

BUREAUCRACY

State Capitalism and the Bureaucrats

By Raya Dunayevskaya

Raya Dunayevskaya, an American, is the author of *Marxism and Freedom*, and has recently visited Britain on a lecture tour

THE two decisive criteria in regard to the bureaucracy, which stamp it 'contemporary', and distinguish it from bureaucracies of all other ages, from the Byzantine Empire to the world depression, are: (1) State Capitalism, as the new stage of world economic and political development, and (2) Automation, as the new stage of world scientific and technological development.

Automation has cut across the thinking of all people, but the Great Divide arose with the Depression.

It is the 1929 crash that first split the world mind into two: on the one side stood the State Planners, which now included not only the owners and/or managers of production, but also the intellectual who had been sucked into the machinery of the State Plan.

For the objective pull of that new stage of world capitalistic development had changed the role of the intellectual from the spheres of culture and consumption to that of plan and production.

A plethora of plans, from Stalin's Russia to Roosevelt's 'New Deal' America, as well as from Hitler's Germany to Japan's Co-Prosperity Sphere, disclosed the fact that the new 'Brain Trust' took time out to debate total versus partial planning, but never for a moment stopped to look at the throes of rationalised production.

At the same time millions upon millions of unemployed walking the streets while other millions of unskilled in factories questioned the conditions of labour compelled private capitalists as well as state rulers to attempt to escape from the deepening crisis by the further bureaucratisation of life, beginning at the point of production, and ending in the state offices in Moscow, Washington, Berlin, and Tokyo.

Neither World War II, nor the post-war world, changed anything in that bureaucratic pattern except put an end once and for all to any illusion that the interference of the State into the economy was only a war measure.

NO BASIS

Within this new bureaucratic development, sociologists like C. Wright Mills can indict various schools of social science for developing a "bureaucratic ethos" and serving the military, governmental and business bureaucracies, but offer no basis whatever for overcoming these bureaucracies.

His indictment of "the human relations in industry school", for example, is inclusive enough: "Much of the advice of these scholars—explicit and tacit—can be neatly summarised in this simple formula: To make the worker happy, efficient, and co-operative we need only make the managers intelligent, rational, knowledgeable."

But, by specifically denying to "ordinary men" the capacity either to understand or to transform what is happening in the world, he can only appeal to the self-same "social scientists" to shed their "bureaucratic ethos" by acquiring a "sociological imagination". There is thus no basic distinction between himself and those he criticises.

On the other side of the intellectual bureaucrat, however, stands the worker with thoughts of his own to resolve the totality of the modern crisis through workers' control of production.

Throughout the 1930s this took various organisational forms, ranging from the C.I.O. in the United States, to the proletarian revolution in Spain.

These spontaneous actions centred at the point of production, and on the matter of the new phenomenon of SIT-DOWNS, the labour leadership, whether young ones like Reuther, or old ones like John L. Lewis, saw no way out for themselves either except to align with this new force.

The outbreak of World War II, however, put an end to this development of the labour leader under pressure of the rank and file. Here too the world witnessed the hothouse transformation of labour leadership into labour bureaucracy.

Differing from the intellectual bureaucrat who elaborated his plans from a governmental centre, the labour bureaucrat exercised his power directly at the point of production.

The new labour bureaucrat, who began to compete with big industry, in elaborating plans for conversion of peace-time industry to war-time purposes, took over also the question of disciplining the worker, chaining him with no-strike pledges, extension of the working day, and bowing before the 'progress' of ever greater and greater machines, till we reached the monster machine of Automation.

AUTOMATION AND THE SCIENTIST-PHILOSOPHER

While each country was thus divided into two worlds, the maturity of our age revealed itself in the one-worldliness of the state of technology.

This was true not because the two groups of 'Allies' kept no secrets from each other. Quite the contrary. Never had cloak-and-dagger techniques been carried into the field of science quite so overwhelmingly, and again without regard to the

camp of Hitler and his 'secret weapon' of the V-2 rocket, or the camp of Roosevelt and his secret of the atom bomb.

The one-worldliness of the state of technology came about through the compulsion of the world crisis which had now taken the shape of total destruction. Thus, it was no longer merely a question of losing one's place in the world market. The present penalty of not keeping up with the world technological development was death.

It is this that made me write in 1945¹ when America exploded the A-bomb and thought its secret fool-proof, that "at this stage of world competition, which is world war, Russia must find the secret of the A-bomb; or perish, and Russia doesn't intend to perish".

Everything in our age is invested with its opposite. Thus, out of the splitting of the atom, came not the greatest creative force on earth, but the most destructive weapon.

And the post-war time marriage of science and industry resulted in Automation which, far from lessening the burden of toil, both throws the labourers out of work and overworks those at the monster machine.

No other epoch ever imparted greater reality to Marx's analysis that "All our progress seems to result in endowing a material force with intellectual life, and stultifying human life into a material force."

One contemporary intellectual did, at first, accurately appraise the disastrous impact of automation. "Let us remember," wrote Norbert Wiener, "that the automatic machine is the precise economic equivalent of slave labour. Any labour which competes with slave labour must accept the economic conditions of slave labour. If we follow our traditional worship of progress and the 6th freedom—the freedom to exploit—it is practically certain that we shall have to face a decade or more of ruin and despair."

But, since Mr. Wiener looked to "pure science" as the motive force of history, how could his "human use of human beings" possibly differ from the scientist who could, with impunity, write

(Continued on page eight)

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¹ Mills, C. Wright, 'The Sociological Imagination', page 92 (1959).

² My draft of *Marxism and State Capitalism* handed into the Oxford University Press.

³ Marx, K.: *Speech at the Anniversary of the People's Paper*, April 1856.

⁴ Wiener, Norbert: *The Use of Human Beings*, page 189 (1959).

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● FROM PAGE FIVE

of 'Man Viewed as Machine'. Evidently no human passion nowadays is beyond a mathematic formula that can forthwith be made practicable in a "buildable machine".

What is true of the scientist is even more true of the philosopher in a state capitalist world. Thus Hannah Arendt, who saw the 'Origins of Totalitarianism' in human enough terms, now jumps, without any mediation, into a society "freed from labour" by Automation.

ATTITUDES TO AUTOMATION

In contrast to the abstractions by men who no longer live in ivory towers because state capitalism will no longer allow intellectuals that escape, consider the attitude of the rank and file worker who, when told about Automation freeing the worker from toil and confronting society with too much 'leisure', said:

"I don't know what he is talking about. I don't have any time to breathe, much less to loll about. The work-week at Ford's now (model change-over time) is 53 hours and here that man (Reuther) goes around talking about 'leisure'. As for the working conditions, they are worse than they have ever been since the C.I.O. first came into being. All Automation has meant to us is unemployment and overwork. Both at the same time."

The sharp division between scientist, philosopher and intellectuals generally, on one side, and the rank and file workers, on the other side, is nowhere seen as clearly as between production worker and labour bureaucrat. Where the latter joins other 'researchers and educators' and talks abstractions of promise and leisure and

future, the production worker is concerned with the way it affects his daily life.

As could be seen from the study of the Renault plant, which is the most automated, the French workers' attitude to that 'man-killer, the Automation machine', is no different from that of the American worker, but it is the latter that the present writer has interviewed most. They insist that with the invention of Automation, the speed of the machine knows no bounds of time, energy, or even human-kind, that it has resulted in literally increasing the death-rate in industry.

In one auto shop one worker reported: "We weren't on the job one day when a man lost a finger, and had the one next to it crushed. Before the week was out, another man lost his finger and a third man had three fingers chopped off by the machine. There are signs all over the shop saying 'Are you doing it safely?'. Inside half-an-hour after that man was hurt, the workers had written under all these signs, 'This Machine Is Not Safe Enough To Do It With!'"

Indeed, directly after the launching of the Sputnik, a poll in Detroit revealed that, next to Russia, Automation is what the workers feared most. This is not due to the fact that they are not as 'educated' as the educated and do not know the 'promise' Automation holds, but because they are confronted with realities of Automation under capitalism.

They see it creates a permanent unemployed army which the intellectual bureaucrats, along with the managers of production, call "pockets of unemployment" that dot "prosperity".

They see it as a 'man-killer' not only because it has, in actual fact, raised the death-rate in industrial accidents, but because,

even where it is safe, it has made the worker 'jumpy' and degraded him. He never seems to be on top of the situation any longer: the machine is complete master of him. These machines are 'man-killers' that are constantly breaking down, and breaking down the nervous system of the men themselves. It is they therefore who have raised the decisive philosophic question: *Why* is the division between mental and manual labour so great that machine masters man, not man machine? *How* can one unify thinking and doing in the worker himself?

But no one, least of all the modern intellectual who is busy indicting bureaucracy in general listens to these impulses from the ordinary men at the point of production. Indeed the bureaucratic mark of our age is that everyone is ready to lead; no one to listen.

THE ONLY ROAD

We have reached a stage of capitalistic development where the law described by Marx as the law of motion by which the technologically advanced country shows the technologically backward country the course of its own future is true in reverse.

The bureaucratization that is the concomitant of total planning, reaching into the daily life of every single life with its terror, forced labour camps, political tyranny, had taken the shape of Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, not because these characters were Italian, Russian, German, but because such was the nature of total bureaucratic state capitalist planning.

Short of breaking with the mainspring of capitalistic development, which pays the worker the minimum it takes to feed, clothe and reproduce the next generation of labourers and extract from him the maximum unpaid labour that it takes to constantly expand production to keep ahead in the lawless laws of world market competition that has reached the form of nuclear destruction, there is no way out.

All roads, including Socialist and Communist, lead to the summit of the State Plan. Andre Philp is the latest 'victim'. Along with the 'Left' and the 'Right' in present-day France he is not only capitulated with 'the Plan', but endows what he himself calls "France's New Power

Elite" with a revolutionary mission: "The only class that is capable of making a revolution is the very class which is actually doing so, the class that in fact has the power to administer, organise and create."

No wonder that the most popular saying in Poland, which has a great deal more experience in discussing the various 'roads to socialism' from China to Russia is: "Yes, I'm for socialism, but I am against all the roads leading to it."

The only road leading out of the bureaucratic jungle is that by the rank and file workers who, in their opposition to Automation, have raised the decisive question: what kind of labour should man perform? Where they have not 'sloganised' the demand for an end to the division of mental and manual labour, they have succinctly expressed themselves in their aspiration that work "be completely different, and not separated from life itself."

The road against bureaucracy is not the intellectual road whether it is guided as 'Socialist', 'Communist', or 'Free Enterprise'. Anyone who today mouths phrases against bureaucracy without discussing the concrete attitudes of worker and intellectual to Automation or the concrete question of State Capitalism is falling into the trap of totalitarianism leading up to the summit of Khrushchev and Eisenhower.

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* Arendt, Hannah: 'The Human Condition', 1958.

* Quoted in my *Marxism and Freedom*, page 268.

* Philip, Andre: 'France's New Elite' in *The New Leader*, 22nd June, 1959.

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BUREAUCRACY

I. State Capitalism and the Intellectual and Labor Bureaucrats.

The two decisive criteria in regard to the bureaucracy, which stamp it "contemporary", and distinguish it from bureaucracies of all other ages, from the byzantine Empire to the World Depression, are: (1) State Capitalism, as the new stage of world economic and political development, and (2) Automation, as the new stage of world scientific and technological development.

Automation has cut across the thinking of all people, but the Great Divide arose with the depression. It is the 1930crash that first split the world mind into two: on the one side stood the State Planners, which now included not only the owners and/or managers of production, but also the intellectual who had been sucked into the machinery of the State Plan. For the objective pull of that new stage of world capitalistic development had changed the role of the intellectual from the spheres of culture and consumption to that of plan and production. A plethora of Plans, from Stalin's Russia to Roosevelt's "New Deal" America, as well as from Hitler's Germany to Japan's Co-Prosperity Sphere, disclosed the fact that the new "Brain Trust" took time out to debate total vs. partial planning, but never for a moment stopped to look at the throes of rationalized production. At the same time millions upon millions of unemployed were walking the streets while other millions of unskilled in factories questioned the conditions of labor scolded private capitalists as well as state rulers to attempt to escape from the deepening crisis by the further bureaucratization of life, beginning at the point of production, and ending in the state offices in Moscow, Washington, Berlin, and Tokyo. Neither World War II, nor the post-war world, changed anything in that bureaucratic pattern except put an end once and for all to any illusion that the interference of the state into the economy was only a war measure.

Within this new bureaucratic development, sociologists like C. Wright Mills can indict various schools of social science for developing a "bureaucratic ethos" and serving the military, governmental and business bureaucracies, but offer no basis whatever for overcoming these bureaucracies. His indictment of "the human relations in

in industry school", for example, is incisive enough: "Much of the advice of the scholars—explicit and tacit—can be neatly summarized in this simple formula: To make the worker happy, efficient, and co-operative we need only make the managers intelligent, rational, knowledgeable." (L) But, by specifically denying to "ordinary men" the capacity either to understand or to transform what is happening in the world, he can only appeal to the self-same "social Scientists" to shed their "bureaucratic ethos" by acquiring a "sociological imagination." There is thus no basic distinction between himself and those he criticizes.

On the other side of the intellectual bureaucracy however, stands the worker with thoughts of his own to resolve the tatality of the modern crisis through worker control of production. Throughout the 1930's this took various organizational forms, ranging from the U.I.O. in the U. S., to the proletarian revolution in Spain. These spontaneous actions centered at the point of production, and on the matter of the new phenomenon of STRIKES, the labor leadership, whether young ones like Leathers, or old ones like John L. Lewis, saw no way out for themselves either except to align with this new force. The outbreak of W. W. II, however, put an end to this development of the labor-bureaucrat exer

the labor leader under pressure of the rank and file. Here too the world witnessed the hothouse transformation of labor leadership into labor bureaucracy. Differing from the intellectual bureaucrat exercised his and elaborated his plans from a governmental center, the labor bureaucrat exercised his power directly at the point of production. The new labor bureaucrat, who began to compete with big industry, in elaborating Plans for conversion of peacetime industry to wartime purposes, took over also the question of disciplining the worker, chaining him with no-strike pledges, extension of the working day, and bowing before the "progress" of ever greater and greater machines, till we reached the monster machine of automation.

II. Automation and the Scientist-Philosopher

While each country was thus divided into two worlds, the maturity of our age revealed itself in the one-worldedness of the state of technology. This was true not because the two groups of "Allies" kept no secrets from each other. Quite the contrary. Never had cloak-and-dagger techniques been carried into the field of science quite so overwhelmingly, and again without regard to the camp of Hitler and his "secret weapon" of the V-2 rocket, or the camp of Roosevelt and his secret secret of the atom bomb. The one-worldedness of the state of technology came about through the compulsion of the world crisis which had now taken the shape of total destruction. Thus it was no longer merely a question of losing one's place in the world market. The present penalty of not keeping up with the world technological development is death. It is this that I would write in 1945(2), when America exploded the A-bomb and thought its secret fool-proof, that "at this stage of world competition, which is world war, Russia must find the secret of the A-bomb or perish, and Russia doesn't intend to perish."

Everything in our age is invested with its opposite. Thus, out of the splitting of the atom, came 266 the greatest creative force of earth, but the most destructive weapon. And the post wartime marriage of science and industry resulted in automation which, far from lessening the burden of toil, both throws the laborer out of work and overworks those at the monster machine. No other epoch ever imparted greater reality to Marx's analysis that "All our progress seems to result in endowing a material force with intellectual life, and stultifying human life into a material force". (2)

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III. Attitudes to Automation

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worker from toil and confronting society with too much "leisure", said:

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- (1) Mills, C. Wright, "The Sociological Imagination", p. 92. 919690
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