

INTRODUCTION

Today, in the face of the constant struggle of men for full freedom on both sides of the Iron Curtain, there is a veritable conspiracy to identify Marxism, a theory of liberation, with its opposite, Communism, the theory and practice of enslavement. This book aims to re-establish Marxism in its original form, which Marx called it "a thoroughgoing naturalism, or Humanism." The fact that the might of Russia is used to cover up its barbarism under the name of Marxism makes it all the more urgent to let Marx speak for himself.

Marxism is a theory of liberation or it is nothing. Whereas Marx was concerned with the freedom of humanity, and with the inevitable waste of human life which is the absolute general law of capitalist development, Russian Communism is concerned with the mainspring of capitalism -- paying the worker the minimum and extracting from him the maximum. They dub this "the Plan." Marx called it the law of value and surplus value, and predicted that its unhindered development would lead to the concentration of capital "in the hands of a single capitalist or a single capitalist corporation." Our epoch has been characterized by "a struggle for the minds of men." Unless this struggle begins with a concept of totally new relations of man to labor and man to man, it is hollow.

Hitherto, the American roots of Marxism have remained hidden. It is known, although not widely, that Marx aided the North during the Civil War in the United States. Less well-known is the fact that the paths of the Abolitionists and Marx crossed at that time. What is not known at all is that

under the impact of the Civil War, and the subsequent struggles for the eight-hour day. Marx completely reorganized the structure of his greatest theoretical work, CAPITAL. This is analyzed here for the first time. The new unity of theory and practice, which characterized the forty years of Marx's maturity (1843 - 1883), is the compelling need of our own epoch as well. This book covers the modern machine age from its birth in the Industrial Revolution to its present-day development in Automatic.

These leading strands of thought are developed here:

- 1) The evolution of English political economy, French revolutionary doctrines and German idealist (Hegelian) philosophy, in relation to the actual social development;
- 2) the development of Marxism in Marx's day and since, in relation to the actual class struggle;
- 3) the methodology of Marxism applied to the problems that arise from the trend towards state capitalism on the one hand, and a movement for absolute freedom on the other.

The today-ness of Marxism flows from this: no philosopher has ever had a grander concept of humanity than did Marx, and yet no philosophic conception was ever rooted more deeply in the first necessity of human society -- labor and production.

The problems Marx posed theoretically 100 years ago are battled out today as concrete matters in the factory and in society as a whole: Can human power realize freedom out of capitalist despotism? Or, as we would phrase it today: Will

civilization survive the H-bomb? The answer is not in today's headlines, it is in production. MARXISM AND FREEDOM begins, therefore, not with Marx but with the industrial revolution which undermined the old feudal order and at the same time created the capitalist and the factory worker.

Until the development of the totalitarian state the philosophic foundation of Marxism was not fully understood. Only today is it possible to comprehend that Marx's rejection of the Communism of his day was not a nineteenth century humanitarian adjunct to his scientific economic theories. Far from being a vulgar materialist, Marx based his perspectives, of the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the rise of a new human order, on a realization that workers would seek universality and completeness in their actual social lives as producers. Because Communism was a mere rejection of private property, Communism to Marx was "not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

Marx foresaw the present trend toward state capitalism not because he was a prophet but because of his dialectical method of tracing through to the end all trends of social development. It is impossible to understand Marx's major theoretical work if one begins by thinking that the particular method, Hegelian dialectics, is an absurdity. The absurdity would be if the method were the proof. The proof can only be in practice, in the actual development of society itself.

The impulse for writing this book came from two sources: 1) the American workers, specifically the miners and auto workers who were coming to grips with the realities of Automation, 1950-1953, by moving the question of productivity from one dealing with the fruits of labor--wages--to one dealing with the conditions of labor and the need for a totally new way of life; and 2) the East German workers who, in their Revolt of June 17, 1953, challenged their puppet regime and thus signalled the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarianism. Their revolt was indeed followed, within weeks, by a revolt in the slave labor camps of Vorkuta inside Russia itself. This dual search for a philosophy on the part of the American and European workers emerged from the totality of the world crisis.

From the philosopher in the ivory tower to the man on the street, the world has been preoccupied with the question: Can man be free in this age of totalitarianism? We leaped generations ahead to the affirmative answer with the 1953 Revolts. The road to a new society was again illuminated by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

No theoretician, today more than ever before, can write out of his own head. Theory requires a constant shaping and reshaping of ideas on the basis of what the workers themselves are doing and thinking. The research for this book, for example, on the transformation of Russia from a workers' state into its opposite, a state capitalist society, began at the outbreak of World War II. Scholars, some who did, and some who did not, agree with my conclusions, took part. In its beginning, this work was a Marxist analysis of state capitalism. But it did

not take its present form of **MARXISM AND FREEDOM** until the new stage of production and of revolts was reached in 1950-53. Because we live in an age of absolutes--on the threshold of absolute freedom out of the struggle against absolute tyranny--the compelling need for a new unity of theory and practice dictates a new method of writing. At least, it dictated the method by which this book was written.

A tour was undertaken to present orally the ideas of the book to groups of auto workers, miners, steelworkers and students. In their own words and out of their own lives they contributed a new understanding. A West Virginia miner, for example, modest about his own understanding of "Marxism," took freedom out of its abstraction and gave it concrete meaning.

"I've listened to you discussing that fellow Marx," he said. "I can't word it like him but I know exactly what he means. I lay there this morning about a quarter of six. I looked out window. I said to myself, 'You just got to get up there and go down, whether you feel like it or not.' I didn't even speak it to my wife. I just said to myself, 'Now you call that a free man?'"

After these discussions, the first draft of the book was written. The manuscript was then submitted to some of these groups for study and, over a period of three months, their discussions were taped. Again, the author studied the discussions carefully, revised the first draft, and undertook a second tour for extensive personal discussions, some of which are reproduced in the text. Only after these extensive discussions was the book in its present form finally written.

This work is therefore dedicated to the auto workers,
miners, steelworkers and students who have participated so
fully in the writing of this book. They are its co-author.

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