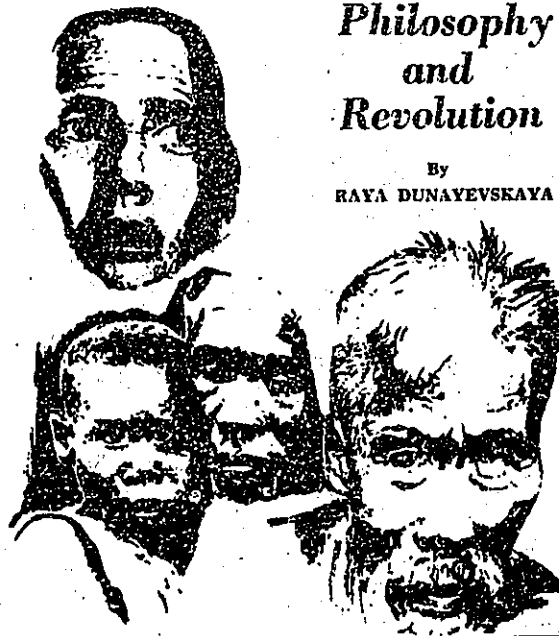


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China, Russia, USA—

*State-Capitalism  
and Marx's Humanism  
or  
Philosophy  
and  
Revolution*

By  
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA



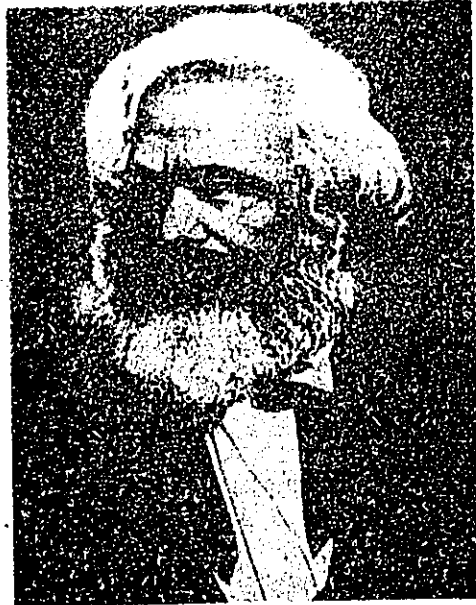
INCLUDES ALSO AS APPENDIX —

*Analysis of Rosa Luxemburg's  
Accumulation of Capital*

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Karl Marx

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
PUBLICATION OF  
KARL MARX'S "CAPITAL"





**BOOTS OF STALIN** are all that remain of his statue as Hungarian revolutionary freedom fighters demonstrate their hatred of the totalitarian regime forced on them by the Russian dictator as they demolish his statue in Budapest during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

## I. The New Vantage Point

The state-capitalism at issue is not the one theoretically envisaged by Karl Marx in 1867-1883 as the logical conclusion to the development of English competitive capitalism. It is true that "the law of motion" of capitalist society was discerned and profoundly analyzed by Marx. Of necessity, however, the actual results of the projected ultimate development to concentration and centralization of capital differed sweepingly from the abstract concept of the centralization of capital "in the hands of one single capitalist, or in those of one single corporation." (1) Where Marx's own study cannot substitute for an analysis of existing state-capitalism, the debates around the question by his adherents can hardly do so, even where these have been updated to the end of the 1920's. For us, in the mid-1960's, to turn to these disputes for any other than methodological purposes, appears to this writer altogether futile.

The state-capitalism that is in need of analysis is not the one that feebly emerged and died during the first world war, but the one which emerged on a world scale in myriad forms during the world Depression and survived World War II. Presently it has the appearance of affluence in the industrially advanced countries and that of near-starvation in the technologically underdeveloped countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. The fact that within each affluent country there are the unskilled laborers and the national minorities who remain the ill-paid, ill-clad, ill-fed and ill-housed, seems to be of less significance to many Marxist theoreticians than the more startling fact that, no matter how the Depression had undermined private capitalism which disgorged both Nazism and the "New Deal," the full statification of production took place in what had been a workers' state: Soviet Russia.

By the end of World War II the State Party Plan had characterized not only Russia and its East European satellites, but also China where Communism had achieved power on its own. Moreover, it

(1) K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 838. (Chas. H. Kerr, Chicago, 1932).

was achieved via an altogether new road — the result of a protracted guerrilla war that outflanked the cities. What seems to be little known is that up to the so-called Great Leap Forward in 1957, Mao's China referred to itself as "state-capitalist." (2) It is true that its use of the term was not in the sense of a new stage of world production, but in the sense of something "Communism" could set "limits to."

Even those who either do not accept the theory of state-capitalism, or say that it does not apply to Russia, Eastern Europe or China, face one and the same problem: Has the new stage of production, by whatever name, proven its viability? That is to say, has it found the means whereby to overcome the catastrophic economic crises that were supposed to have caused capitalism's collapse? Is it possible to "liberate" the productive forces for limitless production without releasing the proletariat from wage-slavery and thereby achieving a totally new kind, a greater kind of energy from the liberated proletariat?

Many there are who think the answer is: Yes. Moreover, these same theoreticians would call that science "neutral" and even "magical" which ushered in both the nuclear age and Automation. After all, Automation had succeeded in achieving a phenomenal rise in labor productivity through the application of ever greater amounts of constant capital (machinery) at the expense of ever less numbers (relatively) of workers. And since every one, regardless of class, fears that a nuclear holocaust

(2) The Report on the Draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China, on September 15, 1954, reads: "The transitional form for the socialist transformation of industry and commerce is state capitalism. In the historical circumstances of China we can carry out the gradual transformation of capitalist industry and commerce through various forms of state capitalism. State capitalism under the control of a state led by the working class is different in nature from state capitalism under bourgeois rule." (Documents of the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, p. 33. Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1955). Even on the eve of the so-called Great Leap Forward, the Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party—the only time a congress of the CCP had been convened since 1945, four years before conquest of power in 1949, and none has been convened since—was so far from anticipating the overnight establishment of "socialism" that the main report held that "in our country the allies of the working class consist not only of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, but also of the national bourgeoisie." (Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Vol. 1, Documents, p. 12, Peking, 1956.)

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would spell the end of civilization as we have known it, modern capitalism is also supposed to have learned to stop short of nuclear war, thus barring the only other avenue open to social revolution — the transformation of an imperialist war into a civil war. Those who pose such questions, as well as those who fear such answers, seem not to have asked themselves, why had these questions not been raised directly after World War II when both Europe and the Orient lay prostrate? Why could these problems not have presented themselves any earlier than the mid-1950's when, on the one hand, Western Europe could, without the prop of the Marshall Plan, once again stand on its own economic feet; and, on the other hand, the Korean War had ended so that a semblance of peace could be effected? To get the answers to these questions, we must take a closer look at those mid-1950's.

**T**HE PERIOD of 1950-1956 is a crucial one, however, not because capitalism had gained a new lease on life, but because a new proletarian opposition arose. In the United States workers were resisting the new stage of production called Automation by a general strike in the mines, wildcatting in the auto industry, talking up a storm at union meetings and elsewhere. In East Germany, the opposition to increased "norms" (speedup) led to open revolt against the totalitarian state.

The absolutely unprecedented developments throughout Eastern Europe culminated in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the very year which ushered in the Negro Revolution in the United States. (3) By the end of the 1950's that new page of freedom was large enough to cover a new, a third world — Asia, Africa, Latin America. Along with these epochal developments came a search for a new philosophy of freedom, a new, a Marxist Humanism.

In the third section of this essay we will deal with the philosophical problems of today. Here it will

(3) For a factual report of the Montgomery Bus Boycott by one of its leaders see *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Harper & Row, N.Y., 1958). For a Marxist-Humanist analysis, see *MARXISM AND FREEDOM*, p. 279-83, and Introduction to the 2nd edition. (Twayne Publishers, N.Y., 1958 and 1964).

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suffice to assert that the theoretical void in the Marxist movement since the death of Lenin has not been filled, not for lack of a life and death struggle over Stalin's usurpation of the mantle of Lenin, nor for lack of statistical studies of the economy and reams of political theses. Rather, the void exists because, from Leon Trotsky down, the disputants have failed to face up to the shattering truth of Lenin's wartime break with his own philosophic past. Lenin's dialectical analysis of the relationship of monopoly capitalism to the collapse of the Second International at the outbreak of the first world war has been reduced to a set of cliches, while the methodology he worked out for discerning the emergent administrative mentality within Bolshevism has been bypassed altogether.

Where Lenin, although he knew exactly where he was going politically, felt it imperative to work out anew the dialectic methodology, directly from Hegel and, indirectly, in relationship to the attitude of his Bolshevik co-leaders, how can "Leninists" think they can coast along politically without such a philosophic foundation? Naturally, this is not a mere matter of showing "respect" for the dialectic. That word was on no one's lips more frequently than on Bukharin's. And yet the mechanistic abstractions of his philosophic magnum opus, *Historical Materialism*, permeate all of his writings, even the "correct" ones. Moreover — and this, precisely, is the reason for its relevance to today's debates — his dialectic never seemed to breathe life, have a "personality" of its own, much less that of self-activity, of proletarian self-development. It is no accident that the so misused and abused word, the dialectic, keeps cropping up throughout a whole decade of debates among Bolsheviks, from the outbreak of the first world war till Lenin's death, January, 1924.

The relevance, nay, the imperativeness of a philosophic method as foundation for today's debates on state-capitalism lies in this: without it, the debates can lead nowhere else but to eclecticism. This has been true ever since World War II proved the Trotskyist Fourth International to have been a stillbirth. It has resulted in the theoretician being forced to "pick out something" from a Bukharin who had worked out a full theory of state-capitalism without



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giving up what he had previously learned from Trotsky, though the latter had rejected the idea that the theory of state-capitalism had any applicability to Russia. For good measure, one adds to this something from Lenin who analyzed a state-capitalism which one "cannot find in books" because its frame of reference was a workers' state, that is to say, a state where workers controlled the conditions of production, held political power. This choosing and picking from contradictory theories is then topped by one's own contribution of a still different epoch, thereby succeeding in making a complete hash both of different historic periods and conflicting philosophic methods. Of necessity, this must end by superimposing an abstract universal, like Revolution, with a capital R, on a static situation, instead of laboring to discern new revolutionary impulses and the emergence of a concrete universal out of the actually developing conflicts wherein the "subject" (the proletariat) itself determines the end — both the revolution and what comes after as inseparables. The discernment of new revolutionary impulses is a task each generation of Marxists must achieve for itself. The methodology that was at stake in the debates between Bolshevik theoreticians, between Lenin and Bukharin, however, has much to tell us for the period of the 1960's.

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## II. Lenin vs. Bukharin: the Dialectic and Its Methodological Enemy, Abstract Revolutionism

Because the transformation of reality is central to the Hegelian dialectic, Hegel's philosophy comes to life, over and over again, in all periods of crisis and transition, when society is shaken to its foundations as the world reaches a new turning point. Hegel himself lived at just such a turning point in history — the French Revolution; the dialectic has rightly been called "the algebra of revolution." (4) What seems almost beyond comprehension is this: just when the Russian Revolution made real "the algebra of revolution," and smashed bourgeois state power, just when "workers organized as the ruling class" was concretized as Soviet power, and the workers finally organized national trade unions, and just when the Party that led the revolution was establishing the first workers' state in history, that Party became embroiled in arguments over, of all things, state-capitalism.

The two debates most relevant to us are the vocal one on the trade unions and the silent one—Lenin's Notes on Bukharin's Economics of the Transition Period. Elsewhere (5) I have analyzed the three major positions in that famous trade-union debate, 1920-21, including that of Shlyapnikov of the Workers' Opposition who opposed both Lenin and Trotsky-Bukharin and who called for an "All-Russian Congress of Producers." The position of Lenin—that the workers must maintain the independence of their trade unions (and all other organizations) from

(4) Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, p. 521. (Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1955.)

(5) See Chapter XII, *MARXISM AND FREEDOM*. Those who can read Russian will find the major positions included in *The Party and the Trade Unions*, edited by Zinoviev, and the major proponents speaking for themselves—Lenin, Trotsky, Shlyapnikov—in the *Stenographic Minutes of Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party*. When Lenin was alive, no one thought that theoretical disputes are won through concealing the opponents' views. The English reader is limited to Lenin's views arguing against the other positions. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IX (International Publishers, NY, 1943) is indispensable both for the trade union debate and the Report to 11th Congress of RCP where Lenin warned of a "return backwards to capitalism."

the state, although that state be a workers' state — was opposed by Bukharin, this time in coalition with Trotsky. They maintained that, "since" Russia was a workers' state, the workers had nothing to fear from it, and "therefore" should dissolve their trade unions into the state apparatus. Here, where we are concerned with methodology, the trade union debate concerns us only as it illuminated, theoretically, the role of workers in a workers' state and as this, in turn, was related to the theory of state-capitalism. In a word, Bukharin's theory underlying his argumentation in the trade union debate is of greater relevance to us than the debate itself, which, of necessity, bears the marks of factionalism. It will clarify matters if we concentrate, therefore, on his *Economics of the Transition Period*, and, along with it, Lenin's commentary on it. (6)

Bukharin's theory of state-capitalism, the obverse side of his theory of economic development under a workers' state, is that of a continuous development, a straight line leading from "unorganized" competitive capitalism to "organized" state-capitalism. On a world scale, it remains "anarchic," subject to the "blind laws of the world market." Anarchy is "supplemented by antagonistic classes." Only the proletariat, by seizing political power, can extend "organized production" to the whole world. The fact that Bukharin believes in social revolution does not, however, seem to stop him from dealing with labor, not as subject, but as object.

Quite the contrary. 1917 notwithstanding — and despite the fact that Bukharin played no small role in that revolution — his concept of revolution is so abstract that all human activity is subsumed under it. Thus, he is inescapably driven to preclude self-movement. Which is exactly why labor remains an object to him. As object, the highest attribute Bukharin can think of assigning labor is its becoming an "aggregate." Indeed, Bukharin uses the

(6) Unfortunately neither Bukharin's *Economics of the Transition Period*, nor Lenin's *Commentary on it* is available in English. (I've used the Russian texts.) However, other works by N. Bukharin are available in English. These are: *The World Economy and Imperialism*, *Historical Materialism*, and individual essays are included in other works, those against self-determination in *The Bolsheviks and the World War* (edited by Cankin and Fisher, Stanford U. Press, 1946) and elsewhere.

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word, subject, not to denote the proletariat, or living man, but just "consciousness," "single will" so that, despite his contention that only the proletariat can plan on a world scale, state-capitalism "has become a rational organization from an irrational system; from a subject-less economy, it has become an economic subject." To this economic form of "the future" the proletariat must submit; in a workers' state he becomes the "smallest cell." Thus: "The statification of the trade union and factual statification of all mass organizations of the proletariat is the result of the very inner logic of the process of transformation . . . The smallest cell of the workers' apparatus must become transformed into a bearer of the general process which is planfully led and conducted by the collective reason of the working class which finds its material embodiment in the highest and most all embracing organization, in its state apparatus. Thereby the system of state-capitalism is dialectically transformed into the state form of workers' socialism." Everything here stands topsy turvy as if indeed people were nothing but "human machines." (7)

**F**OR A REVOLUTIONARY intellectual to have become so entrapped in the fundamental alienation of philosophers in a class society, identifying men with things, is a phenomenon that laid heavy on Lenin's mind as he wrote his Will, but in his Notes on Bukharin's book, Lenin moved cautiously in drawing any conclusions. Yet he began his criticism with Bukharin's very definition of political economy as "the science of social economy based on production of commodities, i.e., the science of an unorganized social economy." Lenin comments: "Two untruths: (1) the definition is a step backward from Engels; (2) commodity production is also 'organized' economy."

By stressing that not only state-capitalism, but even simple commodity production is "also 'organized' economy," Lenin is rejecting the counterposition of "unorganized" to "organized" as any sort of fundamental criterion for the determination of a workers' state. By pointing out that Engels had,

(7) Draft CI Program, included in *Ataka*, p. 121, Collection of Theoretical Articles by N. Bukharin (May, 1924, Moscow, Ruzsian).

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as far back as 1891, held that, with trustification, planlessness ceases, Lenin has in mind his State and Revolution where he first developed not only his theory of state-capitalism (based on Engels' thesis) but also his theory of proletarian revolution.

Or, to put it differently, what Lenin is saying is that the days when plan and planlessness were considered absolute opposites, are gone forever. What is now on the agenda is listening to the voices from below not only for the theoretical preparation for revolution, as he had done in State and Revolution, but for reconstruction of society on new beginnings. The point at issue now, 1920, is this: Russia is not a theoretical or "abstract" workers' state. It is a workers' and peasants' government that is "bureaucratically deformed." The workers are demanding an end to State interference in their trade unions: "We, the ordinary rank and file, the masses, say that we must renovate, we must correct, we must expel the bureaucrats; but you pitch us a yarn about engaging in production. I do not want to engage in production with such and such a bureaucratic board of directors." (8).

So totally did Lenin disagree with Bukharin's method of presentation that even when he agreed with the specific points, he felt it necessary to criticize. Thus, he singled out for praise Bukharin's restatement of Marx's "two essential moments: centralisation of means of production and socialisation of labor which bloomed together with the capitalist method of production and inside it." But here is how he phrased his agreement: "Finally, thank god! Human language instead of 'organized' babbling! All is well that ends well."

But "all" didn't end well, not even when there was no disagreement. Thus, there was certainly no disagreement about the major achievement of the Russian Revolution — the destruction of bourgeois production relations. But the minute Bukharin tried to make an abstraction of that, tried to subsume production relations under "technical relations," it became obvious to Lenin that Bukharin simply failed to understand the dialectic. Thus, when he quoted Bukharin to the effect, that, "Once the destruction of capitalist production relations is

(8) Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. IX, p. 19.

really given, and once the theoretic impossibility of their restoration is proven," Lenin hit back with: "Impossibility' is demonstrable only practically. The author does not pose dialectically the relationship of theory to practice."

Practice to Lenin was workers practicing. To the Marxist theoretician, this is where all theory must begin. Without having been aware of Marx's Humanist Essays — they had not yet been discovered and published — Lenin developed a "new universal" for his age, that the population, to a man, was to run production and the state — or it could not be considered a new social order. He wrote this in *State and Revolution*, and he tried practicing it after conquest of power. What worried him about his Bolshevik co-leaders was that, now that they had power, they themselves either displayed "a passion for bossing," or, at best, were ready with an administrative solution where only the self-activity of the masses could solve the crisis. (9)

In the fires of revolution and, again, when under the threat of counter-revolution, all may have been forgiven. On his death-bed, however, Lenin showed he had not forgotten. As he lay writhing in agony — not just physical agony, but agony over the early bureaucratisation of the workers' state and its tendency "to move backwards to capitalism!" — Lenin took the measure of his co-leaders in his Will. In it, Lenin warns that Bukharin, despite the fact that he was the Party's "most valuable and biggest theoretician," "never learned and, I think, never fully understood the dialectic." (10)

It sounds like the kind of abstraction that Lenin considered his methodological enemy, the kind of abstraction that Lenin criticized in Bukharin. Once,

(10) Lenin's Will has been published in various papers since Khrushchev's deStalinization speech in 1956. I've used the text as first published by Trotsky, *The Suppressed Testament of Lenin* (Pioneer Publishers, NY, 1935.)

(9) "They (the workers and peasants) must understand that the whole thing now is practice, that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, is vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice . . . Every attempt to adhere to stereotyped forms and to impose uniformly from above, as our intellectuals are inclined to do, must be combated . . . The Paris Commune gave a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism stereotyped forms." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 12 (mp. 420)

however, one remembers that the *Will* is both concrete and the summation of a whole decade of theoretical disputes, the realization begins to dawn that this is a generalization based on what had started with the beginning of the new, monopoly stage of capitalist production which had brought about the collapse of the Second International. At the turn of the century, the new development of capitalism had the leading Marxists searching for answers to new problems. The results of the new research and analyses can be seen in the following major works: Rudolf Hilferding's *Finance Capital* (1910), Rosa Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital* (1913)(11), Nikolai Bukharin's *The World Economy and Imperialism* (1915), and Lenin's *Imperialism* (1916). Because Lenin had also introduced Bukharin's work, and took no issue with it, the impression created when the two disagreed sharply on the question of national self-determination during the same period, was that the point at issue was "only political."

**I**N TRUTH, the methodology of the two works shows they are poles apart. Thus, as opposed to Bukharin's concept of capitalist growth in a straight line, or via a quantitative ratio, Lenin's own work holds on tightly to the dialectical principle, "transformation into opposite." The key point in tracing the subject's self-development instead of an "objective" mathematical growth is that the former not only makes it possible to see transformation into opposite of both competitive capitalism into monopoly and part of labor into an aristocracy, but also makes you conscious that this is but the "first negative," to use an expression of Hegel's. The development through this contradiction compels finding the "second negative," or as Marx expressed it, going "lower and deeper" into the masses to find the new revolutionary forces. Thus, Lenin held that, just when capitalism had reached this high stage of "organization," monopoly (which extended itself into

(11) Insofar as Luxemburg's theory of accumulation deviated from Marx's and anticipated that of Keynes on the question of "effective demand," Luxemburg was suddenly hailed by academic economists, particularly John Robinson. Nothing, however, could have been further from Luxemburg's mind than the uses to which her theory is put. (See my 1948 analysis, reproduced in Appendix.)



imperialism), is the time to see new, national revolutionary forces that would act as "bacilli" for proletarian revolutions as well. (12) Where Lenin saw, in the stage of imperialism, a new urgency for the slogan of national self-determination, Bukharin vehemently opposed the slogan as both "impossible of achievement" and "reactionary." Nothing short of a direct road to socialist revolution would do for him. This plunge to abstract revolutionism in place of working with the concretely developing revolutionary forces, which Hegel would have considered a manifestation of jumping to the "Absolute like a shot out of a pistol," and which politicians called "ultra-leftism", Lenin called nothing short of "imperialist economism." (13)

Such a characterization of a Bolshevik co-leader whose work, *The World Economy and Imperialism* he had introduced less than a year before, wasn't something that came out only because of the heat of a factional debate. In the heat of a factional debate what became clear to Lenin was that "the failure to understand the dialectic" meant the failure to see self-activity of the masses. To think that anything short of ceasing blindness to the self-activity of the masses would have caused Lenin to describe a Bolshevik co-leader in words that would characterize a class enemy is to close the only avenue open to marching with "the masses as reason."

The dialectic obviously meant something different in 1917 than it had in 1914-16 when the problem was to relate the betrayal of the Second International to the objective development of capitalism. Then "the transformation into opposite" — competition into monopoly — meant also the transformation of a part of labor into its opposite, the aristocracy of labor that gained from capitalism's imperialist adventures. By 1917 the administrative mentality began to permeate Bolshevism itself, once it assumed power. Lenin discerned the tendency to substitute an administrative solution to problems which can only be resolved by the self-development of the proletariat precisely because he stood firmly on the ground

(12) Vol. V of Lenin's Selected Works and Vol. XIX of his Collected Works contain the major articles on the question of national self-determination.

(13) See "Lenin and the Imperialist Economism of the Bukharin-Platskov Group" (pp. 32-347), in *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, edited by Ganikin and Fisher, where Bukharin's analyses are likewise published.



of the historic achievements of the Russian Revolution. For this reason and for this reason alone he could be so uncompromising in his criticism of the Bolsheviks who led the revolution.

Where the dialectic became the *pons asini* for Lenin who was witnessing the barest emergence of bureaucratisation of the early workers' state, can the dialectic mean less for us who have seen its full development — the transformation of the workers' state into its absolute opposite, a state-capitalist society? Where the debates on the class nature of Russia in the late 1930's and early 1940's could revolve around political forms and economic relations, can we continue to escape the integrality of philosophy with revolution in the 1950's? Once the workers have revealed new revolutionary impulses in the 1950's, shouldn't this, of necessity, have also created a new vantage point for the debates on state-capitalism?

### III. The Philosophic- Economic Problems Of Today

It is this which distinguishes the 1960's from all other periods. I do not mean to say that there was no proletarian opposition to the emergent state-capitalism and fascism in the 1930's which bore witness to such revolutionary transformations as the sit-downs and the establishment of the C.I.O. in the United States and the tremendous upheavals throughout Europe culminating in the Spanish Revolution of 1937. The victory of fascism, however, not only destroyed the revolution but also, unfortunately, created new illusions as to the nature of Stalinism. Thus, although the "bureaucratic collectivist" tendency had broken from Trotskyism and its concept of Russia as a workers' state, "though degenerate," it itself could still put forward such spurious ideas as Stalinism being part of "the collectivist epoch (sic!) of human history." (14)

(In contrast to this early statement, Max Shachtman, in his 1961 Foreword to his *Bureaucratic Revolution*, defines Stalinism as "a unique form of reactionism" as if that had always been his analysis of "bureaucratic collectivism." "The name is meant to reject the belief that Stalinist society is in any way socialist or is compatible with socialism; and to reject as well the belief that it is capitalism, or

(14) Not by accident, Max Shachtman, in reproducing a selected, a very selected, group of his articles on bureaucratic collectivism under the title of *The Bureaucratic Revolution* (The Donald Press, NY, 1962) skips the whole critical year, 1941, when those who split from Trotskyism, had to account for themselves theoretically. Here is what he did say then: "Bureaucratic collectivism is closer to capitalism so far as its social relations are concerned, than it is to a state of the socialist type. Yet, just as capitalism is part of the long historical epoch of private property, bureaucratic collectivism is part—an unforeseen, mongrelized, reactionary part, but a part nevertheless—of the collectivist epoch of human history. The social order of bureaucratic collectivism is distinguished from the social order of capitalism primarily in that the former is based upon new and more advanced form of property, namely, state property. That this new form of property—a conquest of the Bolshevik revolution—is progressive, i.e., historically superior to private property is demonstrated theoretically by Marxism and by the test of practice." (This resolution has also been printed in *The New Internationalist*, October, 1941, p. 238.)

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moving toward capitalism." (p. 1) Actually, Shachtman fought those (Joe Carter, Hal Draper et al) who did consider bureaucratic collectivism "equally reactionary with capitalism." (See 1944 Workers Party Historic Documents Bulletin #1 where all major positions are stated.) In any case none of those in the U.S. expounding the "unique" conception of bureaucratic collectivism (James Burnham and his Managerial Revolution included) originated the concept. Rather it was Bruno R. (Rizzi) who authored *La Bureaucratization du Monde* in 1939. The one thing that all these tendencies (including also the French of Pierre Chaulieu) have in common is their departure from Marxism in general and the Marxist economic categories in particular.)

The state-capitalist theoreticians put all the weight of their arguments on the exploitative relations between State Planners and workers, and, in the post-war discussions on the class nature of Stalinism, the emphasis shifted with the reality — the objective compulsion for world domination on the part of each of the only two remaining world powers — the United States and Russia.

Not only on the question of the law of value but also when the new form of world competition — nuclear holocaust — became the determinant, when the US alone had the monopoly of the A-bomb, I wrote: "Atomic energy may be the secret discovery of the United States. But Russia must follow suit or perish. And it does not intend to perish." (15) But to the extent that the workers' resistance to state-capitalism had nowhere exploded in open rebellion, the role of the workers could only be presented negatively.

(15) I happened to have been the first to have analyzed the three Five Year plans from original documentary sources, and thus analyzed the operation of the law of value in Russia. (See "An Analysis of the Russian Economy" in the New Internationalist, Dec. 1942, Jan. and Feb. 1943; and, again, in Dec. 1946 and Jan. '47). When the Russian theoreticians first openly revised the Marxist analysis of the law of value, I was the first to translate their study from *Pod Znamenem Markizma*, with a commentary of my own, both of which were published in the American Economic Review, September, 1944, and, again, September, 1945. The quotation, above, on atomic energy was from the 1947 outline of "Marxism and State Capitalism." This was the period also of the publication, in mimeographed form, of Marx's Humanist Essays in the United States. It was only during the late 1930's, however, that the academic world was finally forced to concern itself with Marx's Humanism not as a form of "utopianism" but as an urgent problem of the day. Where the academic world disregarded philosophy, the journalists paid no attention to actual revolts in the

In 1953, on the other hand, with the spontaneous proletarian outburst in East Germany, followed in a few weeks by a strike in the forced labor camps within Russia itself, the pivot of the discussion at once shifted from concentration on the "objective" capitalist development (in Russia and the United States, in Japan and the world) to the new impulses emanating from the proletariat in revolt. It was only then that one began to see that the phenomenon of Automation had also changed the axis of the controversy, from the state form, or the political plane, to the relation of men to machines at the point of production. Here, too, the preponderant issue was not the object, the machine, but the subject, the worker battling Automation.

The American workers had not only come up with a new form of struggle — the wildcat — but had raised questions of the most profound philosophic importance. In mines, in shops, at union halls and outside of them, the workers were creating a new vocabulary. Automated machines were named "man-killers." The adjective used to describe their speed was "inhuman." In the mines, the question most often asked was this: what kind of labor should men do? In the auto shops tales were told of how foremen were referring to the men as mere "fractions."

"When the foreman first told me I was so many tenths and so many thousands of a man I thought he was a nut. I argued with him. I told him a man is a whole human being. You can't split a man into fractions. But that's what they are doing to us.

"On the job, the foreman said that time study showed we had to get nine and one-tenth jobs an hour. He said it took so many man hours, and so many one-tenth man hours to get production. That's why the men had to be divided into tenths. They split us up into fractions . . ." (16)

Precisely because these questions were posed, not as "philosophical" questions, but as concrete and

forced labor camps in Russia. "When I first mentioned the words 'civil war' to these people," wrote Dr. Joseph Scholmer upon his being freed from a Vorkuta camp, "they were appalled. The possibility of a rising lay outside their realm of comprehension . . . It seemed to me that the man in the street had the best idea of what was going on. The 'experts' seemed to understand nothing." (Vorkuta, p. 301, Henry Holton & Co., NY, 1951)

(16) Workers Battle Automation, by Charles Denby, pp. 11-14. (News & Letters).

urgent matters affecting the workers' daily lives, they should have, but didn't, signify to theoreticians that philosophy, in Marx's sense of human activity, had become actual. Yet, if we are not to run a losing race with reality, all theory must begin here, just here. Because, in the mid-1940's it did not begin with the new revolutionary impulses from below, the postwar rediscovery of Marx's Humanist Essays could be confined to a discussion among intellectuals. Whether they were relegated, as with the Communists, to questions of "pre-Marxist" Marxism when Marx was still supposed to bear the birthmark of the original sin: Hegelianism, or whether alienation, as with the Existentialists, was abstracted equally from Kierkegaard and Marx, the point was the debates remained abstract, a game intellectuals played.

**B**Y THE 1950's, on the other hand, this was no longer possible. The second rediscovery of the Humanist Essays came simultaneously when the proletariat from below, the youth, the masses were all in open revolt. While the Polish anti-Stalinist intellectuals were debating questions of alienation and humanism, the Hungarian Freedom Fighters brought these questions onto the historic stage, made them matters of life and death. Once the Russian tanks began to shoot Hungarian revolutionaries, no one could any longer separate the philosophy of freedom from the struggles for freedom. At the same time, the new forms of self-liberation — Workers' Councils, Councils of Revolutionary Youth and Intellectuals, all fighting for de-centralization of state power, for freedom from Communism — could not be pressed back into old molds. Now that a river of blood separated Communism from Humanism, the Communist opposition to the young Marx's writings had in it as much an academic air as "the empiricism of a machine gun." (17)

Finally, the second rediscovery of Marx's Humanist essays took place in England and in the United

(17) Far from this brilliant phrase of Trotsky's becoming the basis of the Trotskyists defending the wholeness of Marxist theory, they attacked the Stalinists also on this question. They opened their attack on Marx's early philosophical writings with a pretentious set of articles entitled "Socialism and Humanism" by Wm. F. Ward in the International Socialist Review (Winter and Spring, 1939) and have kept it up ever since. (See Marxism vs. Existentialism, 1965.)

States, where neither the Communist Party nor Existentialism were the powerful forces they had been in France and Italy in the mid-1940's. Humanism could no longer become an adjunct either to "science" or to the "opaqueness" of the human condition. The clear and loud voices on conditions of labor at point of production could not be silenced.

Nor was this any longer a European problem and an American side issue. A new, third world of technologically underdeveloped, but politically mature, countries, in the throes of birth, was unfurling the banner of the new Humanism. This stretched from West Africa where Leopold Sedar Senghor singled out the Humanism of Marxism as the most contemporary and profound aspect of Marxism, (18) to Latin America where Fidel Castro also at first called his revolution "humanist." (19) Even in the most pragmatic, most undialectical and unMarxist land—the United States—(and not among Marxists at that) the Negro Revolution began to speak in the terms of humanist philosophy. It is true that it was not yet in the sense of Marxist Humanism, that its frame of reference was the humanism of the Existentialist Jewish philosopher, Martin Euber, but this could as little hide the deep Marxist roots as could the choice of Gandhi "non-violence" hide the roots of Abolitionism. (20)

Nor was this due to any forgetfulness of the "real" material foundations of the world. The

(18) Leopold Sedar Senghor, *African Socialism* (American Society of African Culture, NY, 1959); and also L. Senghor's "Socialism is a Humanism" in *Socialist Humanism* edited by Erich Fromm, Doubleday, NY, 1965, pp. 53-67). (19) Fidel Castro, *History Will Absolve Me* (1954), Lyle Stuart, NY, 1961; also his Summer, 1959 speech published in *New Left Review*, London, Jan.-Feb. 1961: "We have named it (our policy) humanism . . . The tremendous problem faced by the world is that it has been placed in a position where it must choose between capitalism, which starves people, and communism, which resolves economic problems, but suppresses the liberties so greatly cherished by man. . . . That is why we have said that we are one step ahead of the right and of the left and that this is a humanistic revolution, because it does not deprive men of this essence . . . Capitalism sacrifices man; the Communist state, by its totalitarian concept sacrifices the rights of man. That is why do I do not agree with any of them . . . ours is an autonomous Cuban revolution."

(20) See Preface to 2nd edition, *American Civilization on Trial* (News & Letters, Detroit, Mich., 1963). See also Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," published by New Leader, N.Y., 1963).

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third world of technologically underdeveloped countries was all too conscious both of its physical hunger and its "industrial backwardness." The Negro Revolution in affluent United States could not possibly separate the fight for political equality from that for jobs. And the college youth the world over that wasn't working but was feeling its alienation was determined to let the world know that there were other, deeper crises, than the economic ones, nor were they going to be terrorized by the threat of nuclear war to de-humanized actions.

#### ***I. Economic Crises and Wars***

I'm not saying that this means that all economic problems have thereby been "dissolved" into philosophic ones. That would be ludicrous. What I am saying is this: how, in the face of the actual objective and subjective conditions—the new forms of economic crises and wars, on the one hand, and the new forms of revolt and underlying philosophies, on the other hand—can the disputants on the state-capitalist theory keep themselves shut away from the existential reality of which philosophy is an integral part?

In the 1930's those who sensed the emergent state-capitalist form of production felt hamstrung by the giant revolutionary figure of Leon Trotsky who opposed the state-capitalist theory and lent all his weight to the characterization that nationalized property characterized Russia as a workers' state, "despite all crimes of Stalin" which contributed to the "degenerate form" of this workers' state's existence. The Hitler-Stalin Pact, followed by the outbreak of World War II, did undermine Trotskyism, splitting it, first, and, following the war, showing the Trotskyist Fourth International to have been a stillbirth, a mere footnote to history.

What excuse can there be now for any independent Marxist theoretician to persist in keeping economics, politics and philosophy in three separate compartments just when the 1950's disclosed a movement from practice itself toward theory?

Presently, if even we limit ourselves to normal and "purely" economic issues, we cannot escape seeing the new form of appearance of economic crises tied tightly to the new forms of revolt, be that of the Negro Revolution in affluent USA, or the Afro-Asian revolutions that brought into existence a new, a third world. Let us first look at the

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relationship of the technologically advanced countries to the underdeveloped economies, made urgent for our day by the ever-widening gap between these newly independent countries and the technologies which suck the former back into the vortex of the world market and world production. Over half of the world's population live in countries with per capita income of less than \$100 a year. Despite all the "foreign aid" there has been no improvement. In Indonesia, for example, the per capita product actually declined from pre-war levels; in all countries, even those experiencing a comparatively fairly high rate of economic growth, the gap between advanced and backward countries actually widened. Under world capitalism, it is true that the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer is a familiar enough sight. The new form of appearance of economic crisis, however, is not, and it is for this reason that we must turn to the most extreme assumptions of Marx in purest theory.

It was Marx's contention that if capitalism continued in its perverse course of development—increasing constant capital, or machines, at the expense of variable capital, or labor—there would come a day when "if even" capitalists could appropriate "the full 24 hours of the laborer", (21) they would head toward collapse. The irreconcilable contradiction between the method of production—using ever more machines—and the motive force of production—extraction of surplus value or unpaid hours of labor from living labor—leads to crises, to curtailment of production, to big capital eating up little capital and greater production and still greater markets, only once more to end up in crises, and more technological revolutions that continue on their merry way, that is to say, in disregard of the motive force of capitalist production.

Yet, no matter how fabulous the mass of profits, once the capitalists experience a decline in the rate of profit, they lack the passion for the accumulation of capital needed to keep expanding production on the ever greater scale demanded by technological revolutions.

(21) Capital, Vol III, p. 458: "In order to produce the same rate of profit, when the constant capital set in motion by one laborer increases ten-fold, the surplus labor time would have to increase ten-fold, and soon the total labor time, and finally the full twenty-four hours a day would not suffice, even if wholly appropriated by capital."



So extreme was this assumption, in Volume III of Capital, that no one, at first, paid any attention to it when it was first published in 1895—ten years after Marx's death and some 30 years after he had written it. With the rise of imperialism and the super-profits of capitalism, one revolutionary Marxist—Rosa Luxemburg—thought, in fact, that she could disprove it by contrasting theory to reality. For Marx's abstract assumptions did indeed appear even more fantastic than the one that underlined Volume II of Capital where he presented a capitalism that had no worries over markets; everything the capitalists produced that was not consumed by itself and the laborers went into further production. Luxemburg now proclaimed that, if we are to wait for capitalism to collapse because of a decline in the rate of profit and lack of capital, we might as well wait for "the extinction of the moon." (22)

WHAT HAD seemed stratospheric to a great revolutionary at the turn of the century had, by the 1960's, so closely approached factual development that even a bourgeois economist could recognize this visceral characteristic of advanced capitalism which kept it from doing anything substantial to industrialize the underdeveloped countries, despite the fact that they feared that otherwise the "Third World" would be won over and absorbed in the Communist world. Thus Barbara Ward wrote: "American foreign ventures are barely one-fifth of Great Britain in its heyday . . . Shortage of capital is the world's trouble today, not the struggle of rival capitalists to go out and invest." (23) Miss Ward notwithstanding, imperialist rivalry, of course, also continues, as the attempts to dismember the Congo, on the one hand, and the all-sided investments in South Africa, on the other hand, testify.

At the same time, even in the most affluent of the developed countries—USA—and despite the

(22) Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*. (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1951) translated into English as part of "Rare Masterpieces of Philosophy and Science," edited by Dr. W. Stark, introduced by Joan Robinson, and translated by Agnes Schwartzchild. . . some vulgar errors appear, beginning with the elimination of the dashes in "Nikolai-on," thus "eliminating" the Tsarist censorship which compelled Danielson not to sign his name. Thereupon "Nikolayon" appears as if it were a name by itself. Nevertheless, the English reader is finally enabled to read Luxemburg's greatest theoretical work.

(23) Barbara Ward, *Five Ideas that Changed the World*, p. 150.

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fact that we have, in the postwar world, confronted "only" recessions, not depressions, the crises had become chronic not alone in relation to the underdeveloped world, but right within it. Again, even bourgeois economists recognize the chronic nature both of the underdeveloped regions like Appalachia and persistent unemployment. (24)

One co-thinker has raised the question of the qualitative change in economic crises since the period of the Depression. He recognizes, of course, that our affluent society where depressions have become "mere" recessions is not free of crises, wars, political upheavals. He stresses, further, that the fictitious prosperity should not make us forget the new, third world, and calls for a theory of social revolution to be built on the theory of state capitalism. But this is still a long way from a concrete discussion of Marx's Humanism and the point is that the theory of state-capitalism must test itself against the philosophic developments as well as the economic, old and new. If we take a second look at the new forms of revolt—say, the Negro Revolution and the youth rebellion both against academia and the draft (25)—we can see how inter-related are the new forms of crises and new forms of revolt, and yet how "only human." The Negro Revolution began as a fight against segregation, but the greatest outbursts North have been among the urban, ghettoized Negro where unemployment is not a "mere 4-5 per cent", but 25 per cent and higher. The Vietnam war, being a "poor man's war" (that is to say, the rich college youth can escape the draft), we again confront the economic problem, but again, it isn't only "economics".

The same is true of the slogan, "turn the imperialist war into a civil war." Of course, the problems of a nuclear age are different than when wars were fought with other arms. Of course, this makes more

(24) See Simon Kuznets, *Postwar Economic Growth*, which gives the reader not only an economic analysis of the postwar world but raises other than economic questions. "If modern economic growth is, in essence, a controlled revolution in economy and society, and the revolution in society, with its internal and external ramifications, is an indispensable part of the total process, economic growth is neither fully understood nor properly measurable and analysable, in a study limited to traditionally defined economic variables." (p. 128).

(25) See *The Free Speech Movement and Negro Revolution* by Mario Savio, Eugene Walker and Raya Dunayevskaya (News & Letters, Detroit, 1967).

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urgent the anti-war struggles. Of course, it will be altogether too late to raise the slogan when the H-bombs start falling and put an end to civilization as we have known it. But it is precisely because the H-bomb cannot be used within a country without destroying the perpetrator of the crime that the slogan may, under many circumstances, be the only correct one. Surely, what we are witnessing in Vietnam is, precisely, the revolutionary act of the South Vietnamese trying to transform the imperialist war into a civil war. And because it is indigenous, they have not lost yet, despite the astounding, the overwhelming might of United States imperialism.

## 2. *Mao's China: A New State-Capitalism*

Our age is the age of state-capitalism, national revolutions, and workers' revolts. Unless one is ready to base himself on the masses who alone can initiate a truly new social order, one has no place to go but to state-capitalism; the vortex of world industrial production sees to that. This is so irrespective of the fact that the economic foundation, as in China, remains overwhelmingly agricultural. As we saw earlier, China at first admitted as much, but maintained that it nevertheless was "different in nature" from capitalism. China's claim to being "different" notwithstanding, the non-viability of state-capitalism as a "new" social order is proven by the fact that it is subject to the same economic laws of development—that is to say, the compulsion to exploit the masses at home and to carry on wars abroad—as is that of private capitalism. (26) I summed this up in *Marxism and Freedom* by stating: "A shocking fact faces us now: Can there be war between two regimes calling themselves Communist?" When I posed this question in 1963, it sounded a bit on the wild side, and certainly more abstract than it does now that China not only has missiles and "Red Guards," but is also bound by its

(26) Chapter 17, "The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung" in the 1964 edition of *MARXISM AND FREEDOM* (Twayne, NY) traces "Mao's Thought" from the defeat of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution through the conquest of power in 1949 to the 1963 challenge to Russian Communism for leadership of the Communist orbit. This is done against the background of the economic development of Communist China.

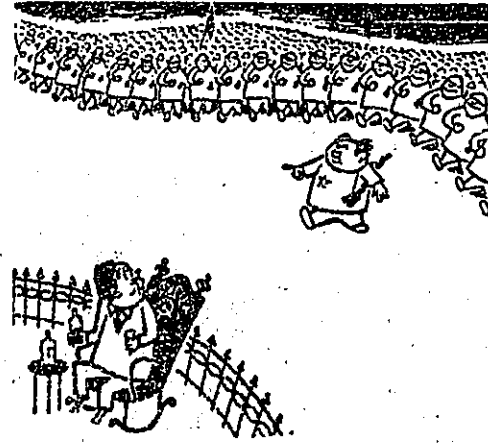
August, 1966 plenum (27) which declared the destruction of "revisionism" to be a prerequisite of fighting United States imperialism.

Of the two features that set the current plenary statement off from both the 1962 statement and the 1963 challenge to Russia for leadership of the Communist world, one—the entry into the ominous, exclusive, world "nuclear club"—is a self-evident great achievement. Therefore there is nothing unusual in the Chinese Communist statement that this "scientific experimentation," is nothing short of one of "three great revolutionary movements" (sic). (The others are "the class struggle" and "the struggle for production.")

**T**HE OTHER distinguishing feature of the Statement is something else again. Though it is totally new, it isn't made self-evident. On the contrary, it is so stated as to be deliberately confusing. We're referring to the expression, "breaking down foreign conventions . . .". First thing to be noted is the use of the word, foreign. It does not refer to the West, or to imperialism, or to "revisionism." What is implied in the rest of that sentence—"and following our own road of industrial development"—would appear to refer to the "Great Leap Forward." This is certainly one time that they did follow their "own road of industrial development." The truth, however, is that it is the one thing they are not following this year, but, instead, are reverting, in the initiation of their Third Five Year Plan, to a Russian-style planning.

No, the truth is, that the rejection of "foreign conventions" can, and does have, one meaning, and only one meaning. It is the rejection of the "other" world communist movement, specifically the 1960 Statement of the 81 Communist Parties which Mao had signed, as he had the previous (1957) "Declaration and Peace Manifesto." Heretofore China and Russia vied with each other in claiming that each, and each alone, had remained faithful to those world declarations, while the other "betrayed." Now, on the other hand, what is singled out, as proof of

(27) Excerpted from The New York Times, Aug. 14, 1966. For Russia's latest editorial on Mao Tse-tung see excerpts in NY Times, 11-28-66.



"This is the way to the West, isn't it?"

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"Mao's brilliant policies," is "the breaking down of foreign conventions."

No doubt, the deliberate obscurity which shrouds this new, this "brilliant policy," is there to give China room for maneuverability, should it become, tactically, necessary to engage in any such united front with the other CPs.

But the strategic line is set, and is immovable. Just as in 1957, when confronted with loud voices of revolt against his rule, Mao moved, not to compromise with them, much less to let the "100 schools of thought" keep contending, but rather to tighten his grip and order the disastrous "Great Leap Forward," so in 1968, when confronted with silent voices of protest internationally, he is moving, not toward compromise, but to "going it alone" not only in respect to the "West" and Russia, but to the rest of the Communist world.

Thus, when Cuba balked at accepting China as the sole leader of the Communist world, Chinese Communism went directly to the Cuban Army and bombarded it with propaganda. Whereupon Castro accused China of violating its sovereignty, adding: ". . . those methods and procedures were exactly the same as the ones used by the United States Embassy in our country . . . our country had liberated itself from the imperialism 90 miles from our shores and it was not willing to permit another powerful state to come 20,000 kilometers to impose similar practices on us . . ." The rupture with Cuba came on the very eve of the convening of the Tri-Continental Conference in January, 1966, the last "foreign convention" China attended.

What now, now that anti-Americanism is no longer the unifying cement holding together the Communist world?

"Why," asked Pravda in an editorial (September 16, 1966) regarding the so-called proletarian cultural revolution in China, "is the 'proletarian' movement . . . going on without any participation by the working class?"

For Russian Communism to be able to answer that question, it would have had to admit that its own society, even as the Chinese, is an exploitative one, so that the destiny of the proletariat is not, and cannot be, in its own hands. Indeed, the nearest parallel to the 1966 "proletarian cultural revolution"

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in China is Stalin's 1943 revisions in the Marxian theory of value, which still dominate both Russia and China.

Then, as now, the students rebelled against the hypocrisy of teaching the Marxian theory of freedom, but practicing state-capitalist tyranny. Then, as now, the answer of the ruling powers was, first, to stop teaching Marxian economics, and then to revise Marxism itself. Where the Russian Communists revised Marxian economics, the Chinese revise Marxian philosophy, rejecting in toto the Humanism of Marxism.

The distinguishing feature of the wholesale revision of Marxism in the two countries does not, however, reside in whether one country centered its perversion of Marxism in the economic or in the philosophic field, for in the Marxian theory of liberation the two are inseparable, but in the fact that, in 1943, Stalin could rely on the Party intelligentsia to do the job, whereas Mao, in addition to preferring the Army as the perpetuating organ of Communist rule, must create an extra-legal instrument to enforce intellectual conformity.

**A** VERITABLE deification of Mao seemed to be the principal attribute of the CCP plenary statement. The claim is made that "Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era . . . Mao Tse-tung's thought is the Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to world-wide victory." Mao's "brilliant policies" during the four year period between this, the 11th, and the previous, the 10th, plenum are attested to, stress being put on his (a) "call for the whole party to grasp military affairs and for everybody to be a soldier," and (b) "call for the People's Liberation Army and all factories and villages, schools, commercial departments, service trades and party and Government organizations to become great schools of revolution."

Yet a careful reading cannot help but note that, simultaneously with this adulation, what is singled out for emulation is this: "Comrade Lin Piao's call on the People's Liberation Army to launch a mass movement in the army to study Comrade Mao Tse-tung's Thought has set a brilliant example for the



whole party and the whole nation."

Prior to this statement the communique had stressed that, in conjunction with the 1963 "programmatic document" (which had challenged Russia's leadership) and which had been "drawn up under the personal leadership of Comrade Mao Tse-tung," Lin Piao's "Long Live the Victory of People's War" must be studied, for, together, the two documents "give scientific Marxist-Leninist analyses of a series of important questions concerning the world revolution of our time . . ."

The discerning reader cannot help but wonder whether Mao is being deified—or mummified. Is Lin living in the reflected glory of Mao, as the press holds, or is Mao being allowed to live out his remaining years as a deity only because he transferred total authority to Lin, head of the Army?

Whether, in the turmoil in China, we are witness to a new form of Bonapartism, or allegedly participating in a "school of revolution," the point is that what is immediately involved is the life of the Vietnamese people.

The CCP Statement reads: "The Plenary session maintains that to oppose imperialism, it is imperative to oppose modern revisionism. There is no middle road whatsoever . . . It is imperative resolutely to expose their (Russian Communists) true features as scabs. It is impossible to have 'united action' with them."

For the first time since the fall of Khrushchev, the Russian Communist Party, on August 31, answered back in kind. "In conditions when imperialism is stepping up its efforts in the struggle against the revolutionary movement, its expanding the dirty war in Vietnam, such a step ("mass outrage in front of Russian Embassy") renders a particularly big service to imperialism and reaction."

This in-fighting in the so-called Communist world cannot but hearten U.S. imperialism which feels free to go on with its wanton bombing of North Vietnam as well as its scorched earth policy of South Vietnam whom it is supposed to be "defending."

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China is the only one in the Communist world that lists the Army along with the Party as the two instruments of power. Naturally this is no accident. Long before Mao won state power, as he was escaping Chiang



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Kai-shek's murderous counter-revolution, Mao developed an original, far Marxist, view of the Army—first of a guerrilla army, and then just of the Army. This is Mao's one original contribution to "Marxism-Leninism," or more precisely put, to the perversion of Marxism. His concept was for continuous guerrilla warfare to develop irrespective of any relationship to a mass movement which, to genuine Marxism, would be its only reason for being. If now the Army should have slipped away also from Mao's control, it would only show that theory has a logic of its own, irrespective of a relationship to the theoretician.

Once this army has an objective basis for being—state power — nothing can keep it from being the expression of the exploitative ruling class and its global ambitions. It is not that Mao disagrees with these: he is anxious to contend with other great powers for world domination. It is, rather, that he does also have a concept of "the vanguard role of the Party to lead" which now, however, has been absorbed in the stress on "politics must take command," with the Red Guards pointing the way.

**F**AR FROM the activities of the "Red Guards" initiating "a second revolution," China's "proletarian cultural revolution" is so devoid of any proletarian participation, or peasant or student youth for that matter, that (1) all universities were ordered closed for six months, and (2) the Red Guards were ordered "not to go to factories, enterprises and Government organization below the country level, not to rural people's communes . . ." In a word, they must not interfere with production, neither in the factories, nor on the farms.

No doubt, Mao is hoping to use them against the rebellious students in the cities, but success is by no means assured. Quite the contrary. For the truth is that the foremost voices of revolt against Mao's rule during the 100 Flowers campaign were those of the youth (28). And it is they, again, who had brought about a very modified version of it in 1961. The fact that Mao felt compelled to order the closing of the

(28) See *The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals* by Roderick MacFarquhar (Prager, NY, 1960). Also cf. *Communist China: the Politics of Student Opposition* by Dennis J. Doolin (Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., 1964).

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schools bespeaks the restlessness of the Chinese youth. Those confident of the rule of their thinking do not go about shutting down schools of higher learning.

State-capitalism calling itself Communism is as anxious to dull the sense of youth as any ruling class fearing the daring of youth compelled to live in a world they did not make. The Chinese youth will yet teach Mao the lesson begun by the Hungarian Freedom Fighters: that even totalitarian rule cannot brainwash a people.

Even a cursory look at the actual, instead of the imagined, developments in Mao's China will show that power in the People's Republic does not lie in the hands of the people; it isn't even in the hands of the "vanguard," the Communist Party. It took Mao over a decade after the conquest of power before he bothered to convene a Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Furthermore, all apologists for China as a "land of socialism" notwithstanding, that Congress designated China as state-capitalist.

Naturally, Communism held that "State-capitalism under control of a state led by the working class is different in nature from state-capitalism under bourgeois rule." But this does not change the fact that even the Chinese Communists, as late as September, 1956, called the country by its right name, state-capitalism.

What happened then to change everything very nearly overnight? Where it took 11 years to convene a Congress, why did it take less than a year for the Politburo to proclaim that not only could China industrialize faster than "the West," but that it was outdistancing "socialist" Russia by going directly (sic!) to "communism"?

This was no "second revolution." (29) It was an outright counter-revolution. Unlike the elemental outpouring of the masses against the corrupt Chiang Kai-shek regime, this time "the mass line" meant the mass sweat and blood that would be needed to take the fantastic "Great Leap Forward"—into what they knew not. What shocked Mao's China beyond any rational reaction, one short month after the Communist Congress, was the first great proletarian revolution for freedom from Communism. It happened in

(29) See "Mao's Second Revolution" by K. S. Karol, *New Statesman* (London), Sept. 9, 1964.

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Hungary, and it shook the whole Communist world to its foundations.

Mao's counter-revolutionary role was not exhausted in his urging Khrushchev to rush Russian tanks to put down the revolution. No, so afraid was Mao that a genuine proletarian revolution might also occur in China, that, first, he tried winning over the Chinese intellectuals through a "thaw" called "let 100 flowers bloom" campaign. Then, when the voices of protest to his rule could be heard from all layers of the population, the youth in particular, he clamped down their protest, and ordered, instead, the so-called Great Leap Forward, which brought the country to near-famine conditions.

**O**UTSIDE of guerrilla warfare and "organization, organization, organization," Mao has a sheer genius for miscalculation. The 1956 Congress on state-capitalism and the 1958 Great Leap Forward disaster are not the only ones. Greater still in its world impact was the tragedy of cosmic proportion which resulted from his adventurism for a new axis of world power, as against the West, and Russia—the planned Peking-Djakarta axis. (30)

It is true that Chinese Communism's concept of itself as the center of the universe is not that of the old Empire, but of new "Communism." But the fact remains that China's present concept of "a new era of world revolution" rests wholly on this being led solely and exclusively by Chinese Communism. It is no accident that Mao's maps of China, just as Chiang Kai-shek's, show China not as it is, but as it was in the days of great empire when China was the center of the universe.

The trouble with Mao's apologists is that they share his concept of the "backwardness" of the masses, hence the need for extra-legal organs to assure allegedly revolutionary succession. Having no confidence that the proletarians could gain freedom by their own mass strength, and holding U.S. imperialism to be very nearly invincible, they prefer to lean on some state power.

It is this which has made them subject to the alchemy with which Mao transforms China as a nation into a proletarian class.

(30) See "Indonesian Communism: A Case of World Communism's Decomposition" in *News & Letters*, October and November, 1963.

Of course, United States imperialism is the main escalator of the Vietnam war. Of course, this is part of its strategy against China itself. Of course the U.S. is out for world domination. But the way to undermine this barbarism is not by siding with China (or Russia) who have their own global aims.

The Negro Revolution has done more to shake up American capitalism than all the thunderous statements of China and its all-too cautious actions. To think otherwise is to play power politics and to block the road to freedom. The only way to achieve freedom is through the release of the elemental creativity of the oppressed masses, Chinese included.

All other problems fade into insignificance before this monumental task because without it—as the souring of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions have proven — no society on humanist foundations can be created. Without it, nuclear-powered politics —whether or not also “armed with Mao’s Thought” —can wreak total destruction, and nothing else. It cannot build anew. Therein lies the ominous significance of the self-created and self-perpetuating disorder in Communist China on the 17th anniversary of its conquest of power.

The current revolutionary-sounding statements that thunder out from Communist China notwithstanding, the whole history of Mao proves him to have been a fighter, not against “revisionism,” but against “dogmatism.” As he himself put it: “There are people who think Marxism can cure any disease. We should tell them that dogmas are more useless than cow dung. Dung can be used as fertilizer.” (31) And now that the whole of “Marxism-Leninism” has been degraded to a struggle against Marxism as humanism, and “the mastering of theory” has been reduced to studying “Mao’s Thought,” excerpted properly by Lin Biao, it is high time for genuine Marxists to return to the Humanism of Marx himself, to his greatest economic work, *Capital*.

(31) For a more colorful translation of this passage, see *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* by Stuart R. Schram, p. 120. (Praeger, NY, 1963.)

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### 3. Philosophy and Revolution

Marx stated it succinctly enough when he said that his original discovery, "the pivot on which political economy turns", is the distinction he drew between concrete and abstract labor. One of these economic categories, concrete labor, was easy enough for any one to see whether they looked at a tailor or factory worker, at a carpenter or a miner. But, what is "abstract labor"? No one has ever seen an "abstract" laborer so why create such a fantastic category? That this is precisely the question Marx wanted to be asked can be seen not only from the fact that he states his original contribution in the very first chapter of *Capital*, but that he never lets go of it either throughout the whole volume, or volumes II and III, all of which disclose how capitalist production (1) reduces the concrete labor of the whole working class to one abstract mass of undifferentiated, socially-necessary labor time by following the movements and speed of the machine, thereby not only (2) alienating the workers' very activity as well as his products, but also (3) perverting the relationship of man to things, making the machine master of man, not man of machine. Because (4) there has been this reification of man himself, transforming him into a thing (5) the fetishism which clings to commodities in their exchange makes social relations assume the form of relations between things as if real. Marx insists that relations between men must assume "the fantastic form of a relation between things" because that is what they "really are," at the point of production or, as he put it elsewhere, "The mastery of the capitalist over the worker is in reality the mastery of dead over living labor."

It is this concept of the dominance of dead labor which was the determinant feature in the whole of capitalist society. This, just this, is the reason why Marx attributed the degradation of bourgeois thought to an ideology, i.e., a false consciousness. The fetishism of state property had even a more deadening effect on Marxists than the fetishism of commodities had on classical political economy. The death of Stalin, however, did produce a liberating effect both in a movement from below to put an end to that epoch of enslavement of workers in production, as well as to the administrative mentality in the realm of thought, and in the beginnings

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of a theoretical return to Marx's Humanist Essays, as well as to Hegel's Absolute Idea.

I would like to reiterate that it is not for any abstract reason that Bukharin's logic is non-dialectical; rather it is because he saw no new subject that will itself determine the end. Instead, the state will do it "for" the proletariat. Of course, he didn't mean the bourgeois state. Of course, he had in mind the workers' state. Of course, as a revolutionary, he couldn't have had any other "end" in mind than that of socialism, a classless society.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that he opposed the concrete, living Russian workers in their attempts to have their own organizations, that is to say, themselves determine that end. So that, despite his unfulfilled record as a revolutionary, he saw the workers, not as subject, but as object. The inescapable result was that his concept of revolution was thoroughly abstract, which is why he opposed self-determination of nations both before and after the conquest of power.

**O**UR THEORY of state-capitalism differs from Bukharin's not only because the concrete problems differ in each epoch, but because the vision, if you will, must differ from Bukharin's abstract revolutionism and, instead, be rooted in the actions and thoughts of working people who would themselves decide their own destiny before, in, and after the revolution.

This is why, from the start of the state-capitalist debate in 1941, my immediate point of departure was not the crimes of Stalin, but the role of labor in a workers' state. That role was of the essence, irrespective not only of the role of "the rude and disloyal" Stalin, but also of the "administrative" attitude of the revolutionary planner, Trotsky, as well as of the non-dialectical but revolutionary Bukharin. Dialectic is, after all, just shorthand for development, self-development, development through contradiction, development through transformation into opposite, development not only through negation (abolition) of what is, but also, and above all, through negation of the negation, that is to say, reconstruction of society on new beginnings. It is this which we have to concretize today.

In a word, what needs to be investigated, I

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should think, is not so much the probability that capitalism is not about to repeat its near-fatal experience of the Depression. What needs to be investigated are the new revolts, how it is that a new, third world won its freedom, despite the fact that it was technologically backward, despite its lack of arms, despite the largeness of its poverty and smallness of the nation; how a little Guinea of less than three million could say, No, to mighty (but not almighty) DeGaulle France — and win.

The recent retrogressive moves in some of the newly-independent countries — military take-overs — are not the result only of the pull of the vortex of the world economy — neo-colonialism, although that, of course, played not an unimportant part. Rather, they are closely related to the fact that the new leaders moved away from the spontaneity and revolutionary zeal of the very people that made possible the revolutionary victory.

It is the human problem that is the problem of our age. Without the Humanism of Marxism, the theory of state-capitalism could degenerate into one more variety of economism. Without the dialectic of objective contradiction, materialism is nothing but bourgeois idealism in the sense of all men of good will (changed to all good Party men) will "fix everything up." The strangest combination of vulgar economism and sheerest voluntarism ("Mao's Thought") that characterizes Mao's China at this very moment, has a great deal of relevance to our discussion. It is surely no accident that the most rabid attack on Marx's Humanism comes from Mao's China. (32)

Lenin couldn't have foreseen any such willful "transformation into opposite." And yet some such conception of the workings of the dialectic must

(32) See Chou Yang's Speech at the Fourth Enlarged Session of the Committee of the Department of Philosophy and Social Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1963): "Completely discarding historical materialism, the modern revisionists substitute the bourgeois theory of human nature for the Marxist-Leninist teaching of class on class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, for scientific communism. . . . The modern revisionists and some bourgeois scholars try to describe Marxism as humanism and call Marx a humanist. . . . This, of course, is futile. In the early stages of development of their thought, Marx and Engels were indeed somewhat influenced by humanist ideas. . . . But when they formulated the materialist conception of history and discovered the class struggle as the motive force of social development, they immediately got rid of this influence."



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have been at the back of his mind when he insisted that even the destruction of the bourgeois state is insufficient to constitute the makeup of a true Marxist: "The petty bourgeois in a frenzy may also want as much." (32) One thing, and one thing only, distinguishes a socialist revolution from all others. It is that there is "only one road, changes from below; we wanted the workers themselves to draw up, from below, the new principles of economic conditions." (34)

In our age, the new principles of economic conditions are inseparable from the mass search for a total philosophy, or, to use Marx's phrase, "a quest for universality." (35) "To discern this mass search for a total philosophy," I wrote elsewhere (36), "it is necessary only to shed the stubbornest of all philosophies — the concept of 'the backwardness of the masses' and listen to their thoughts . . . The espousal of partynost (party principle) as a philosophic principle is another manifestation of the dogma of 'the backwardness of the masses' by which intellectuals in state-capitalist societies rationalize their contention that the masses must be ordered about, managed, 'led'. Like the ideologists of the West, they forget all too easily that revolutions do not arise in the fullness of time to establish a party machine, but to reconstruct society on a human foundation."

Instead of fearing Humanism as if it meant a return to the young, "Hegelian-tainted" Marx, if not back to outright bourgeois humanism of the Renaissance, we have much to learn from the way the new revolutionaries in the underdeveloped countries and the youth everywhere embraced it. Leopold Sedar Senghor profoundly and poetically defined Marx's humanism as "a new humanism, new because it is incarnate." (37)

Future generations will stand in amazement at the equivocal but relentless resistance that those who consider themselves Marxists in our age carry on against Marx's Humanism. Once, however, this becomes the underlying philosophy of revolution, the idea of freedom will no longer be "philosophy"; it will be reality. —November, 1966

(32) Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 337.  
(33) *Ibid.*, p. 377.  
(34) K. Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy*.  
See also *An Exchange of Letters on Hegel's Absolute Idea*, appendix to mimeographed *Extracts from Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks (News & Letters, Detroit, 1955)*.  
(35) *Socialist Humanism*, pp. 76-80 (edited by Erich Fromm, Doubleday, NY, 1948).  
(36) *Ibid.*, p. 81.