

The Bolshevik Ideal-logical Paradigm

Communist parties have inherited from Lenin and other great bolsheviks an ideal-logical paradigm. In terms of this paradigm the bolsheviks understand themselves and the world, which they try to disqualify ideologically and to change through revolutionary activity.

Apart from the ideal of a communist society, the following ideas exerted key influence on the Bolsheviks' (self)understanding: proletarian revolution; a party of (professional) revolutionaries organized in a democratic-centralist manner; dictatorship of the proletariat; the party as the representative of the objective and historical interests of the proletariat; the transition period between capitalism and communism.

As Marxists the Bolsheviks faced the problem of how to explain to themselves and others the possibility of proletarian, socialist revolution in backward Russia. The idea of a centralized party of professional revolutionaries did not suffice; they needed a radical revision of the Marxist vision of revolution.

This revision transformed a revolutionary philosophical-social theory into a revolutionary ideal-logy. Admittedly, Marx himself was ambivalent: He saw a real chance for the revolution and the subsequent development of a new society in developed capitalism, but from time to time he lost his patience, hoping that the revolution would soon break out even though capitalism was still rather undeveloped.

Characteristically, Bolshevik ideal-logues believed that Marx's goals could be achieved under radically changed conditions and through radically

changed means.* One could almost say that revolution sets only those goals it cannot achieve.

Two ideas were of key importance for the Bolshevik ideal-logical revision of Marx's concept of revolution: the weakest link of imperialism and the permanent revolution.

The idea that imperialism must first be broken in the areas where capitalism was most developed was rejected, and instead an entirely opposite starting point was adopted. This idea in itself could have bolstered expectations of a bourgeois-democratic, but not of a socialist revolution in backward Russia.

Hence the need for the idea of permanent revolution. The bourgeoisie in Russia was said to be too weak and afraid to consistently lead a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and so the working class led by its vanguard, had to be the main vehicle of the revolution; and once the working class carried out such a revolution, there was no need to give the liberal bourgeoisie a leading role. On the contrary, the next, socialist stage of revolution had to be embarked on immediately. The international aspect of the idea of permanent revolution lay in the expectation of a world, or, at a minimum, a West European revolution. This is the link with classical Marxism: There is no hope for the proletarian revolution in backward Russia unless revolution succeeds at least in capitalist Western Europe.

Neither the concept of the weakest link nor that of permanent revolution were seriously problematized. If a country constitutes the weakest link of

*Here is a further example of ideal-logical (self)delusion. When the relation of forces in international communism radically changed some twenty years ago, the slogan of "different roads to socialism" was adopted. But, when one takes a close look at the nature of the means, methods and conditions this implies, it becomes clear that their goal cannot be the same "socialism," but rather different goals ("socialisms").

capitalism and imperialism, at the same time it can be the weakest link in the hands of revolutionaries, thus offering the least chance for building a new socialist society.

With respect to the permanent revolution: How did the assumption ever come about that the working class, as an economic class (one even weaker than the bourgeoisie in Russia) could lead a bourgeois-democratic revolution and be powerful enough to control politically postrevolutionary development? Moreover, how could it be assumed that such a class could introduce and carry out a dictatorship? The victory of Stalinism is usually explained by the overall weakness of the Russian working class, which was virtually decimated in the civil war and therefore unable to control the postrevolutionary process. This process then became bureaucratized, ultimately leading to the Stalinization of the revolution.

I think the problem is much deeper than such an analysis indicates. The roots of the problem should be sought in the first phase of the revolution: What were the grounds for presuming that a small and weak working class would be capable of safeguarding for itself bourgeois-democratic revolutionary achievements, not to mention its domination over the new state apparatus and safeguarding of Soviet achievements? After the October revolution, not only was the Soviet dimension gradually eliminated, but the achievements of bourgeois-democratic revolution were also destroyed, such as freedom of assembly, association, parties and trade unions. After February 1917 the working class clearly had more to lose than "its chains."

In my opinion, at the heart of the idea of permanent revolution lay a mistaken dichotomy stemming from classical Marxism: capitalism or socialism. History has shown that at the very least a trichotomy should have been taken into account, because what emerged was the statization of the revolution (culminating with Stalinization).

As for the international aspect of permanent revolution, mention is usually made of Lenin's and Trotsky's mistakes in predicting a European revolution. While they sought support on the one hand in international revolution, on the other their actions often alienated potential supporters in the West. When they realized that their revolution lacked the inner strength to maintain itself, why did they narrow its social and political base by eliminating all other socialist parties and organizations? In narrowing their base inside Russia, the Bolsheviks actually alienated the democratic West and its workers' movement.

I come back to my claim that the idea of permanent revolution was not seriously problematized, so that the assumptions about the very first stage were unfounded. Now, let me take this thesis a step further: The very scheme of two stages was unfounded and was more harmful than useful. This holds true even more for the assumption that the second stage was bound to have a socialist character.

The only thing I can discover as a kind of true intimation behind the idea of permanent revolution (apart from the perceived weakness of the bourgeoisie in Russia) is the presentiment that Russia was entering a long period of revolutionary upheaval, and indeed, this is what happened: a revolution in 1905 -- two revolutions in 1917 -- and the third revolutionary upheaval which started in 1928/29 and was the beginning of the final victory of Stalinism by means of complete statization and terrorist collectivization.

In theory-ideology, however, on the basis of a philosophical-historical scheme, a conclusion was drawn on the lower and higher stages of revolution, instead of on the long-term revolutionary* process with different, even contrary

*In contrast to many marxists, I use "revolution" as an empirical-historical notion, not as a category of the philosophy of history where revolution is linked to only progressive changes.

tendencies: capitalist, statist and socialist. The statist possibility and tendency was not taken into serious consideration because of the theoretical dichotomy: either capitalism or socialism. Here one should again raise doubts about the claim of the October revolution's unquestionably socialist character. In its unequivocally anti-feudal and anti-capitalist orientation, this revolution from the beginning developed a tension between its socialist (Soviet) and statist components.

What kind of support did the Bolsheviks expect from Western Europe? Did their hopes rest exclusively on the fact that the West was economically more developed or also on the fact that democracy existed there? In relation to the bourgeois democracy, the Bolsheviks' negativist paradigm was fundamentally wrong. It inevitably led to a misunderstanding of the world in which the bolsheviks operated, including their own illusory hope that the center of revolution would shift to the West.

This was increasingly inferior and envious communism which, faced with a far more advanced capitalism, developed a variety of arrogant ideological appraisals, compensations and rationalizations. That is why the findings of political psychology should be applied to its examination.

Study should start by examining the Bolshevik perception (and reality) of the threat of "capitalist encirclement" and the slogan of "catching up and overtaking" the capitalist world. Two systems, the capitalist and the statist, have long dominated the world scene. In earlier chapters I have stressed that statism is not only weaker but that in its heart of hearts it knows it is weaker. Capital has long dominated the world market. Statism has revealed its inferiority complex by trying to imitate what it says is doomed in capitalism: the market, private property, and competition. As always, however, the combination of suppression and imitation takes its bitter revenge.

The Ideal-logical and Praxological Criterion

I call classical bolshevik ideal logy socialist realism, because the assumed tendency of movement toward communism was more important for determining the character of its social reality than any facts or other empirical indicators. I borrowed the name from the official "Soviet" literature and culture (where the main demand is to "reflect" this tendency), but I considerably expanded its range of application.

This ideology did not always reject unpleasant truths. They were "merely" proclaimed "small" and "partial," as compared to "big," "epoch-making" and "whole" truths. The "historical tendency" of movement towards communism carried greater weight and reality than "individual facts," "taken in isolation," from this tendency.

In the last chapter I discussed the role of "objective interest" in the Bolshevik ideology and its metaphysical meaning. While ideal logy primarily cites proclaimed historical goals, praxological critique of it primarily establishes the actual consequences that ensue in the struggle to realize these goals. Bolshevik ideology has bountifully applied the principle of "objective meaning" to everybody else, while assessing itself primarily in terms of intended, proclaimed consequences ("subjective meaning").

A theoretical obstacle to perceiving the ideal-logical character of the Bolshevik approach to the future was also Marx's conviction that he himself had not set up any ideal (of communism), but simply scientifically described the necessary tendency of social development (towards communism).

Lenin's State and Revolution is a manifesto of revolutionary ideal-logy. Its example can be used to study the relationship between the most general political program, the program of action, and practice. What in the most general program actually obligates revolutionaries, and what constitutes ideal logical

(self)delusion, does not become quite clear until they acquire power. No wonder that skeptics say that virtue is a lack of temptation.

It may be an exaggeration to say, like some moral philosophers, that man is not bound by anything moral if it is only the future that binds him. But it would be hard to deny that little binds us morally, if only the future binds us. This is the old problem of the relationship between the ethics of ideals and the ethics of means.

Trotsky's defense of Bolshevism in the 1938 essay "Their Morals and Ours" bears all the traits of ideal-logy. Twenty years after the revolution he still defends all the Bolshevik actions as unavoidable means to achieving communist goals -- along the lines of "the end justifies the means." He staunchly refuses to see in any of these acts even the possible germ, let alone the fertile soil for the victory of Stalinism. This is as though Stalinism was nothing more than the abuse and betrayal of Bolshevism, and not one of its tendencies and currents as well.

Writings on negative utopia give a striking picture of how Stalinism functions at the peak of its power. It would be even more interesting, in my opinion, and more important from the practical point of view, to concentrate less on the ultimate result and more on the process that led up to it. This is the theme of the emergence of negative utopia.

There is no doubt that Lenin, Trotsky and other leading Bolsheviks bear a co-responsibility in this respect. It was under their leadership that the structural possibilities and tendencies were created which led in this direction. Who else, if not Lenin, bears responsibility for the extreme formulations on the "dictatorship of the proletariat," as expressed in the following:

". . . a rule based directly upon force and unre-
stricted by any laws." ("The Proletarian Revolution
and the Renegade Kantsky," in The Lenin Anthology,
ed. Robert C. Tucker, New York, Norton, 1975, p. 466).

Even worse are some of Lenin's and Trotsky's actual instructions regarding terror. Would their instructions have been quite the same if the following rule had been one of the minimal principles of revolutionary morals: Anyone who orders something to be done which clearly clashes with the humanistic moral legacy is duty-bound to set a personal example by being the first to take such action. But, in an atmosphere marked by "democratic centralism" and "revolutionary discipline," a particular kind of homo duplex emerges: Leaders formulate ideology, determine programs and issue directives, while others are in their eyes suitable for doing the "dirty work."

In speaking about the co-responsibility of leading Bolsheviks for the victory of the Stalinist tendency, it would be unjust to overlook the West's own co-responsibility. It has long since been established that with their extremist revanchist attitude to a Germany defeated in World War I, leading circles in the West had a part in creating and strengthening the chances for Hitlerites to come to power. The same type of responsibility can be applied to Soviet history in the twenties and thirties: first counter-revolutionary foreign intervention, then isolation of the USSR, and finally pushing Hitler and Mussolini against the USSR -- all such steps played into the hands of Stalin and the worst Stalinists.

Of course, the furthest thing from my mind is to equate Stalinism with other currents and tendencies of Bolshevism. Those who limit comparisons between the period before and after 1928 to a difference of degree, and deny the difference in type, would do well to ponder from what standpoint they are doing this from. Only an abstract theory deprived of concrete moral and generally humane sensitivity is able to relativize to this extent the difference between Stalinism on the one hand and Leninism and Trotskyism on the other. Stalinists committed millions of state crimes. War criminals were tried for the first

time in history after World War II. The XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party was not enough for a massive catharsis in and outside the USSR. What is needed is a symbolic trial of such equally great state criminals as Stalin and his henchmen.

Because of its "Marxist" genealogy, Stalinism is an ideology with immense intellectual ambitions. Indeed, Stalinism's super-ideological character is unparalleled: It depicts itself as a scientific ideology, and all others as unscientific. Some critics seem to accept Stalinists' self-understanding and talk about their "scientism" and "positivism." True, there are elements of both in Stalinist self-understanding, but no less true is the fact that Stalinist "science" cannot intellectually stand up to even the simplest of positivistic criteria and analyses. Otherwise how could one explain the great intellectual effectiveness of a kind of "neopositivist Marxism" in reckoning with Stalinist ideology?

During Marxism's Stalinization, even Marx's way of criticizing ideology assumed an ideological character. As a rule, Marx first endeavored to show that a given world view really presented a distorted or false picture of the world, and only then asked why this was so and looked for the answer in the particular place and interests of a group or class in the social division of labor.

It is a mistake to believe that Stalinists only change the order of the moves, so that the social root of the criticized ideas comes in first place, while the question of their truthfulness comes second. Stalinists actually do not examine whether these ideas are true or not, because they are concerned with discrediting such ideas at any price. The position they stick to is that the presumed social origin of such ideas in itself implies their untruthfulness, which, of course, is a genetic fallacy. Still worse: The social roots of ideas are not examined, they are established a priori. Ideas that differ from Stalinist

ideas by definition have an undesirable social origin. The truthfulness or untruthfulness of world views is deduced from the transcendental connection between social groups and their alleged progressiveness or regressiveness. But, it is actually the other way round: The degree of concern for the truth as a social value is one of the criteria of progressiveness of social groups.

From "Socialist Realism" to "Real Socialism"

By the end of the 1960s the ruling ideology in the USSR and Eastern Europe, burdened on the one hand by the Stalinist legacy and challenged on the other by reform communism, was transformed explicitly from the former ideal-logy to a kind of real-logy. In order to justify itself ideologically the system would not, as it had done previously during the period of "socialist realism," continue to invoke mainly a communist utopia. Rather, the system began to invoke primarily the fact that it was a reality (of course, "reality" as it was defined by ideology, and not as it actually was). Hence the new name: "real socialism." This new formula suggested, among other things, that any alternative "socialism with a human face" was pure utopia.

In the 1950s and 1960s the adherents of the communist ideal-logy reacted in different ways to the Stalinist legacy. Some readily sacrificed their communist ideals, others became disillusioned and passive, while yet others revolted against Stalinism precisely in the name of their communist ideals.

Milan Kundera excellently describes the last group in his Book of Laughter and Forgetting with the following words:

"Yes, say what you will -- the Communists were more intelligent. They had a grandiose program, a plan for a brand-new world in which everyone would find his place. The Communists' opponents had no great dream; all they had was a few moral principles, stale and lifeless, to patch up the tattered trouses of the established order. So of course the grandiose enthusiasts won out over the cautious compromisers and lost no time turning their dream into reality: the creation of an idyll of justice for all

And suddenly these young, intelligent radicals had the strange feeling of having sent something into the world, a deed of their own making, which had taken on a life of its own, lost all resemblance to the original idea, and totally ignored the originators of the idea. So those young, intelligent radicals started shouting to their deed, calling it back, scolding it, chasing it, hunting it down. If I were to write a novel about that generation of talented radical thinkers, I would call it Stalking a Lost Deed Historical events usually imitate another without much talent, but in Czechoslovakia, as I see it, history staged an unprecedented experiment. Instead of the standard pattern of one group of people (a class, a nation) rising up against another, all the people (an entire generation) revolted against their own youth. Their goal was to recapture and tame the deed they had created, and they almost succeeded. All through the 1960s they gained in influence, and by the beginning of 1968 their influence was virtually complete." (Penguin Books, pp. 8-14.)

The alienation of the communist idealists' deed and their effort to de-
alienate it would constitute an excellent but separate topic. Here, I would like to mention only that the official ideology of "real socialism" represented in good part a response to the communist idealists' challenge in Eastern Europe.

Whenever the ideology of "real socialism" comes into conflict with reformist endeavors it manifests one of its hidden faces: cynical consciousness. Any movement for democratic-humanist socialism is supressed by force, but the ruling ideologues continue triumphing by claiming that the existing "socialism" represents the single realistic alternative.

Unlike the other countries of the socialist camp, the "Soviet ideology" comes forward in the name of both "real" and "developed" (or "mature") socialism. In other words, there exists an international ("internationalistic") hierarchy of "real socialisms" as well. That is why Edward Glerek proclaimed "developed socialism" as the goal of Poland. "Real socialism" in Eastern Europe was to "catch up" with "developed socialism" in the USSR, although this in turn had not yet "caught up" with the most developed capitalism.

But, if socialism is already developed, why is the transition to communism relegated to the indefinite future?*

The recent congress of the CPSS has opted for an indefinite period of the further development of developed socialism.

On this topic Mikhail Gorbachev said:

While some suggest that references to developed socialism should be completely removed from the Programme, others, on the contrary, believe that this should be dealt with at greater length. The draft sets forth a well-balanced and realistic position on this issue. The main conclusions about modern socialist society confirm that our country has entered the stage of developed socialism. We also show understanding for the task of building developed socialism set down in the programme documents of fraternal parties in the socialist countries. At the same time, it is proper to recall that the thesis on developed socialism has gained currency in our country as a reaction to the simplistic ideas about the ways and terms of carrying out the tasks of communist construction. Subsequently, however, the accents in the interpretation of developed socialism were gradually shifted. Things were not infrequently reduced to just registering successes, while many of the urgent problems related to the conversion of the economy to intensification, to raising labour productivity, improving supplies to the population, and overcoming negative things were not given due attention... Today, when the Party has proclaimed and is pursuing the policy of accelerating socio-economic development, this approach has become unacceptable.... As for the chronological limits in which the Programme targets are to be attained, they do not seem to be needed. The faults of the past are a lesson for us. The only thing we can say definitely today is that the fulfillment of the present Programme goes beyond the end of the present century. (Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress, Novosti Press, Moscow, 1986 -- emphasised by this author)

Critics of the ideology of "real socialism" have already pointed to its tautological nature: it seeks to justify reality by invoking "reality."

*Already during Krushchev's rule in the Program of the CPSS (1961) it was declared that the "dictatorship of the proletariat had fulfilled its historic mission" and was transformed into a "state of all people." Brezhnev included the formula in the Constitution of the USSR (1977).

According to the critics it is also a conservative ideology: "reality" is proclaimed the norm.

T. H. Rigby has noted correctly that Weber's typology of legitimation (traditional, charismatic and formal-legal) is incapable of encompassing the "Soviet" type of social order:

The predominant orientation of these command-structures is towards goal-achievement, rather than towards the application of rules, which Weber correctly identifies as the predominant orientation of the public bureaucracies of Western 'capitalist' societies. Consonant with this, the legitimacy claimed for the commands issuing from this system and for those holding office under it is framed in terms of 'goal-rationality' rather than the formal-legal rationality of Western 'capitalist' systems... Though some essentially rule-applying bureaucracies are present, the predominant bureaucratic mode is the task-achieving mode. Accordingly the central role in the political system is played by institutions concerned with formulating the goals and tasks of the constituent units of society and supervising their execution. Consonant with this, the legitimating claims of the political system, of those holding office under it, and of the latter's commands, are validated in terms of the final goal ('communism') from which the partial and intermediate goals set by the leadership are allegedly derived and to which individual goals should be subordinated. (T. H. Rigby and F. Feher eds. "Political Legitimation in Communist States," St. Martin's Press, New York, 1982, introduction by T. H. Rigby, pp. 10-20 -- underlined by this author)

Rigby is right when he says that the "Soviet" system tries to legitimize itself through "goal" rather than "formal-legal" rationality. However, it is not true that this ideology has invoked in recent times mainly the "final goal"(communism). Rather, the ideology's ambition has become more moderate: further development of developed socialism. The category of "goal rationality" can mislead us if we do not clearly distinguish between "socialist realism" and "real socialism".

After all, 70 years after "Marxism-Leninism" came to power, there are very few who are willing to forgive its faults because of its alleged "historical tendency to move toward communism." As soon as "socialism" begins ideologically to rely mainly on its own "reality," it is inevitably judged on the basis of its performance. And it is exactly at this point that the troubles begin,

ranging in intensity from stagnation to the obvious crisis visible in some countries. "Real socialism" remains functionally inferior to developed democratic capitalism. Even the social policies of "real socialism" do not always compare favorably with those of the social-democratic "welfare states" in the West, especially those in Scandinavia.

The following question presents itself as well: What kind of "real socialism" is this when, for instance, in Poland a workers' movement of many millions revolt against it? Those "patriots" who introduce martial law against this movement suggest implicitly that the Polish people should accept them as representing a lesser evil than eventual direct foreign occupation. This is a good example of the role of evil in ideological justification. In this respect one should also remember the following: since a radical alteration of the power structure in Eastern Europe is not possible without risking universal nuclear destruction (absolute evil), the existing evil appears relative. According to Werner Becker, we have in this regard reached the limits of the customary understanding of legitimation:

One should not ignore the fact that in the second half of this century we have perhaps reached the limits of the classical understanding of legitimation. This understanding has never before in history envisaged the possibility that the state rulers might become almighty in carrying out their will . . . In these states [of the Eastern Bloc] the power structure of 'real socialism' is being preserved only through the threat that the Soviet Union would begin the big war in case of states' instability in its sphere of influence. ("Die Freiheit, die wir meinen," R. Pipper, Munich, 1982, p. 17f.)

In Poland the official ideology has, in my view, entered the third phase: from distorted through false to mendacious consciousness. All Polish people reject this mendacious ideology, even the officials who use it but do not believe in it. Why, then, do they employ it?

Here is one of the possible explanations: "This propaganda does not seek to persuade anybody, it is aimed to defeat. It says; look, listen, we can say whatever we wish, any lie, we can spread dirt on whomever we choose, we can offend, humiliate, provoke you, we can attack anything which is

dear to you, we can sentence the finest patriots for treason and decorate traitors with medals -we can do anything, and you can only sit in front of the television and clench your fists. Listen and be silent. This is how strong we are. This is our revenge for your attempt to dream about a better world. (Jacek Fedorowicz, "Let us have the censor," Index on Censorship, 5 October 1985.)

But this problem is more complex. That which is possible in Czechoslovakia is, for instance, no longer possible in Poland. It is true that the Polish statist class would also like to monopolize the public sphere, excluding from it all alternative languages. But it no longer possesses this kind of power. This class, it is true, still uses "Marxist-Leninist" formulae, but it does not expect to successfully represent untruths as truths. Rather, we are dealing here with the power holders' signals to one another and even more to the Soviet Union: They will not permit a fundamental alteration of the constellation of forces at any price. If they were to abandon the official ideological language, the USSR would believe that its vital geo-strategic interests are imperilled. And the system of the statist "nomenklatura" still has an international dimension as well, although in some countries this external control of cadres has more a negative and indirect character than a positive and direct one.

However, the mendacious consciousness has not prevailed just in Poland. During post-1968 "normalization" in Czechoslovakia, the majority of those seeking to retain their positions or jobs had to reject publicly the "Prague Spring" and to accept publicly "fraternal help." The power holders were not interested in the least whether this was done sincerely or not. Here is another interesting contribution to the analysis of the reality and non-reality of Czechoslovakian "socialism":

The manager of a fruit and vegetable shop places in his window, among the onions and carrots, the slogan: 'Workers of the World, Unite!' Why does he do it? . . . Let us take note: if the greengrocer had been instructed to display the slogan, 'I am afraid and therefore unquestionably obedient,' he would not be nearly as indifferent to its semantics, even though the statement would reflect the truth. The greengrocer would be embarrassed and ashamed to put such an unequivocal statement of his own degradation

in the shop window, and quite naturally so, for he is a human being and thus has a sense of his own dignity. . . Thus the sign helps the greengrocer to conceal from himself the low foundations of his obedience, at the same time concealing the low foundations of power. It hides them behind the facade of something high. And that something is ideology. (Vaclav Havel "The Power of the Powerless," in a collection of essays under the same title edited by John Kean, Hutchinson, 1985, p. 27f.)

However, those who expected that the statist system would perish the moment it entered the ideological impasse of mendacious consciousness were mistaken. Even ideologically defunct systems can continue to exist, especially if the international constellation of forces is favorable to them. Besides, if the official ideology of "Marxism-Leninism" loses influence, it does not mean that the statist system cannot have a different kind of ideological support. As an example we have already mentioned the ideology of the "lesser evil." True, this ideology in itself does not have enough strength to make possible a "return" from mendacious to distorted consciousness.

Reliance on the victory in World War II, superpower status, and, generally, the patriotism of Soviet citizens are usually treated in the literature as a "secondary" ideology. But why, since this ideology de facto is no less important for the system's legitimization than "Marxism-Leninism"? After all, in the USSR, "Soviet patriotism" is officially regarded as a component of "Marxism-Leninism" and not as something separate from it. Moreover, precisely those generations for whom the experience of World War II remains decisive still set the tone of social life in the USSR. These generations have a feeling (almost religious) of the "sacred obligation" toward the compatriots who fell in the war. World War II, the Cold War and the recurrent heightening of international tensions -- all of this has contributed fundamentally to the renewal of the atmosphere of (almost) permanent war communism in the USSR. How else can we explain these generations' lasting patience and willingness to sacrifice?

Liberalization of Statism (statism with a human face)

"Secondary," "hidden," "implicit," "non-legitimized," "informal" spheres, activities and ideas increasingly play an important role not only in the ideology, but also in the economy, culture, morality, etc. of statism. Some of these help society to function, although the formal system often inhibits it from doing so.

The ruling class sometimes tolerates such phenomena and sometimes tries to diminish or eliminate them through organized campaigns and measures. If it cannot reject them as foreign bodies, the statist ideology seeks at least to conceal them. This leads only to the further accumulation of the surplus of illusory ideology and failed investments in the ideological-propagandist machinery.

And the practical measures as well are often counterproductive. When the statist finally decide, for instance, to allow private initiative in crafts, trades, tourism and other services, they usually try to reduce it to a minimum in order, as they say, to prevent private enrichment. But since the private businessmen do not have enough competition they quickly become rich. This in turn leads to revolt in the statist apparatus and among common people, and triggers a renewal of campaigns against private business. In this fashion, a vicious circle arises.

In spite of the countermeasures, "secondary," "hidden," "implicit," non-legitimized," and "informal" spheres tenaciously rear their heads. For a flexible ruling class, that would be a sufficient indication that systemic reforms are needed.

What would have happened to capitalism if the bourgeoisie in the 1930s had been incapable of accepting the need of state interventionism? The statist class currently finds itself confronting a similar historical turning point: In order to keep strategic control over the state and the means of production,

it will ultimately have to sacrifice total, supercentralized, and detailed control. Only the former is indispensable for the preservation of the statist system's identity. Has not Yugoslavia already demonstrated that considerable statist decentralization is possible? True, this has not been done without some change in the power structure: for example, a shift in favor of the technocratic elements at the expense of the politocratic group.

It is true that, as G. Markus says, the system has sought to maximize the quantity of economic products and the extent of control over social life. But I do not believe that the statist class must remain incapable of replacing extensive economic development with intensive economic development and total, super-centralized and detailed control with strategic control.

How would a discussion on "history and class consciousness" look like if the main topic were the statist class? This class laboriously and slowly comes to understand the necessity of systemic reforms. Could we in this case really speak about the need to "inject class consciousness from without"? Who will open the statist class' eyes to its own objective and long term interests, and in which way will this be accomplished?

I maintain that the liberalization of statism would be in the historical interest of the ruling class. Only democratic socialism would signify the end of statist rule.* In this connection, the question about the main differences between statist "civil society" and socialist "civil society" should be raised. The chances for democratic socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe will remain more or less illusory unless statism is first liberalized.** The leftist

*I do not see how the theory of totalitarianism could allow for and explain the possibility of statism's liberalization.

**If we abstract from external control and intervention, the Czechoslovak development of 1968 point to a real possibility that should be considered when we are dealing with a relatively developed statist country with a democratic past. I am referring to some kind of permanent reform-revolution in which mass pressure to liberalize statism would immediately spill over into a mass movement for democratic socialism.

intelligentsia will alternate between resignation and excessive expectations if it does not understand this fact.

The position of democratic socialists in statism is rather similar to that of Marxists in pre-revolutionary Russia. The true goal of the latter was socialist revolution, whereas their theory required them to prepare patiently only bourgeois-democratic revolution. Democratic socialists in Eastern Europe and the USSR face the following question: How can they work for the liberalization of statism when their true goal is democratic socialism? How can they contribute to the liberal enlightenment of the statist class when they are fundamentally opposed to its rule? There is an "unhappy consciousness."

With regard to the ideologues of the liberal-statist orientation, it should be remembered that today it is virtually impossible to justify openly the right of any social group to the monopoly of strategic control over the state and means of production. For this reason I do not believe that a liberal-statist theory will be built which would be comparable, in terms of its philosophical and other intellectual qualities, with the theories espoused by the greats of bourgeois liberalism.

In some statist countries, most notably in Poland, the population does not want to hear any Marxist language, let alone "Marxist-Leninist" language. Workers in Poland do not even readily accept the explanation of Marxists who refer to Solidarity as "the movement for the self-emancipation of the working class." It is true that the real character of groups and movements ought to be determined on the basis of their attitudes toward concrete social problems and not according to their relationships with any abstract formulae. If Solidarity is approached in this manner it will be seen that it is not incompatible with humanistic Marxism.

However, the question of how Marxism could survive in an environment in which even the system of mendacious consciousness seems to use the same language

cannot easily be dismissed. It is no small difficulty for a theory to be sustained when people, already at the verbal level, reject it out of hand.

In the approaches taken to this problem by Agnes Heller and myself, interesting differences have manifested themselves. It would be useful to quote what she has to say in this respect:

Question: During a debate in 1979 in Koin between Rudi Dutschke, Boris Weil, Plushch and other oppositionists from Eastern Europe there came to the fore something which has become obvious in the contemporary conflicts in Poland. During the days of internationalism in Tübingen, Stojanovic summarized this as follows: according to his experiences with Polish oppositionists in Poland the entire marxist language has been discredited. It is no longer possible to lead any kind of discussion using this language. The left in the East is searching for a new language.

Answer of A. Heller: The opposition does not want to speak in the language of the powers that be . . . What can be done, I believe, is to reclaim this language from the powers that be . . . We can give new meaning to these words . . . We can always strip the powers that be and the government naked by confronting them with their own language. ("Intellektuelle und das stalinistische 'Erbgut'," in Internationalismus-Tage, Tübingen, 11-13 Dez. 1981, Dokumentation, Tübingen, 1982.)

If the increasing political irrelevance of Marxism in the statist countries resulted exclusively or even only primarily from its abuse by the official ideology, perhaps Heller's suggestion would have some chance to succeed. But the problem consists primarily in the fact that in "socialist" statism only liberalization finds itself on the realistic political agenda: decentralization of management, reliance on the market, practical rehabilitation of private property and private initiative, and establishment of the "civil society's" sphere. And yet, such changes and measures could not be considered marxist, even with the maximum amount of conceptual flexibility.

This does not, of course, mean that the Marxist attack on statism in the 1950s and 1960s, was politically irrelevant. At that time statism was rejected in the name of the most general ideals of humanistic marxism such as de-alienation, de-reification, satisfaction of authentic human needs, praxis, etc. It

was only natural that at that time Marxist philosophers, philosophical sociologists and philosophical economists played the leading role among the critics of statism. Confronted with their immanent philosophical delegitimation of the "Marxist" ideology and system, the ruling class raised the alarm. This alarm became shriller the more Marxist philosophers demonstrated the ability to climb "down" in their criticism from the most general humanistic to the more concrete political level, and even showed the ability to engage in practical oppositionist activity. The ruling class came to feel that the times were changing, and that the people desired more and more of a realistic political program of changes and not merely a global Marxist-humanistic rejection of the statist system. Such changes constitute the core of the liberalization of statism.

And yet, if marxism has nothing to say about the liberalization of statism, it does not mean that it is irrelevant for the long-term historical perspective of the democratic-socialist transformation of statism. A radically revisionist and fragmentary Marxism no doubt has something to say about this transformation.

Here a much broader question should also be raised: How can we intellectually deal with the ideology of "real socialism" when it ultimately has neither intellectual purpose nor real intellectual quality? Do we not thereby accord to this ideology intellectual stature and dignity?*

Official ideologues' bitter reaction demonstrates that the analysis and critique which theoretically unmask the abuse of classical Marxism by "Marxism-Leninism" still touch a very sensitive nerve (intellectual legitimacy). Besides, even if "Marxism-Leninism" no longer has any chance in this regard to mislead

*F. Feher, in the article "Eastern Europe in the 1980's" (Telos, no. 45), criticizes this "indirect apology."

educated and experienced generations, the same does not have to be the case with the youth undergoing "ideological education" in statism.

Almost always, however, there remains the possibility of seriously trying to interpret symptomatically "Marxist-Leninist" ideology. Even the differences in it which appear small can be a good indication that serious divisions exist within the ruling class. Thus, for instance, in the USSR a public debate has recently begun regarding whether in "socialism too non-antagonistic contradictions can become antagonistic ones." The non-initiated may regard this as mere conceptual hair-splitting; however, those who sufficiently understand this ideology and its history have concluded that this represents the hidden debate as to the weight of the problems confronting the USSR today, and the depth of the needed changes.

For successful symptomatic interpretation it is very important, as pointed out by scholars, to distinguish clearly between abstract and operative ideology. The former should be sought, for instance, in the "theoretical" texts of the leaders, the state constitution and the CP's program, whereas the latter manifests itself in laws (especially criminal law), executive orders, the CP's statute, etc. If we want to discover, for example, whether real intentions and chances for statism's liberalization exist, we should not rely on innovations in the abstract ideology, which very often are designed to make favorable impressions, especially abroad. This is true. The most important question, however, is: Where should we search for the operative ideology par excellence? Many scholars still suffer from naivete, since they still search for this operative ideology par excellence in the sphere of "high" ideology. For me, much more indicative in the operative sense is the "low" ideology, embodied, for instance, in the textbooks for elementary party schools, officers and

soldiers, policemen, etc. Only at this level can we discover, if not the real desires of the leadership, then at least the extent of their real power to prompt intended liberal changes.

Serious investigation of changes within "Marxism-Leninism" helps us to understand what kind of reforms are really possible in statism. With the recent and significant leadership changes in the USSR, this question has again become the focus of attention.

That part of the ruling class and party in the Soviet Union which desires significant reforms will have to search for support in their own ideological tradition. Although the Soviet Union without doubt has something to learn from the reforms in Yugoslavia, Hungary and China, I do not believe that its leaders will want to refer publicly to foreign examples.

As William James pointed out, nothing new can be accepted as truth unless we make it fit with the minimum of disturbance and maximum continuity into an original stock of truths. This continuity cannot be preserved in the USSR without referring to Lenin. Fortunately, versions of Leninism exist not only for "War Communism" but also for "NEP". Reform-oriented economists in the USSR have long since begun to search for support in the Lenin of "NEP." But even with Lenin's support, reforms will be difficult. How can the ruling class and party be persuaded that they should "return" to 1921?

The second immanent ideological possibility of opening the way to reforms lies in the alleged "scientific character of Marxism-Leninism" and in the promotion of the "scientific-technological revolution." To this should be added the realization of the growing technological gap between the most developed capitalism and the USSR.

Ever since the recent Soviet leadership changes, Western experts have been in search of the "really existing" Gorbachev. Leaders can certainly have a

great impact, especially if they, like Gorbachev, have much greater reformist potential than the ruling class, party, and system. Precisely this disproportion, however, represents the main obstacle to reforms. Of course, I also do not believe that Gorbachev has any well-defined plan of systemic reforms which he does not yet want to reveal due to tactical considerations. He himself is still searching for the "really existing" Gorbachev.

At the recent CPSS Congress, Gorbachev sharply criticized those who would "like to improve things without changing anything." After less than one year of experience as secretary general, Gorbachev has found out exactly how much resistance to reforms he faces: "Unfortunately, there is a widespread view that any change in the economic mechanism is to be regarded as virtually a retreat from the principles of socialism." For this reason I believe that the new leadership will initially try to make significant improvements through small changes. Of course, in two or three years it will turn out that this is an illusion.

Only then will the ruling class and party be confronted with the most difficult problem: How can radical changes be made without endangering strategic control over the state and society? Such deep reforms will require the rehabilitation of private property and private initiative in agriculture, crafts, trades, and in other service industries. It will also be necessary to permit market competition between state enterprises. These measures, however, would in effect necessitate the abandonment of some of the central dogmas of "Marxism-Leninism."

Even the mere suggestion of the need to introduce market competition in "socialism" causes severe protests. How much larger are they going to become, once it is necessary to live with the practical consequences of the market — bankruptcy of entire enterprises, unemployment, permanent restructuring of the

economy, etc.? Often the question is asked in bewilderment: How is it that "socialism" is incapable of fully implementing market reforms, whereas capitalism continually functions due precisely to market competition? But the main difference lies just in the fact that capitalism, ever since its beginnings, has been organically functioning on the market basis, whereas statism through the decades has accumulated unprofitable enterprises. If market criteria were to be introduced fully, a good part of the national economy would go bankrupt. The mere thought of the social dangers inherent in such structural changes startles even the most liberal statist.

A good portion of ordinary citizens will also bitterly resist such reforms. Universal state paternalism, as has already been pointed out by many scholars, is deeply ingrained in the population's consciousness. The entire "collectivist" political, economic and moral culture will have to be changed. It is wellknown that emigrants from the Soviet Union, although they represent a very selective group, have great difficulties weaning themselves from the social-economic security afforded by statism and adjusting to the market competition in the West.

If even common citizens do not easily surrender their "privilege" of having such material security through little labor, we can easily imagine the extent of resistance of the ruling class to any attacks on its privileges. I am not even referring to its most basic class privilege, i.e., monopoly control over the state and means of production, that could only be eliminated through an eventual revolution.

Due to the Bolshevik levelling egalitarianism in the past and the remnants of egalitarianism in their present ideology, statist attempt to hide numerous sources of income, services, and favors which they enjoy in addition to their nominal salaries. If all of these were to be translated into money and included

in the nominal salaries, enormous differences between their incomes and those of common citizens would become evident. Prior to the recent CPSS Congress, there emerged public moral criticism of some statist privileges. Immediately, however, the privileged began to justify themselves "morally": these are not actually privileges, but deserved compensations for hard work and responsibility. Allegedly officials do have much more important business than standing in line in front of stores, restaurants, counters, doctors' offices, travel bureaus, etc. And thus the ruling class instead of having to take responsibility and be blamed for the fact that "developed socialism" is still choked by shortages of elementary goods and services refers exactly to these shortages as the justification of its privileges.

The USSR confronts a long period of liberal reforms of statism, and not of further development of "developed socialism." Big oscillations, contradictions, resistance and conflict will inevitably accompany such reforms. The uneven level of development of class consciousness of the ruling classes constitutes the most significant limitation to the liberalization of statism in Eastern Europe. The ruling class at the center of the international statist system has been exceptionally rigid, and in any case more rigid than the ruling classes in some countries at the periphery. Whenever liberal reforms in Warsaw Pact countries have failed, the explanation could be found in the international statist encirclement.

Since Yugoslavia finds itself on the outside of this encirclement, it most clearly reveals the internal possibilities and the internal hurdles for the further liberalization of statism. The same holds true for the eventual transformation of this liberalization into an effective mass movement for democratic socialism. Hence the next volume in this series "From Marxism to the ideology of 'real socialism'," will be devoted to the study of Yugoslavia. The volume

which I have just completed carries the subtitle "From a theoretical to an ideological paradigm," whereas the next volume will have the subtitle "Yugoslavia: resistance to the ideological paradigm and its resistance."