from our fate.

A Digression on Marx and Homer

To the Progressive, art is as awkward a subject as ethics. Esthetic values cannot be scientifically grounded any more than morals can. Nor can art be fitted into the pattern of historical progress; the Greeks were

technologically as primitive as they were esthetically civilized; we have outstripped Archimedes but not Sophocles. Finally, if values are taken to be historically relative, why do we enjoy art created thousands of years ago and expressing a way of life alien to ours in most ways?

These questions bothered Marx, who was personally sensitive to literature and to that of the Greeks especially. He tries to answer them at the end of the *Critique of Political Economy*:

"It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations . . . The difficulty lies only in the general formulation of these contradictions. No sooner are they specified than they are explained. Let us take for instance the relation of Greek art . . . to our own . . . Is the view of nature and of social relations which shaped Greek imagination and Greek art possible in the age of automatic machinery and railways and locomotives and electric telegraphs? Where does Vulcan come in as against Roberts & Co.; Jupiter as against the lightning rod; and Hermes as against the Credit Mobilizer? All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature . . . Greek art presupposes the existence of Greek mythology, i.e., that nature and even the form of society are wrought up in popular fancy in an unconsciously artistic fashion . . . Is Achilles possible side by side with powder and lead? Or is *The Iliad* at all compatible with the printing press and the steam press? Do not singing and reciting and the muses necessarily go out of existence with the appearance of the printer's bar, and do not, therefore, disappear the requisites of epic poetry?"

Two things are striking about this passage: (1) the way Marx goes to the heart of a question: (2) the fact that it is not the question he started to answer. Instead of showing, in historical-materialist terms, how the existence of a high art may be reconciled with its low material base (the "high" and "low", as Marx uses them, are value terms, please note), he slides over into a demonstration of quite another matter: that Greek art presupposes mythology, which is no longer possible once man has mastered nature. From a value problem which his system cannot deal with, Marx slips into a historical problem it can handle admirably.

But one of the signs that Marx was a great thinker is that his thought is often more profound than his system, which is why he was bothered by all sorts of things it never occurred to his epigones to see as problems at all. A Kautsky would have let it go at the above passage, quite satisfied (not that he could have written it in the first place; he would have taken twenty pages and would have muffed the point in the end). But Marx was evidently still uneasy, vaguely aware that he had evaded the real problem. So he returns to it: "But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of social develop-

ment. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of esthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment."

Here at least Marx puts the question unequivocally. His answer is less satisfactory: "A man cannot become a child again unless he becomes childish. But does he not enjoy the artless ways of the child and must he not strive to reproduce its truth on a higher plane? . . . Why should the social childhood of mankind, where it had obtained its most beautiful development, not exert an eternal charm as an age that will never return? There are ill-bred children and precocious children . . . The Greeks were normal children. The charm their art has for us does not conflict with the primitive character of the social order from which it had sprung. It is rather the product of the latter, and is rather due to the fact that the unripe social conditions under which the art arose and under which alone it could appear can never return."

This seems to me an appalling judgement. In the typical philistine-sentimental manner, Marx affects to see Greek art as a charming object from a vanished past, something which the modern stands apart from and appreciates, with an indulgent smile, as the adult looks at the little joys and sorrows of children. To the philistine, indeed, it is precisely the *apartness*, the definitely long-done-with-ness of Greek art that is its most fascinating characteristic; since thus he may accept it without letting it disturb his complacency about the Progress made since then ("unripe social conditions"). Marx was not a philistine, which is why I say that he "affected" to view Homer in this light. I think that his esthetic sensibility was too lively, his imagination too profound for him to make such a judgement spontaneously. He was coerced to it by the necessities of his historical-materialist system, in which he was imprisoned, alienated from values as surely as the proletarian is alienated from the products of his labor; there was no other way for him to escape acknowledging that there are supra-historical values in art.

As it chanced, Simone Weil's "The Iliad, or the Poem of Force" (POLITICS, November 1945), puts forward the opposite thesis to Marx's. I think she shows that the Homeric Greeks had a more adult conception of warfare and suffering than we have—it is we who are the children, and ill-bred children at that—and that, far from being able to stand apart and view *The Iliad* as an expression of a primitive, long-past world, we are so close to its mood today that we can view our own deepest fears and emotions in its terms. Without a single direct reference to the present—the essay was written in the months following the fall of Paris—Weil is able to communicate our modern tragedy through a scrupulous analysis of the ethical content of *The Iliad*. Except for a few Marxists, who could not understand why a political magazine should feature a "literary" article, every one who read the article seemed to grasp the point at once: that by writing about a poem written three thousand years ago, Simone Weil had somehow been able to come closer to contemporary reality than

the journalists who comment on current events. She had, of course, the immense advantage over Marx of living in a time when the 19th century dream of progress has collapsed in brutality, cruelty and helpless suffering so that our kinship with Homer's dark time emerges clearly. Thus the historical method may be used to show

its own limitations. For we can now see, from our own present experience, that during the last century, for certain historical reasons, the grim visage of History was overlaid for a time by illusions which were powerful enough to deceive even so profound a sensibility as Marx's—and one of such a naturally *tragic* cast, too.

10. Toward a New Concept of Political Action

My purpose in writing this article is to find a basis for political action.* This may seem an odd statement, since the article deals with only the most general kind of theoretical questions while its proposals for action, as will shortly appear, are of the most modest nature. But it is because the traditional assumptions of the Left about political action no longer seem valid that it is necessary, if we are to act, to begin by criticising them in broad terms. I am enough of a Marxist to agree that creative political action must be based on theory, and enough of a Christian to agree that we cannot act for good ends until we have clarified the nature of Good. So another of the paradoxes among which we uncomfortably exist is that we can find a road to action only through philosophical speculations. *'STOP AND THINK!'*

Not only this article, but all the articles in the "New Roads" series have been concerned with this problem of action, either in the sense of trying to find a clearer ethical basis than is afforded by historical materialism (Herberg, Constat, Chiaromonte) or else in the direct sense of suggesting alternatives to Marxian revolutionary techniques (Goodman, Calhoun). Yet, with the reckless self-confidence which one gets from feeling the weight of the culture of one's time behind one, our Progressive critics have chosen as their main grounds of dispute precisely that of Action. "Escapist", "unrealistic", "scholastic", "metaphysical", and "reactionary" are some of the more polite adjectives used. It is natural that this should be, for, as I have already noted, what is proposed at least by some of us is a break with a 150-year old cultural tradition. (And even those, like Goodman and Calhoun, who don't go that far do challenge Marx's historical materialism, which has become the main creed of the modern Progressives.)

If this article has a "point", I should say it is that it criticises the Progressive notion of what is "real" and what is "unreal" in political action. It seems to me that the view of this crucial question which Marx put forward as his major contribution to socialist thought has by now become generally accepted among Progressives of all shades, from Trotskyists to New Dealers. This is that consciousness (and conscience) are less "real" than the material environment, and that the individual is less "real" than society; that is, that the former of these

two pairs depend on the latter, are determined by the latter.* From this follows the assumption that the only "real" political action is on a mass scale, one involving trade unions, parties, the movements of classes. This means that, politically, one thinks of people in terms of classes or parties instead of in terms of individual human beings; and also that one's own motivation for action springs from identification with a class or a historical process rather than from one's personal sense of what is right and true. In short, the historical rather than the personal level of action is thought to be the Real level, and the criterion of Reality in judging a political proposal is how many people it sets in motion.* This quantitative standard is typical of our scientized culture.

It is to Marx above all that we owe the present general acceptance of this criterion of Reality. The difficulty today, as I showed in Part I of this article, is that the Marxian notion of historical Reality and the Marxian revolutionary values have come into conflict: i.e., that the course of Marx's History seems to be leading us away from socialism as Marx conceived it. This split puts Marxians into one of two untenable positions: either their programs command mass support but don't lead towards socialism (Stalinists, French and Italian Socialists, British Labor Party); or else their programs remain faithful to socialist principles but command no significant following (U. S. Socialists, Trotskyists, Britain's Independent Labor Party). In a word, political activity along Marxian lines today is either Real but not Socialist, or Socialist but not Real.

What, then, Is To Be Done? In the current issue of *Pacifica Views*, a reader describes a meeting of the

* I am aware that Marx constantly denied the direct relationship between the economic base and the ideological superstructure which his followers constantly attributed to him. But insofar as his theories have a specific content, they do tend to reduce consciousness and conscience to functions of the economic base; and his disclaimers were vague and weasel-worded, usually employing the expressions "ultimately" or "in the long run" without defining what is the long, as against the short, run.

* Or will set in motion, in the case of those whose program at present commands no large following. These Marxists reply to sceptics: "Just wait and see. Our analysis of society is the Real one in terms of the evolution of history, and if it is not generally accepted today that is because of a cultural lag. The masses will come to understand and follow our program after World War—." (Insert number depending on how long one thinks it will take the masses to catch on to the superior Reality of the program.) That this Reality is, so far as one can see at present, simply a metaphysical assumption does not seem to bother such Marxists, nor to inhibit them from accusing us Radicals of trying to escape from the Real world. (See the letters from Franck and Bazelon in this issue.)

* By "action" is meant action to bring about a free, classless, warless humanly satisfying society—in short, just about the opposite kind of society to the one we have now. There is, of course, no difficulty in finding a basis for action if one accepts, with whatever critical reservations, existing capitalist or bureaucratic-collectivist society. Quite the contrary!

Philadelphia branch of the Committee for Non-Violent Revolution:

"... we proceeded to get down to the business at hand, the first item of which was an evaluation of the two recent CO demonstrations in Washington and at Byberry. All agreed they were damn good demonstrations... The group displayed the greatest interest in a discussion of Dwight Macdonald's recent article, 'The Root Is Man'. Every one agreed it is a damn good article and that the world is in a helluva shape. At 9:45 some intemperate person slipped in a question about 'what can we DO'? There was a momentary silence, someone mentioned cooperatives and there was a general agreement that cooperatives were very valuable. Then it was 9:50 and time for the meeting to break up. A half hour later, as I leaned against the bar and fondled my glass of beer, the thought occurred to me that the evening's discussion had ended at the same place all the articles I could recall having read in *Pacifica Views* or *POLITICS* had ended."

This is a perfectly natural reaction, and a widespread one. When I first began *POLITICS*, readers used to ask me all the time what they could DO? (They don't ask so much now...) All I could ever think of to suggest was reading, thinking, and writing; but, as several were rude enough to point out, even if these pursuits were granted the honorable status of Action, the answer was helpful only to scholars, journalists—and editors. Since then, I must admit that such halfhearted additional suggestions as I made about working in the trade unions or in some group like the Socialist Party or the Michigan Commonwealth Federation (it seems incredible, but I once wrote a lead article about the MCF as a potential mass-socialist party), that even these appear less and less worth investing time and hope in. On the other hand, some of us of late seem to be getting some dim notion at least of the *kind* of political activity worth engaging in. The specific forms of action, and the organizations to carry them out, are yet to be created. We seem to be in the early stages of a new concept of revolutionary and socialist politics, where we can hope for the present only to clear the ground, to criticise the old methods that have landed us in a blind alley, and to grope in a new direction. Anarchism and pacifism provide the best leads for this direction, but only leads; something quite different from either of them, as they have traditionally developed, will probably have to be evolved.

The trouble with mass action today is that the institutions (parties, trade unions) and even the very media of communication one must use for it have become so perverted away from sensible human aims that any attempt to work along that line corrupts one's purposes—or else, if one resists corruption in the sense of sticking by one's principles, one becomes corrupt in a subtler way: one pretends to be speaking to and for millions of workers when one is not even speaking to and for thousands; we are familiar with the revolutionary rodomontades of tiny Marxist parties which address themselves to an "international proletariat" which never pays the slightest attention to them; this is a species of self-deception,

at best, and at worst a kind of bluffing game. It is time we called that bluff.

As socialists, our central problem today is what Frank Fisher, following Lukacs, calls "reification" ("thingification"), that process which Marx prophetically described in his theory of "alienation": the estrangement of man from his own nature by the social forces he himself generates.

"This crystallization of social activity," write the young Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*, "this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up to now. And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community, the latter takes an independent form as THE STATE, divorced from the real interests of individual and community... The social power, i.e. the multiplied productive forces... appears to these individuals, since their cooperation is not voluntary but coerced, not as their own united power but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and end of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and action of men—nay, even being the prime governor of these!..."

"How does it come about that personal interests continually grow, despite the persons, into class-interests, into common interests which win an independent existence over against the individual persons... enter as such into opposition with the real individuals...? How does it come about that, within this process of the self-assertion of personal interests as class-interests, the personal behavior of the individual must become hard and remote, *estranged* from itself...?"*

It is not difficult to sketch out the kind of society we need to rescue modern man from his present alienation. It would be one whose only aim, justification and principle would be the full development of each individual, and the removal of all social bars to his complete and immediate satisfaction in his work, his leisure, his sex life and all other aspects of his nature. (To remove all social bars does not, of course, mean to remove all bars; complete happiness and satisfaction is probably impossible in any society, and would be dull even if possible; regardless of the excellence of social institutions, there will always be, for example, persons who are in love with others who aren't in love with them.)

* English translation, International Publishers, 1939, pp. 22, 23, 24, and 203. I have put "coerced" instead of this edition's "natural", a change I think justified by its own Note 12, p. 202. These formulations are so wonderfully precise and imaginative as to make one regret all the more that Marx, instead of making his theory of alienation the cornerstone of his intellectual effort instead wasted years on economic analysis which today has only historical interest. Nor was it just a matter of a lost opportunity. The remedy for this alienation of man by his own creations which Marx evolved, misled by his historical-materialist concepts—that is, the class struggle conducted by parties and trade unions directed towards replacing capitalism with collectivism—this has turned out to be simply the 20th century aspect of that alienation which the above passage so admirably describes.

This can only be done if each individual understands what he is doing and has the power, within the limitations of his own personality and of our common human imperfection, to act exactly as he thinks best for himself. This in turn depends on people entering into direct personal relationships with each other, which in turn means that the political and economic units of society (workshops, exchange of goods, political institutions) are small enough to allow the participant to understand them and to make their individual influence felt. If effective wars cannot be fought by groups the size of New England town meetings, and I take it they cannot, this is one more reason for giving up war (rather than the town meeting). If automobiles cannot be made efficiently by small factories, then let us make them inefficiently. If scientific research would be hampered in a small-unit society, then let us by all means hamper it. Said the young Marx: "For Hegel, the starting-point is the State. In a democracy, the starting-point is man . . . Man is not made for the law, but the law is made for man."

This is all clear enough. What is not so generally understood is that the traditional Progressive approach, taking History as the starting-point and thinking in terms of mass political parties, bases itself on this same alienation of man which it thinks it is combatting. It puts the individual into the same powerless, alienated role vis-a-vis the party or the trade union as the manipulators of the modern State do, except that the slogans are different. The current failure of the European masses to get excited about socialist slogans and programs indicates that the masses are, as Rosa Luxemburg constantly and rightly insisted, much smarter and more "advanced" than their intellectual leaders. The brutal fact is that the man in the street everywhere is quite simply *bored* with socialism, as expounded by the Socialist, Stalinist, and Trotskyist epigones of Marx, that he suspects it is just a lot of stale platitudes which either have no particular meaning (Socialists, Trotskyists, British Labor Party), or else a sinister one (Stalinists). Above all, he feels that there is no interest in it for *him*, as an individual human being—that he is as powerless and manipulated vis-a-vis his socialist mass-organization as he is towards his capitalistic employers and their social and legal institutions.*

Here is observable a curious and unexpected (to Progressives) link between the masses and those dissident intellectuals here and there who are beginning to show a distrust of the old Marxian-Deweyan-Progressive verities and to cast about for some firmer ground. Each party, in its own way, has come to find the old slogans and axioms either treacherous or boring—mostly the latter. Boring because they give no promise of leading to that which they proclaim, and meanwhile still further alienate man from his true and spontaneous nature.

* See, for confirmation, the Paris Letter elsewhere in this issue, which arrived just as I was finishing this article. The meaninglessness of "Left" and "Right", the dominance of foreign over domestic policy in contemporary politics, the apathy of the citizens towards the struggle, over their heads, of mass-parties differing only in empty slogans—these aspects of modern politics, theoretically demonstrated in the first and second parts of this article, are factually confirmed by A.B.C.'s report.

From all this one thing seems to follow: we must reduce political action to a modest, unpretentious, personal level—one that is real in the sense that it satisfies, here and now, the psychological needs and the ethical values of the particular persons taking part in it. We must begin way at the bottom again, with small groups of individuals in various countries, grouped around certain principles and feelings they have in common. These should probably not be physically isolated communities as was the case in the 19th century since this shuts one off from the common experience of one's fellow-men. They should probably consist of individuals—*families*, rather—who live and make their living in the everyday world but who come together often enough and intimately enough to form a *psychological* (as against a geographical) community. The purpose of such groups would be twofold. Within itself, the group would exist so that its members could come to know each other as fully as possible as human beings (the difficulty of such knowledge of others in modern society is a chief source of evil), to exchange ideas and discuss as fully as possible what is "on their minds" (not only the atomic bomb but also the perils of child-rearing), and in general to learn the difficult art of living with other people. The group's purpose toward the outside world would be to take certain actions together (as, against Jim Crow in this country, or to further pacifism), to support individuals whether members of the group or not who stand up for the common ideals, and to preach those ideals—or, if you prefer, make propaganda—by word and by deed, in the varied everyday contacts of the group members with their fellow-men (as, trade union meetings, parent-teacher associations, committees for "worthy causes," cocktail parties, etc.).

The ideas which these groups would advance, by word and deed, would probably run along something like the following lines:

1. The dominance of war and the development of weapons atrocious beyond all past imagination make pacifism, in my opinion, a sine-qua-non of any Radical movement. The first great principle would, therefore, be that killing and hurting others is wrong, always and absolutely, and that no member of the group will use such methods or let himself be drafted to do so.

2. Coercion of the individual, whether by the State or by a revolutionary party, is also wrong in principle, and will be opposed with sabotage, ridicule, evasion, argument, or simple refusal to submit to authority—as circumstances may require. Our model here would be the old I.W.W. rather than the Marxist Internationals.

3. All ideologies which require the sacrifice of the present in favor of the future will be looked on with suspicion. People should be happy and should satisfy their spontaneous needs here and now. If people don't enjoy what they are doing, they shouldn't do it. (This includes the activities of the group.) This point is a leaning, a *prejudice* rather than a principle; that is, the extent to which it is acted on would be relative to other things.

4. Socialism is primarily an ethical matter. The

number of people who want it at any given moment has nothing to do with its validity for the individual who makes it his value. What *he* does, furthermore, is considered to be just as "real" as what History does.

5. Members of the groups would get into the habit, discouraged by the Progressive frame of mind, of acting here and now, on however tiny a scale, for their beliefs. They would do as the handful of British and American scientists did who just refused, as individuals and without any general support, to make atomic bombs; not as Albert Einstein and other eminent scientists are now doing—raising money for an educational campaign to show the public how horrible The Bomb is, while they continue to cooperate with General Groves in making more and bigger bombs.

II. Five Characteristics of a Radical

While it is still too soon to be definite about what a Radical *does* (beyond the vague suggestions just indicated), it is possible to conclude with a more concrete idea of what he *is*. What are his attitudes toward politics? They may be summed up under five heads:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| (1) Negativism | (4) Smallness |
| (2) Unrealism | (5) Self-ishness |
| (3) Moderation | |

1. The Positiveness of Negativism

The first two adjectives which occur to a Progressive when confronted with a Radical attitude are: "negativistic" and "unrealistic." In this section, let us consider the former.

During the late war, those of us who opposed it were told by Progressives who supported it that our position was absurd because we couldn't "do anything" about it; that is, we couldn't stop the war. They felt that they were at least *acting* in accordance with their convictions; that is, they were helping bring about an Allied victory. This criticism, however, reveals an incomprehension of the nature of modern social organization: there is no place in the orderly, bureaucratized workings of a first-class power today for individual emotion, will, choice, or action. As the late Dr. Goebbels well expressed it: "Moods and emotions, the so-called 'morale' of the population, matters little. What matters is that they should preserve their bearing (*Haltung*) . . . Expressions such as patriotism and enthusiasm are quite out of place. The German people simply do their duty, that's all." (*Das Reich*, April 9, 1943; clip and translation thanks to a German friend). The Progressive is the victim of an illusion which he could puncture for himself in a moment if, instead of doing what his Draft Board told him to do, he had tried to volunteer for the work he thought he could do best. He would have been told by some harassed bureaucrat: "For God's sake, go home and wait till we call you. Don't come around upsetting our Selective Service system, which is a delicate and complex affair geared to process so many of you patriots in such and such a time for such and such kinds of service." Thus the only difference between those who *submit* to the draft because they are afraid not to and those who *welcome* it because they want their country to win the

6. They will think in human, not class terms. This means they will free themselves from the Marxian fetishism of the masses, preferring to be able to speak modest meaningful truths to a small audience than grandiose empty formulae to a big one. This also means, for the moment, turning to the intelligentsia as one's main supporters, collaborators and audience, on the assumption that what we are looking for represents so drastic a break with past traditions of thinking and behaving that at this early stage only a few crackpots and eccentrics (i.e., intellectuals) will understand what we're talking about, or care about it at all. We may console ourselves that all new social movements, including Marxism, have begun this way: with a few intellectuals rather than at the mass level.

war, is in the ethical value attached to an identical action. But the Progressive, as a good Deweyan or Marxian, does not believe in values apart from action. The Radical, however, does not submit to the draft; he refuses to do what the State wants him to do; by not acting, he is thus acting—and in the Deweyan sense that what he does (or rather doesn't) distinguishes him from those with different values. The only way to be positive vis-à-vis the modern State is to be negative, i.e., refuse to do what it wants one to do. The situation might be compared to a group of people being driven in a high-powered automobile along a road that ends in a precipice. They see the Radicals sitting by the side of the road—just sitting. "Yaahh, negativists!" they cry. "Look at us! *We're* going somewhere, *we're* really *doing* something!" (There is no space here to develop the relevance of Lao-Tse's principle of "non-acting"—and perhaps it is not necessary.)

2. The Realism of Unrealism

The Progressive insists that one has a duty in every situation to choose between what he calls "real" alternatives, and that it is irresponsible to refuse to make such a choice. By "real" he means an alternative which has a reasonably good chance of success. Thus in World War II, he saw two real alternatives: to support the Allies or to support Hitler. He naturally chose the former. The trouble with his "real" alternatives is that each of them is part of the whole system of war and exploitation, to put an end to which is the very justification of his choice. The Radical believes—and I think logic is on his side—that only an alternative which is antithetical to the existing system can lead one to the abolition of that system. For him, it is unrealistic to hope to secure a peaceful world through war, to hope to defeat the brutality and oppression of Hitler by the brutality and oppression of the American and Russian political systems. Consider the Radical approach to the present situation of France, for example. Today that country lies between two mighty imperialisms: Russian and Anglo-American. The French Progressive wants to create a decent socialist society in France and to avoid the destruction of France in a future war between the two blocs. But in his terms of "real" alternatives, he can

only think of aligning France with one or the other of the two power-blocs (with Russia if he is a Communist, with Anglo-America if he is a Socialist) and making France as strong a power as possible. It is not hard to show that a weak power which allies itself to a stronger one does not thereby avert war and does not even escape being sacrificed as a pawn in that coming war; and that, as the examples of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia show us, to build a strong army and munitions industry means to enslave and oppress the people, regardless of the literary charm of the slogans under which the dirty work is done. The Radical Frenchman would begin by himself, personally, refusing cooperation in the above policy, sabotaging it at every chance, and trying to persuade by argument and emotional appeal his fellow men and women to do likewise. The final perspective would be a pacifist-socialist revolution; this would have at least a chance of striking fire in the hearts of other peoples, spurring them to similar action against their oppressors. Success would be problematical, but at least (1) it would not be logically and historically inconceivable (as is the case with the Progressive's armament-and-alliance program), and (2) his end would be congruent with his means, so that he could view the situation with clear eyes and a whole heart, free from the befuddling and stultifying evasions and compromises which the Progressive must resort to in such a situation.



The greatest living theorist of Progressivism, as defined in this article, is John Dewey. It seems not irrelevant to recall that Dewey gave active support to both World War I and II. The contrast between the Progressive and the Radical notions of "realistic" and "positive" action comes out in the contrasting behavior in World War I of Dewey and his brilliant young disciple, Randolph Bourne.

"In 1916," we read in Louis Filler's life of Bourne, "Bourne broke with John Dewey, and a rift opened that was to become wider as both men formulated their stands on the war. The differences between them were to culminate in a statement of principles by Bourne which was to stand as perhaps his supreme literary achievement. Dewey had slowly come around to the conviction that war represented a state of affairs which had to be faced and mastered by men who wished to be effective social agents . . . The justice of the Allied cause was the assumption behind the articles which Dewey contributed to *The New Republic* and *The Dial* in the interim between American isolation and America's entrance into the war. Dewey's role was to provide the theoretical base for armed preparedness.

"Dewey's conclusions followed logically from his philosophy because the essence of pragmatism was action. 'Our culture,' he wrote, must be consonant with realistic science and machine industry, instead of a refuge from them." ('American Education and Culture', *New Republic*, July 1, 1916). If the task of the day was war, then our culture must be 'consonant' with war. Dewey, therefore, called for army training as a form of contemporary education. ('Universal Service and Education', *New Republic*, April 22, 1916).

"The very thought of military regimentation aroused

in Bourne the keenest agitation, and out of his desperate denial of the idea came one of his most brilliant essays: 'A Moral Equivalent for Universal Military Service' (*New Republic*, July 1, 1916) . . . It was persuasive but was it practical? It demonstrated how essentially the poet Bourne was, that the relative value of education and war, and not the question of how he or anyone else could most effectively influence American affairs for the better, seemed to him the immediate question demanding solution . . . Bourne was fighting for a doomed cause."

That Filler shares, on its most Philistine level, Dewey's pragmatic approach only adds to the weight of the above contrast; he evidently considers Bourne an idiot ("poet" is the polite term in this country) for being so "impractical" about the war. (Who could improve on Filler's incautious formulation of the Deweyan approach: "If the task of the day was war, then our culture must be consonant with war"?) Yet Dewey's role in World War I is now an embarrassing episode to be glossed over lightly; while Bourne's development from Deweyan pragmatism to a Radical viewpoint, with anarchist and pacifist overtones, enabled him to write during the war his finest articles and to see with a "realism" denied to Dewey the political meaning of the catastrophe: the end of the 19th Century Progressive dream. Bourne's cause was doomed; Dewey got his war; yet whose was the triumph, intellectually as well as ethically?

3. The Beauties of Moderation

Writing of Homer's constant demonstration of the evanescence of power, Simone Weil observes:

"This retribution . . . was the main subject of Greek thought. It is the soul of the epic. Under the name of Nemesis, it functions as the mainspring of Aeschylus's tragedies. To the Pythagoreans, to Socrates and Plato, it was the jumping-off point of speculation upon the nature of man and the universe. Wherever Hellenism has penetrated, we find the idea of it familiar. In Oriental countries, which are steeped in Buddhism, it is perhaps this Greek idea that has lived on under the name of Karma. The Occident, however, has lost it, and no longer even has a word to express it in any of its languages: conceptions of limit, measure, equilibrium, which ought to determine the conduct of life are, in the West, restricted to a servile function in the vocabulary of technics. We are only geometricians of matter; the Greeks were, first of all, geometricians in their apprenticeship to virtue." (POLITICS, Nov. 1945)

The best approach, intellectually, to the whole problem of socialism might be, simply, to remember always that man is mortal and imperfect (as Hopkinson Smith—was it?—put it: "The claw of the sea-puss gets us all in the end.") and so we should *not push things too far*. The moderation which the Greeks, as clear-sighted and truly scientifically minded a race as this earth has ever seen, showed in their attitude towards scientific knowledge should become our guide again. Despite their clear-sightedness (really because of it), the Greeks were surpassed by the intellectually inferior Romans in such "practical" matters as the building of sewers and

the articulation of legal systems, much as the ancient Chinese, another scientifically-minded and technologically backward people, discovered printing and gunpowder long before the West did, but had the good sense to use them only for printing love poems and shooting off firecrackers. "Practical" is put in quotes because to the Greeks it seemed much more practical to discuss the nature of the good life than to build better sewers. To the Romans and to our age, the opposite is the case—the British Marxist, John Strachey, is said to have once defined communism as "a movement for better plumbing." The Greeks were wise enough to treat scientific knowledge as a means, not an end; they never developed a concept of Progress. This wisdom may have been due to their flair for the *human* scale; better than any other people we know of, they were able to create an art and a politics scaled to human size. They could do this because they never forgot the tragic limitations of human existence, the Nemesis which turns victory into defeat overnight, the impossibility of perfect knowledge about anything. Contrast, for example, the *moderation* of Socrates, who constantly proclaimed his ignorance, with the pretensions of a 19th century system-builder like Marx. The Greeks would have seen in Marx's assumption that existence can be reduced to scientifically knowable terms, and the bold and confident all-embracing system he evolved on the basis of this assumption—they would have set this down to "hubris," the pride that goeth before a fall. And they would have been right, as we are now painfully discovering. Nor is it just Marx; as the quotations from the other 19th century socialist and anarchist theoreticians show, this scientific "hubris" was dominant in the whole culture of that Age of Progress. But it just won't do for us. We must learn to live with contradictions, to have faith in scepticism, to advance toward the solution of a problem by admitting as a possibility something which the scientist can never admit: namely, that it may be insoluble. The religious and the scientific views of the world are both *extreme* views, advancing total, complete solutions. We should reject both (as the Greeks, by the way, did; they were a notably irreligious people, putting their faith neither in the Kingdom of Heaven nor the Cloaca Maxima). Kierkegaard writes that sometimes wounds heal better if they are left open. So it is better to admit ignorance and leave questions open rather than to close them up with some all-answering system which stimulates infection beneath the surface.

4. Against the Fetishism of the Masses

To Marx's "fetishism of commodities" I would counterpose our modern fetishism—that of the masses. The more Progressive one's thinking, the more one assumes that the test of the goodness of a political program is how wide a popular appeal it makes. I venture to assert, for the present time at least, the contrary: that, as in art and letters, communicability to a large audience is in inverse ratio to the excellence of a political approach. This is not a good thing: as in art, it is a deforming, crippling factor. Nor is it an eternal rule:

in the past, the ideas of a tiny majority, sometimes almost reduced to the vanishing-point of one individual, have slowly come to take hold on more and more of their fellow-men; and we may hope that our own ideas may do likewise. But such, it seems to me, is our situation today, whether we like it or not. To attempt to propagate political ideas on a mass scale today results in either corrupting them or draining them of all emotional force and intellectual meaning. The very media by which one must communicate with a large audience—the radio, the popular press, the movies—are infected; the language and symbols of mass communication are infected; if one tries to use these media, one gets something like the newspaper *PM*, and something like the political writings of Max Lerner. Albert Camus, for example, edited the underground Resistance paper, *Combat*, during the German occupation of France. After the liberation, *Combat* quickly won a large audience, and Camus became one of the most widely read and influential political journalists in France. Yet, as he told me, he found that writing about politics in terms of the great parties and for a mass audience made it impossible for him to deal with reality, or to tell the truth. And so he has withdrawn from *Combat*, giving up what in traditional terms would seem to be a supremely fortunate chance for a socially-minded intellectual to propagate his ideas among the masses, in order to cast about for some better way of communicating. This will be found, I suspect, in talking to fewer people more precisely about "smaller" subjects.

As it is with communication, so is it with political organization. The two traditional Marxian approaches to organization are those of the Second and the Third International. The former puts its faith in mass parties, tied in with the great trade unions; the latter, in a disciplined, centralized, closely organized corps of "professional revolutionaries" which will lead the masses in revolutionary situations. Superficially, it would seem that the vast scale of modern society calls for mass parties to master it, while the centralized power of the modern State can be countered only by an equally centralized and closely organized revolutionary party. But the fact seems to be just the contrary: the State can crush such groups, whether organized as mass parties or as Bolshevik elite corps, the moment they show signs of becoming serious threats, precisely because they fight the State on its own grounds, they *compete* with the State. The totalization of State power today means that only something on a different plane can cope with it, something which fights the State from a vantage point which the State's weapons can reach only with difficulty. Perhaps the most effective means of countering violence, for example, is non-violence, which throws the enemy off balance ("moral jiu-jitsu" some one has called it) and confuses his human agents, all the more so because it appeals to traitorous elements in their own hearts.

All this means that individual actions, based on moral convictions, have *greater* force today than they had two generations ago. As an English correspondent wrote me recently: "The main reason for Conscientious Objection is undoubtedly that it does make a personal feeling

have weight. In the present world, the slightest sign of individual revolt assumes a weight out of all proportion to its real value." Thus in drafting men into that totalitarian society, the U. S. Army, the examiners often rejected anyone who stated openly that he did not *want* to enter the Army and felt he would be unhappy there. We may assume this action was not due to sympathy, but rather to the fact that, as practical men, the examiners knew that such a one would "make trouble" and that the smooth running of the vast mechanism could be thrown out by the presence of such a gritty particle precisely because of the machine's delicately-gearred hugeness.

Another conclusion is that group action against The Enemy is most effective when it is most spontaneous and loosest in organization. The opposition of the romantic clubs of German youth ("Edelweiss," "Black Pirates") was perhaps more damaging to the Nazis than that of the old parties and unions. So, too, World-over Press reports that a recently discovered secret list of British leaders to be liquidated by the Nazis after the invasion of England gave top priority not to trade unionists nor to leftwing political leaders but to well-known pacifists.

What seems necessary is thus to encourage attitudes of disrespect, scepticism, ridicule towards the State and all authority, rather than to build up a competing authority. It is the difference between a frontal attack all along the line and swift flanking jabs at points where The Enemy is weakest, between large-scale organized warfare and guerilla operations. Marxists go in for the former: the Bolsheviks emphasize discipline and unity in order to match that of The Enemy; the reformists try to outweigh The Enemy's power by shepherding great masses of voters and trade unionists into the scales. But the status quo is too powerful to be overthrown by such tactics; and, even worse, they show a disturbing tendency to lead one over to the side of The Enemy.

5. Self-ishness, or The Root Is Man

Granted that individual actions can never overthrow the status quo, and also that even spontaneous mass rebellion will be fruitless unless it has some kind of conscious program and also unless certain elementary steps of coordination and organization are taken. But today we confront this situation: the masses just do not act towards what most of the readers of this magazine would recognize as some fundamental betterment of society. The only way, at present, of so *acting* (as against just "making the record" for the muse of Marxian history by resolutions and manifestoes "against imperialist war," "for the international proletarian revolution," etc.) seems to be through symbolic individual actions, based on one person's insistence on his own values, and through the creation of small fraternal groups which will support such actions, keep alive a sense of our ultimate goals, and both act as a leavening in the dough of mass society and attract more and more of the alienated and frustrated members of that society. These individual stands (many CO's have taken them, also the handful of atomic scientists in this country and Britain

who simply refused personally to work on The Bomb) have two advantages over the activities of those who pretend that mass action is now possible:

(1) They make a dramatic appeal to people, the appeal of the individual who is bold enough and serious enough to stand alone, if necessary, against the enormous power of The State; this encourages others to resist a little more than they would otherwise in *their* everyday life, and also preserves the living seeds of protest and rebellion from which later on bigger things may grow.

(2) They at least preserve the revolutionary vitality and principles of the few individuals who make such stands, while the mass-actionists become, if they stick by their principles, deadened and corrupted personally by their constant submission in their own personal behavior to the standards of The Enemy—and much more corrupted than the simple bourgeois who feels himself at one with those standards (any one who has been through the Trotskyist movement, for example, as I have, knows that in respect to decent personal behavior, truthfulness, and respect for dissident opinion, the "comrades" are generally much inferior to the average stockbroker). On the other hand, if they compromise with principles in order to establish contact with the masses, they simply become part of The Enemy's forces, as is the case with the British Labor Party and the French Socialists. Marxists always sneer at the idea of individual action and individual responsibility on the grounds that we are simply interested in "saving our own souls." But what is so terrible about that? Isn't it better to save one's soul than to lose it? (And NOT to "gain the whole world," either!)

The first step towards a new concept of political action (and political morality) is for each person to decide what he thinks is right, what satisfies *him*, what *he* wants. And then to examine with scientific method the environment to figure out how to get it—or, if he can't get it, to see how much he can get without compromising his personal values. Self-ishness must be restored to respectability in our scheme of political values. Not that the individual exists apart from his fellow men, in Max Stirner's sense. I agree with Marx and Proudhon that the individual can define himself only in his social relations. But the point is to make these real *human* relations and not abstract concepts of class or history. It has often been observed that nations—and, I might add, classes, even the proletariat—have a lower standard of ethical behavior than individuals do. Even if all legal constraints were removed, I take it we can assume that few people would devote themselves exclusively to murder or would constantly lie to their friends and families; yet the most respected leaders of present societies, the military men and the political chieftains, in their public capacities become specialists in lying and murder. Always, of course, with the largest aims, "for the good of humanity."

A friend put it well in a letter I received several months ago: "So long as morality is all in public places — politics, Utopia, revolutions (nonviolent included), progress — our private mores continue to be a queasy

mixture of chivalry and cynicism: all in terms of angles, either for or against. We're all against political sin, we all love humanity, but individuals are sort of tough to love, even tougher to hate. Goldenhaired dreams, humanitarian dreams—what's the difference so long as they smell good? Meanwhile, patronize any whore, fight in any war, but don't marry the girl and don't fight the boss—too dangerous . . . No. Damn, our only chance is to try to get as small, private, honest, selfish as we can. Don't you agree that one can't have a moral attitude toward Humanity? Too big."

Or to put it more generally. Technological progress, the organization from the top of human life (what Max Weber calls "rationalization"), the overconfidence of the past two centuries in scientific method—these have led us, literally, into a dead end. Their trend is now clear: atomic warfare, bureaucratic collectivism, "the crystallization of social activity into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations . . ." To try to fight this trend, as the Progressives of all shades do, with the same forces that have brought it about appears absurd to me. We must emphasize the emotions, the imagination, the moral feelings, the primacy of the individual human being once more, must restore the balance that has been broken by the hypertrophy of science in the last two centuries. The root is man, here and not there, now and not then.

UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED YOU FALL

Maritime leaders admitted today some blows had been struck at a meeting of their Committee for Maritime Unity. V. J. Malone, president of the Marine Firemen's Union, smacked Joseph P. Selly, president of the American Communications Assn. during a debate . . . Harry Bridges was asked if there had been a fight. "Well, we're a committee for unity; we've got to have unanimity," he replied serenely. "It may take a chair or two, but there must be unity."

The Bromide Bar

Do we not see that we can TRUST a universe that moves along unerringly under the law of perfect justice? We certainly can. ("The Friendly Philosopher" by Robert Crosbie, p. 352)

Ignorance and its handmaidens—prejudice, intolerance, suspicion of our fellow men—breed dictators and they breed wars. Civilization cannot survive an atomic war . . . Until citizens of America and citizens of other nations of the world learn this science of human relations, of which President Roosevelt spoke, the atomic bomb will remain a frightful weapon which threatens to destroy all of us. There is at least one defense against the bomb. It is the defense of tolerance and of understanding, of intelligence and thoughtfulness. (President Truman on the radio, May 12)

The war boom demonstrated positively that mass production and distribution in books are both feasible and highly profitable. These developments are irreversible. Their structural consequences are

revealed in the tendency towards combinations and centralization. Inevitably every phase of the book business will become more concentrated than in the past. This concentration will increase the difficulties of operation for small and independent publishers . . . In other words, the scale of publishing will be enlarged . . . There are many forms of literature which have little or no connection with films—essays, most of the good poetry that is written, and such works as "Finnegans Wake." There are many novels, however, which do stand in relationship with the film—the sentimental popular novel and the realistic novel being leading instances. In the case of the former, the influence of the films is the strongest. But not so in the case of the latter. Novels form part of the raw material for films . . . The studios can buy talent and knowledge; but with a purchase price they cannot produce a serious work of art . . . Not because of artistic needs but because of business interests and self-imposed "discipline", the film again and again must reduce, disfigure and alter the contents of novels . . . In general, concerning this mutual relationship between films and novels, there is much irrelevant rationalization. This question must be explored further because Hollywood plays a peculiar role in American life . . . To date the book business has occupied a less important role in American economy than do the radio and film. This above all explains the absence of the contradiction between the commodity and art in book publishing . . . The actual and potential cultural and intellectual needs of masses of people cannot and will not be permanently satisfied by standardized ideas and works of art. This can be stated as a positive fact . . . Marx was a great revolutionary . . . Year in and year out bestsellers have come and gone. Real books will not go like that. They will stay. For we know that the future of books is involved in the future of culture. And the future of culture is a not insignificant part of the future of mankind. (from "The Fate of Writing in America", by James T. Farrell: New Directions, 25c)

The Intelligence Office

The "Times" and Catholicism

Sir:

In the last six months, the anti-Franco letters printed in the *N. Y. Times* have far outweighed the pro-Franco letters. It would seem, therefore, that your recent thrust at the *Times*—sharp, quick and graceful though it was—nevertheless landed somewhat wide of its mark.

Regarding Mr. Sulzberger's dispatch of Feb. 23, which, you insinuate, was suppressed in craven fear of Catholics, I venture to guess that the reason the *Times* did not print it was that its writer revealed inadequate knowledge of the subject he discussed. Specifically, he noted that the catechism he described anathematized Liberalism but not Nazism . . . Now it is a fact, not known only to Catholics, that the Liberalism condemned (and defined) by the Church is not the same as that Liberalism exalted (though not often defined) by men like Bliven, Black, Roosevelt, Murphy and, sometimes, you, sir. The Liberalism condemned by the Ripaldo catechism (the one Mr. Sulzberger wrote about) is defined as holding that the source of all authority in society is the State, that therefore no limit can be set to the power of the State, and that no appeal can be made above or beyond that power. In condemning Liberalism, in short, the catechism condemned Nazism's central tenet, and that is that.

Your own inference, sir, one that you feel is "not necessary to labor", anent Franco's persecution of Protestants appears to be no more justified by the Sulzberger dispatch not printed than by those which were. Deism and Pantheism, for example, are condemned by the catechism, yet the works of Unamuno and Ortega y

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Gasset are published and sold, I am reliably informed, in Franco Spain . . .

I realize, sir, that an occasional slur on the Catholic Church is useful in convincing of their error those among your readers who fantastically see in your revulsion from Russian Communism an impulse toward Roman Catholicism. Having carefully followed your writing for some years now, I say that they do you injustice, and, as a convinced Catholic, I say they flatter you. But the Spanish question should be treated with accuracy and decency, and that is what I have come to expect from you, as an honorable enemy.

NEW YORK CITY

HARMON ASHLEY, JR.

—Grateful though I am for this unsolicited testimonial to my irreligiosity, I am constrained to express mild surprise at the Catholic definition of "Liberalism." Historically, Liberalism arose as a protest precisely against the power of the State; and even in post-1914 usage, "Fascism" would seem a better term for Statism than "Liberalism." Nor can my honorable enemy plead that the Ripaldo catechism was written before Fascism arose, for Sulzberger notes that the edition used in the Spanish schools was published in 1946 and was brought up to date by a Jesuit priest. Why, then, was not Fascism listed? As for the circulation of the works of Unamuno and Gasset in Spain today: I daresay that this is less a concession to Pantheism and Deism (whatever faint meaning these terms still retain) than a tribute from Franco and his Catholic allies to these writers' distaste for socialism and democracy. Finally, if the Catholic Church wants to say "Liberalism" when it means "Fascism", that is its semantic privilege; but at least it should append a footnote pointing out this inversion of modern usage, and also making it clear, especially in a catechism designed for use in Spanish schools, that Franco's as well as Stalin's totalitarian concept of the State is abhorred by the Catholic hierarchy. Until this is done—and I suggest Mr. Ashley take it up at once with the proper ecclesiastical authorities—we outsiders will continue to be confused. And that, my honorable enemy, is that.—ED.

Some Other Counties Heard From

Sir:

I have just read my May *POLITICS*—read it entire, in the middle of the day, with all my fingers interleaved to mark references and unfinished articles. It is alive to me, an essence; there is no dead matter in it . . . To see you break through "the shell of Marxism, which the magazine's living growth had already displaced" into Tolstoy's dynamic thesis of the reality of ethical values, is to free me of the slight uneasiness I have always felt in the presence of many radicals who distorted or departmentalized truth from a different slant than that of those now holding power. *POLITICS* is apparently becoming a mature and creative instrument without losing its revolutionary fire. Nothing is so much needed to save the species from the logical end Dwight Culler has offered us . . . There begin to appear here, at least to my ignorant optimism, the philosophical roots of an American revolution: revealed, pruned, divested of grubworms, and cultivated by a sharp and vigorous editorial spade.

CHICAGO, ILL.

BOB WILSON

Sir:

Congratulations on an improvement in the tone of your articles. The first part of "The Root is Man" is very good as an analysis of present-day Marxist thought.

Especially your very clear analysis of the false theory of most Marxists that the period we are now going through should be considered "progressive". Frankly, I think we are as far or further from a progressive trend than ever before. The reason? The failure of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, and the use of this failure by both "liberal" and "conservative" to befuddle the masses . . . Don Calhoun's article on the Non-Violent Revolutionists was very enlightening.

DAYTON, O.

JAMES S. MOSLEY

Sir:

Your critics (May issue) are apparently disappointed chiefly because you insist on thinking for yourself. To hell with 'em. While they urge you to "join the Church," their anger is actually engendered by your apostasy from their church. They are angered because you are failing to plug for the official (Note Marquart's use of the term) answer to our contemporary problems. They are vexed because you have seen loopholes and, more important, vicious implications in the orthodox panacea. You are questioning their religious faith and you may well expect to be called names.

These critics want to read you for reinforcement of their beliefs. They know the Truth and would like for you merely to repeat it—endless variations on the central theme.

I read you and recommend you because you admittedly are not convinced that you have the Solution to any of our contemporary problems. You are still flexible—a quality alien to those of religious bent. You are being condemned because you have not found Certainty—as so many of your critics apparently have.

I read you for stimulation and catharsis—not for final answers or exegetical work on Marx or any other deity.

More power to you and your heretical contributors.
SEATTLE, WASH.

GWYNNE NETTLER

Sir:

You are right: there are many of us who greatly appreciate the present trend of *POLITICS*, even though we may not have been as vocal as your detractors . . . Above all, we appreciate (besides your intelligence and the ability to express your thought) the downright honesty which characterizes your efforts. Such honesty is, after all, a relative (but active) participation in that unpopular absolute called truth. Such a participation, however, will always be heresy to those who are committed to a creed, whether it be a religious or a political one. I only hope the magazine will be able to survive the excommunication!

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

DAVID WHITE

—Hope so, too. And, judging by reactions to last two issues, I think we shall. Fortunately, these Marxian Popes—at least the ones POLITICS has to worry about—have lost their temporal powers.—ED.

You CAN Strike Against the Government

Sir:

Recent U. S. strikebreaking in the railroad and coal industries points up the need for establishing the right to strike against the government. And the only way labor can establish this right is BY striking against the government, even in defiance of legislation for drafting strikers, as proposed by President Truman.

The prevalent myth that you can't strike against the government is as illogical as that existing a little more than a century ago: that you couldn't strike against a private enterprise. Following the English common-law

doctrine of criminal conspiracy, the courts held that a strike against an employer was an illegal conspiracy. But despite automatic court convictions, the early American unions continued to use the strike weapon until finally the Commonwealth vs. Hunt decision made legal the right to strike against a private enterprise.

Today this right is generally recognized, but the myth that you can't strike against the government, persists. Presidents, governors, mayors and judges repeat it and most people accept it as gospel. In capitalist countries, where you are told the government is the people; in fascist countries, where you are told the government is the fatherland; and in communist countries, where you are told the government is the workers; the same false argument is used—"When you strike against the government, you strike against yourself."

Actually when you, as a government employee, go on strike, you are striking against those government officials in charge of management. You are no more striking against the flag than a worker in private industry strikes against his employer's coat-of-arms. The government management, against which you are striking, is made up of intelligent, ruthless individuals who are as interested as any private management in speeding up production and cutting down labor costs.

That Soviet workers are beginning to realize this is indicated by Russian newspaper reports of a recent strike in a Moscow electrical plant protesting the director's failure to install safety devices plus his arrogant refusal to meet with a union committee. That American workers are starting to get wise was shown in 1943 when miners refused to return to work following government seizure of the struck mines. But these are all merely isolated incidents.

In all countries the struggle for the right to strike against the government is still ahead. And it may prove even tougher than the struggle for the right to strike against private enterprise. Government officials will make full use of the weapon of patriotism against union leaders. But labor can't give up, any more than it could give up in the struggle for the right to strike against private enterprise, because it is a sink-or-swim proposition. Under any system of society, the strike remains the most effective weapon for obtaining and maintaining decent working conditions.

NEW YORK CITY

JAMES PECK

ATTENTION WASHINGTON, D. C. READERS!

Member of "Politics" staff moving to D. C. or environs needs a 3 - 4 room apartment or house. Immediate occupancy preferred, but will accept August or September occupancy. If you know of anything available, wire collect Dept. A, Politics, 45 Astor Place, New York City.

AMNESTY PETITION

Honorable Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

On March 6 you said: "Now that we have preserved our freedom of conscience and religion, let us make full use of that freedom."

Yet thousands who for reasons of principle refused to comply with the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 or were court-martialed for not obeying military orders are still in prison. These include conscientious objectors, Jehovah's Witnesses, Negro objectors to racial segregation and discrimination in the armed forces, Puerto Rican nationalists, Hopi Indians and other political prisoners.

Amnesties have been granted to political offenders in the past by eight Presidents of the U. S. Many other countries have also declared amnesties since the war.

A general amnesty for violators of the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 and war objectors court-martialed by the armed forces is the only possible way to free the men for whom we are concerned and to restore full civil rights to them and to the thousands already released. Continued punishment of these men violates our tradition of freedom of conscience and endangers the civil liberties of all citizens.

We therefore petition you to grant such an amnesty.

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