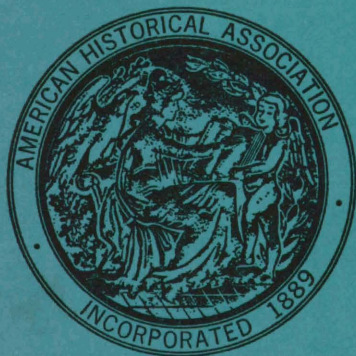


MARXISM SINCE THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

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WALTER RUNDELL, JR.

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BY ALFRED G. MEYER

The events of 1848/9 brought bitter disappointment to liberal and socialist radicals throughout Europe, dashed exuberant hopes for years or even decades, and produced a mood of despair and soul-searching that provided a turning point in the intellectual development of many of the Continent's leading minds. With some qualifications, the above statement applies also to the authors of the *Communist Manifesto* (as that document is customarily called), which had been published on the eve of the revolution. Anyone reading this summary of what Marx and Engels had come to believe will be struck by the sense of immediate deliverance expressed in it. To judge from the pamphlet, the two authors expected that the coming "bourgeois" revolution would not stop until it had turned into a revolt of the working class, which, in turn, would end exploitation, domination, and inequality forever. The evils of class society were about to be overcome.

Marxist theories, wide in scope and quite complicated, are extremely difficult to summarize.¹ At the grave risk of oversimplification, we might nevertheless attempt to sum them up as follows: According to Marx and Engels, history must be seen primarily as man's effort to master the forces of nature so as to secure for himself material security and comfort. History is therefore the history of *production*, and, since all production is carried out within the framework of an organized society, history is more specifically the development of social organization—human relationships and institutions seen as parts of an ever-changing productive machinery. History is progress because man's mastery over nature (the "forces of production") has steadily increased. It is also regression because in perfecting the forces of production,

man has created an ever more complex and ever more oppressive social organization (the "productive relationships"). With technological advance has come the growth of inequality, domination, exploitation, and the dehumanization of man. In describing the evil fruits of civilization, Marxist thought closely echoes that of Rousseau and early nineteenth-century romantic writers. According to the authors of the *Manifesto*, the economy of free enterprise, which they called capitalism, is the last stage in the dehumanization of man. In this stage of history, man has been converted into a commodity, whose labor power, talents, personality, whose every gift and energy is bought and sold in the free market. Liberation from this undignified state, they thought, would come through the abolition of commodity production: Instead of producing for the market, and for profit, modern industry should be geared to produce those goods that satisfy the needs of all society; and it could be used in this rational fashion only if private property in the means of production were abolished. This elimination of the capitalist class, they argued, was to be the task of the proletariat.

The premise on which the boundless confidence expressed in the *Manifesto* was based was their conviction that they were drawing a realistic picture of contemporary conditions and political constellations. More specifically, they believed that the working class was ready in revolution and needed only to be awakened by a document such as the *Manifesto* to a recognition of its own condition and its tasks. In fact, the image of the proletariat as the Chosen People which by virtue of its place in society, its state of organization, and its spontaneous grasp of reality (its "class consciousness") can be trusted to do the job assigned to it by history—this image is the cornerstone of all Marxist thought; and the development of Marxism can therefore be described in terms of the changing relationship between the ideology or its spokesmen, on the one hand, and the workers or the masses, on the other.

The events of 1848/9 revealed that the working class did not come up to these expectations and that, moreover, the link between Marxist theories and proletarian organization was as yet quite tenuous. Marx and Engels, to be sure, did not acknowledge this. They blamed the failure of 1848 on a host of complicating factors and never abandoned their confidence that the proletariat con-

formed to their image, and that the next crisis of capitalism would be the last. Yet, whether they realized it or not, they were in fact almost completely isolated from any significant mass organization or movement, and they did not manage to break out of this isolation for about three decades. True, Marx was to become the head of the so-called First International. But this International Workingmen's Association, an alliance of small radical groups, was not strong enough to be considered a significant political force.

For the time being, the activities of the two fathers of Marxism were therefore confined almost entirely to the realm of theory. Marx set out to study the economy of capitalism and to describe it in his major work. Both he and Engels, meanwhile, filled reams of paper with running comments on the politics of their day—they became political columnists; and the breadth of their interests as well as the massive learning they displayed were phenomenal. They engaged in this for a variety of purposes. For Marx it was the only way he knew how to earn a livelihood. But only a part of his journalistic activity was undertaken for that purpose. Much of the two men's comments on contemporary politics was simply an attempt at self-orientation in a confused and disappointing world. Some of the published writings obviously were designed to explain the failure of the revolution of 1848. Other works aimed to guide their followers and friends in developing a political program of action for the proletariat. This preoccupation with problems of political strategy is a significant shift from the pre-*Manifesto* period. Then Marxism had dealt with the revolution as an inevitable event. Now, while still treating it as inevitable, Marxism discussed methods by which the revolution's coming might be promoted more speedily. In formulating a program of action for the party of the working class, Marx and his followers, in line with this shift of emphasis, began to differentiate between the long-range and the short-range goals of the party, or, as they put it, between a maximum and a minimum program. While there are hints at such different levels of hopes and plans already in the *Communist Manifesto*, the increasing emphasis laid on the more intermediate goals is a direct consequence of the failure of 1848.

Marx died in 1883. He did not complete his economic research and analysis. Nor did he live far into the period in which his

doctrines became the official ideology of a powerful political movement. He only saw the beginnings of this development. The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the creation of strong social-democratic parties and their collaboration within a new international organization. These parties were firmly committed to Marxist doctrines. Marxism had at last acquired the mass basis it had always sought, by becoming wedded firmly to a European labor movement, which rapidly gathered strength in line with the burgeoning development of industry in the Western world. Capitalist society was changed profoundly by a burst of rapid industrial growth that brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity and raised the standard of life for all classes, including labor. The beginnings of social security legislation and the progressive widening of the franchise added to the sense of political and economic security that was beginning to be felt by the leaders of the working class as their parties grew and their press, their unions, their vast empire of organizations and associations expanded.²

Political success, however, was closely connected with an ideological disintegration that went on at the same time. In order to understand this statement, we must first take a look at Marxist doctrines around the turn of the century. One very subtle change had occurred simultaneously with the merger of Marxism with the labor movement: From the scientific theories of one man (or two men) it had turned into an ideology—the officially accepted doctrine of an entire set of political parties. Living thought had been turned into a codified catechism to which the social-democratic parties were far more solidly committed than Marx had been. A scholarly individual can afford to contradict himself, as long as he himself still has the capacity for intellectual growth; his epigoni will be far more reluctant to abandon any parts of his ideas. The very success of Marxism thus was contributing to its impoverishment.

Matters were complicated by two additional problems. One of them was the development of serious conflicts of opinion within the social-democratic movement, the development of wings and factions and deep political cleavages, which in the end became unbridgeable. The other one was the growing discrepancy between

the theoretical positions and the actual policies of the Marxist parties. The development of factions was immensely aggravated by this second, and more fundamental, factor.

Theoretically, the Marxist movement was committed to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, a system which it asserted produced wealth for the few and misery for the masses, and was bound to collapse in a vortex of crises. In practice, the labor parties were aware of their own growing strength and well-being; more and more their leaders came to believe in the staying power of capitalism; and very rapidly they became deeply committed to a policy of peaceful reforms within the framework of constitutional politics rather than violent revolution. Theoretically proclaiming socialism to be their goal, in fact they became increasingly more interested in bread-and-butter questions concerning higher wages, political office, and similar immediate benefits. Furthermore, while theoretically committed to the international solidarity of all proletarians, in practice they became increasingly enmeshed in the political life of their various countries and were thus drawn into the stream of modern nationalism. In short, the socialist parties of Europe were tamed into staunch supporters of constitutional democracy even while they eagerly held on to a doctrine proclaiming that no significant changes could ever be made peacefully.

This was only the first instance in the history of Marxism where strains and strife were caused by the difficulties of applying the doctrine to a society (or letting it guide the policies of a party) which did not correspond to the image of capitalism (or of the proletariat) outlined by Marx and Engels. When, in later decades, Marxism spread to less industrial countries on the borders of Europe and even to the really underdeveloped areas of Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the difficulties of using Marxism as a guide, and hence the possibilities of adopting widely divergent interpretations of the doctrine, were multiplied.

Once problems of revolutionary strategy moved into the foreground, they became controversial, and the formation of rival factions became inevitable. What became controversial were precisely the questions concerning the way in which the revolution should be promoted, and under what circumstances it should be carried out—the when, how, and who of the proletarian revolution.

The most central question, around which most other problems revolved, was the matter of defining at what point a society might be *mature* for socialism or the proletarian revolution—a puzzling question which had already prompted Engels to wonder about the paradox that the revolution could not be carried out successfully as long as it was necessary, and would no longer be necessary once it became feasible. The discussions concerning “maturity” thus dealt with the problem of when to revolt. It was connected with questions concerning the actors who should play the revolutionary roles. Naturally, the working class would rise and seize power. But controversies arose, and never henceforth ceased, about the relationship between the proletariat, on the one hand, and such other groups or classes as intellectuals, peasants or farmers, and national minorities. Similarly, the relationship of the trade unions or of the socialist press to the political organization became a matter of dispute. And, in turn, these matters turned into questions of organization and tactics; the “who?” of the revolution was closely linked with the “how?”, where discussions turned around the relationship between revolutionary violence and constitutional methods, between underground and above-ground organization, between systematic change and gradual reform. Controversies dealt with the meaningfulness of “bourgeois” democracy, the value of a general strike, and the question whether or not terroristic methods were permissible.

These discussions are still going on within Marxism, although the same questions are being asked in continually changing circumstances. Yet they must be asked ever anew, because Marx and Engels themselves did not provide sufficient answers to them, partly because they did not live long enough, and partly because the answers they did give are no longer meaningful as guides for action in a different world. One might say with some justification that the entire development of Marxism since the death of Marx is a series of variations on the themes struck in these problems of revolutionary strategy.

In the period we have so far discussed, which is that of the generation preceding World War I, these discussions were given a decided air of unreality or ideological obfuscation by the discrepancy between revolutionary theory and reformist practice we

have mentioned. Sooner or later, this discrepancy had to thrust itself into the consciousness of Marxist spokesmen and to demand a response. Three possible reactions to this lack of correspondence between theory and practice were open to the leaders of the movement: They could change their theories so as to make them fit their policies; they could change their policies so as to fit their doctrine; or else they could deny or obscure the existence of any discrepancy. All three solutions were advanced by various factions, and most of the controversies which developed within Marxism in the three decades before World War I were related in some way to the above three positions.

The first attempt to bring Marxist theory in line with changes in the capitalist system and in the nature and conditions of the working class was made around the turn of the century. The "heresy" resulting from this attempt was called Revisionism because it claimed to be a revision of the ideas of Marx and Engels. In fact, however, Revisionism came close to being a repudiation of Marxist ideas, and it can be regarded as the first in a long series of steps away from Marx made by democratic socialists in the last six decades. There has been a steady stream of erstwhile followers who have abandoned Marxism; and the Revisionists were the first major group to do so. Their intellectual impetus was given by Edward Bernstein, formerly Engels's secretary and friend, and one of the foremost spokesmen of German socialism. But Bernstein's ideas were echoed by outstanding leaders in all Marxist parties.

The Revisionists said out loud what in practice they had been doing for some time. They renounced the use of violence and virtually abandoned the theory of class warfare, which is so central to Marxist doctrine; instead, they affirmed their belief in democracy as the one and only road to socialism. At the same time, they re-defined socialism so as to strip it of all utopian features. Rather than see in it the abolition of commodity production and of private property, they identified it simply with a more equitable distribution of consumption goods and services. The Revisionists did not want to abolish the capitalist system; they merely wished to mitigate its alleged inequities. Together with the theory of class warfare, they also turned their backs on the notion of international proletarian solidarity. Instead, they stated their loyalty to their

own country and placed it higher than their identification with fellow workers across the borders. Revisionism furthermore abandoned the Marxist theory of the crisis and breakdown of capitalism and affirmed, instead, the staying power of the free enterprise system. Finally, the Revisionists thoroughly repudiated the most important Marxist methods of analysis, and also some philosophical assumptions that were mistakenly believed to be Marxism. Thus they replaced the so-called economic determinism attributed to Marx with a much more open-minded eclecticism. They denounced dialectics—that curious heritage from Hegelian philosophy which Marx adopted and adapted for his own thought—as meaningless hocus-pocus; and for the Marxist belief in certain inevitable trends in contemporary history they substituted a renewed affirmation of the duality of existence—a view of life which makes a strict separation between reality and ideals, between facts and values, between what is and what ought to be. In the thought of Marx, this difference had been virtually obliterated.³

Against such attempts to repudiate or revise Marx, most socialist leaders fought a stubborn rear-guard battle. Even though the policies of men such as Kautsky in Germany, Guesde in France, Plekhanov in Russia, and other “orthodox” Marxists, was not necessarily different from those of the Revisionists, they insistently upheld the letter of Marxist doctrines. Orthodox Marxists showed a fierce loyalty to the doctrine, either because it gave them emotional assurance or because they thought it was an indispensable means for maintaining morale in the workers’ movement, or yet because a theory of inevitable collapse and revolution could be used as a psychological warfare device with which to wring concessions from the bourgeoisie. Whatever their motives, they clung to Marxism as to an unchallengeable Holy Writ, claiming that it was the last word in social science, and that repudiating it was tantamount to betraying the cause of the proletariat. For the majority of orthodox Marxists, who pursued non-revolutionary policies, there remained the task of bridging the gap between theory and practice. They did this by reinterpreting revolutionary Marxism in such a fashion as to maintain the phraseology while denying its meaning, or else claiming that the doctrine yielded different conclusions in changed circumstances. If we have called

this a rear-guard action it is because this position could not be maintained indefinitely. In time, political differences turned out to be more important than doctrinal ones; and those orthodox Marxists who like the Revisionists were committed to democratic, constitutional, reformist methods of improving the workers' lot sooner or later became indistinguishable from the Revisionists even in theory, as their reinterpretation of Marxism, their transformation of a revolutionary doctrine into something akin to Fabianism, more and more amounted to an abandonment of the doctrine.⁴

Before leaving the orthodox Marxists, let us mention one minor, but interesting consequence of their theoretical work. That is the extension of Marxist doctrines into areas of inquiry to which Marx himself had not applied them (although Engels had begun to do so). Marx, to be sure, had believed that his was an all-encompassing theory of contemporary society and human history. But it is doubtful whether he would have claimed that his method of analysis was universally valid for all fields of knowledge. This, however is precisely what some of his followers claimed after his death. Orthodox Marxism, beginning with Engels, thus raised his theories to the level of a universal philosophy applicable even to the natural sciences. Except in the realm of artistic and literary criticism, where some stimulating work has been done by orthodox Marxists, the results of this extension have not been very encouraging. At the same time, the development of science and letters in the Soviet Union and other communist countries cannot be understood without realizing how thoroughly the Marxist believers in those countries have carried on the tradition passed on to them by orthodox Marxism.⁵

While the Revisionists sought to change theories so as to align them with reality, and the orthodox denied the existence of any need for such realignment, a radical wing of the Marxist movement, which arose in the last decade or so before World War I, attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice by leading the labor movement back to revolutionary politics and thus to revive the spirit of the *Communist Manifesto*. This radical wing was small in numbers but became important as the nucleus of the communist movement. Most of the radical leaders found their way into communist parties after the war, if only for a while.

All radical leaders shared a feeling of intense impatience with the caution and tameness of socialist policies and urged the adoption of a more revolutionary course. Most of them agree that conditions had changed since the days of the *Manifesto*. But while these changes might explain why the timetable of Marxism had not been followed according to schedule, they did not, in the opinion of the radicals, rob the basic features of Marxism of their significance. Capitalism was still beset by essentially the same "contradictions," and would be torn apart by them. Only, these contradictions had taken on different forms, as capitalism had spread over the entire globe. This was now the age of imperialism, the era in which Western industrial civilization was engulfing the formerly undeveloped areas of the world; and the tensions created by the many social transformations connected with these changes would create new revolutionary situations, and thus the confidence expressed in the *Communist Manifesto* was as realistic now as it had been believed to be in 1848.⁶

While the radical wing of the Marxist movement on the eve of World War I was broadly in agreement with the above statements, they were disunited on important points. One faction, whose ideas are typified by the writings of Rosa Luxemburg, saw the roots of reformism (as moderate socialism was often called) in the bureaucratization of the Marxist movement. The party functionaries' vested interest in a sprawling political, economic, and associational empire, they argued, had diverted the revolutionary workers' movement from its true aims. The domination of bourgeois-like intellectuals over workers in this political machine was stifling proletarian initiative. Luxemburg and people who thought as she did ardently believed in the revolutionary potential of the workers, if only the machine politicians would leave them alone. Echoing Marx, they confidently expected the spontaneous growth of proletarian class consciousness and the ripening of the revolution through unfettered mass action. Like the Syndicalists, they came to see in the general strike their favorite measure.⁷

A small faction of radical Marxists, led by V. I. Lenin, did not share this optimism. Instead, they believed that the working class could become a revolutionary force only if trained for its task by an outside agent. Moreover, if left to work spontaneously, the

forces of history might not go in the direction assigned to them by Marx, but might go astray, with chaos resulting. For this reason, Lenin and his followers argued in favor of creating a small elite of enlightened orthodox Marxists who would educate the proletariat and manipulate events so as to push the working class into the action for which history had predestined it. Instead of denouncing organization, as Luxemburg tended to do, Lenin believed in it as the most valuable tool for anyone who wished to make history.⁸

Lenin's distrust of the workers and his pessimistic appraisal of prospects for a spontaneously developing socialist revolution are at least in part explained by the Russian environment within which he had grown up. His country of origin was only in the beginnings of its industrialization. Socially, economically, and politically closer to the Middle Ages than to the twentieth century, it did not very easily fit into any Marxist schemes of analysis; and Marxism was difficult to apply to it. Within Russian Marxism, therefore, new and different controversies were bound to develop concerning the when and where, the who and how of the revolution. Marxism had come to Russia together with the beginnings of industrialism in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The acceptance of Marxism by revolutionary theorists and organizers was aided not only by the spectacular growth of the Marxist movement in the West, but also by widespread disillusionment with populism, a peculiar Russian adaptation of utopian-socialist doctrines that placed its hopes primarily in the Russian peasant as the promoter of revolutionary socialism. The Russian Marxists turned their backs on the peasant and staked their hopes on the workers. Yet in promoting a proletarian revolution according to Marxist formulas, Russia's backwardness had to be taken into consideration in defining the Marxist minimum program.

In defining the minimum program, all Marxists agreed that creating the preconditions for the proletarian revolution required the abolition of tsarism and all other traces of pre-capitalist conditions; and that this could be done only through a revolution. In other words, before the movement could think of its true aims, the bourgeois revolution would first have to be brought about so as to obtain capitalism and constitutional government in Russia.

Only afterwards would it be possible to place the proletarian revolution on the agenda. While Russian Marxists, with the exception of Revisionists, were generally in agreement on the need for these two revolutions, there were sharp conflicts over the implementation of this program. The widely ranging issues included the following: 1. the problem of timing, which naturally was bound up with the question of maturity; at what point was Russian society ripe for such action as had to be taken, and, once the bourgeois revolution had taken place, would it take many generations to prepare for the next step? Might it be possible to arrange matters so that the two revolutions would merge with each other? Or was there a middle road between these two extremes? Connected with this was the knotty problem of the relationship of the Russian revolutions to the hoped-for proletarian revolution in the West. Marx himself had wondered once whether a bourgeois revolution in Russia might not be the signal for the proletarian revolution in the West. Some of his Russian followers eagerly echoed these remarks, while others believed that Russia was too backward to initiate world wide revolutionary events, and that therefore all meaningful revolutions would have to start in the West. 2. No less controversial than the "when?" and "where?" of the revolution was the "who?". While Russian Marxists, of course, spoke in the name of the proletariat, they were not in agreement concerning the role which that class was to play in the coming bourgeois revolution. Some argued that this should be no more than a supporting role; others demanded that the working class assume leadership even in the bourgeois revolution because, echoing Marx, they distrusted the bourgeoisie to such an extent that they foresaw the liberals betraying "their own" revolution. Since in Russia the industrial workers were hopelessly outnumbered, the problem of who should make the bourgeois revolution was complicated, moreover, by the need for allies; and whether the middle class, the peasants, the national minorities, or any other groups were suitable allies, and under what circumstances, and how they should be wooed by the movement—these and similar questions were highly controversial. 3. Finally, in a country where literacy had not made nearly the strides it had made in the West, the relationship between leaders and the masses, between intellectuals and workers, was

far more problematical, and the conflict between those who staked their hopes on proletarian class consciousness and those who posited an enlightened elite to lead the revolution was sharper. These discussions inevitably were connected with arguments over party organization; and, last but not least, they were related also to questions concerning the relationship between legal and subversive methods of operation.

In short, all the problems discussed by Western Marxists were at dispute also in Russia, but they were complicated immensely by the backwardness of Russia's economic and political system, and by the far greater difficulties of organizing and running a socialist movement in an old-fashioned police state. It is therefore not astonishing that the Russian Marxist movement participated in all the currents of opinion and all the controversies that troubled the Second International as a whole, but that the divisive effect of these conflicts was greater. From the very moment Russian Marxism emerged as an organized party, that party was split into two factions which drifted further and further apart; and as early as 1912, Marxism in Russia in fact had formed two separate parties, each of which claimed to be the true and only Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. Of these, the Menshevik faction tended to adhere to the more slow-going program, the more moderate views, and the more democratic pattern of party organization, while the Bolsheviks tended to attract the more radical, more ruthless, and more organization-minded elements.⁹

The irreconcilable split that divided Russian Marxism was extended to the entire world-wide movement as a result of World War I and the Russian Revolution. The war broke up the Second International, at least for a number of years, because national loyalties proved to be stronger than the theoretical commitment of the socialist leaders to the idea of international working class solidarity. This, in turn, created an irreconcilable hostility between those socialists who supported their own countries' war effort and those who strove to transform the war into an international proletarian revolution. This conflict over the proper Marxist attitude toward the war was fought out with so much bitterness on both sides that after the war international collaboration among the Marxists was re-established not in one but in two organizations.

The main driving force behind this definite schism was probably Lenin, who during the war had made the firm resolve never again to work in the same organization with anyone who had supported the war effort of whatever was his country; and the Third, or Communist, International was created by him primarily for the purpose of keeping out those whom he considered traitors to the cause of Marxism.¹⁰ Ever since then, socialism and communism have existed as separate and hostile branches of Marxism, each accusing the other of having destroyed the unity of the world's proletariat.

While the divergent attitudes toward the war were the immediate pretext for the schism in the Marxist movement, a more fundamental cause was the difference of opinion concerning the Russian revolution and the Soviet state, and the methods and aims of the Bolsheviks in governing it. The year 1917 was a major turning point in the history of Marxism because Marxists came to power in that year for the first time. Disregarding the ephemeral Menshevik government of the Republic of Georgia and other ill-fated regimes, we are, of course, speaking about the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, the so-called October Revolution. The Bolsheviks came to power because they made skilful use of an utterly chaotic situation in which all other parties and groups were trapped by their timidity, their confusion, or their commitment to moderate measures.¹¹

The Russian revolution deepened the gulf between the two Marxist camps even further. In the realm of theory, this was because of disputes over the timing of the revolution. The very act of seizing power in a comparatively backward country ruined by a disastrous war, and also the rosy expectations and the radical demands of the Bolsheviks were denounced by moderate Marxists inside and outside Russia as dangerous and criminal recklessness on the part of power-mad adventurers. Later on, the drastic policies of the Soviet regime horrified many European socialists, and the regime itself was denounced by them as a travesty on socialism. In their turn, the Soviet leaders have never forgiven their former comrades for failing to support the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet state, and they have always considered the moderate Marxists their bitterest enemies.

From the point of view of Marxist theory, the Russian revolution was indeed a freak, a development that was unforeseen and in many ways unwanted, and was not in line with the revolutionary timetable set up by Marxism. Even the Bolshevik leaders at first considered their revolution in this light, but they mitigated their apprehensions by the firm expectation that the seizure of power in Russia would lead to a world-wide chain reaction of proletarian revolutions, so that then the Soviet regime, no longer isolated, would be supported by socialist governments in the whole civilized world. When this hope was disappointed, the Bolsheviks, in order to stay in power, felt compelled to take desperate steps, to institute a terroristic dictatorship that in many respects mocked socialist ideals. The desperate problems of governing a ruined, semiliterate country surrounded by hostile neighbors, the anomaly of the situation from the point of view of Marxist theory, and also the fact that Marx and Engels had provided only the sketchiest hints about the management of a society once it had been taken over by a socialist party, all these factors provided occasions for new and extremely exacerbated conflicts among the Bolsheviks themselves, conflicts in which many different points of view came to clash. There were purists and idealists who criticized every deviation from what they thought to be socialist norms of government and behavior, arguing with impatient or ruthless machine politicians who wished to get a difficult job done quickly and without undue scruples. Radicals, eager to usher in the era of full-fledged communism, clashed with cautious characters who pointed out all the difficulties ahead. And a host of disputes arose when leaders having these different attitudes proceeded to implement the program the party had established. For at least ten years after seizing power, the Russian Bolsheviks were fiercely disputing with each other, and the party at times was in danger of splitting. Only the ascent of Josef Stalin as the party's undisputed leader silenced these disputes.¹²

Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks, or, as they called themselves after the revolution, the Communists, tried as best they could to promote the spread of the revolution over the entire world. The creation of the Third, or Communist, International in 1919 was one obvious step in this direction. More specifically, the Communist

International was brought into life by Lenin in order to perpetuate the schism within the Marxist camp, to distinguish carefully between revolutionary communists and democratic socialists. In fact, once the Communist International had been created, formal schisms took place in every country having a Marxist party; everywhere two parties came to exist, a communist and a socialist, where formerly there had been only one.

We cannot in this pamphlet give an outline of the history and policies of the Third International and its member parties.¹³ We can only present a few principles underlying its activities and theories. Throughout its existence, the policies of the organization were confused by the dual nature of its motivation. On the one hand, its objective was to promote proletarian revolutions throughout the world and, possibly, also colonial revolutions in dependent areas. But the member parties were also expected to support the national interests of the Soviet state. And, although communists never admitted that these two goals might come into conflict, in fact they often did, because the national interest of the Soviet Union called for, among other things, peaceful co-existence and mutually fruitful relations with precisely those capitalist governments that the communist parties were seeking to overthrow. Because of the precarious position of Soviet Russia in world affairs during the first two decades or so after the revolution, the national interests of the USSR usually won out over the interests of promoting revolution abroad. At the same time, the conflict of principles produced considerable strain and conflict, and a great amount of turnover among leaders, in all communist parties.¹⁴

These strains were complicated by a subtle change that was taking place in the theories held by the communist leadership: communist Marxism began to incorporate into its theoretical framework ideas about the world of underdeveloped nations, and to fit the colonial revolution into its program of action. Taking the theory of imperialism as the point of departure, it is possible to revise Marxism into a rather novel theory of how capitalism is going to break down; and in imperceptible steps communist theory has undertaken this revision. According to the revised theory, capitalism in the nineteenth century saved itself from inevitable breakdown by expanding into the entire world through the export

of capital. This imperialist expansion, however, has now drawn areas into the orbit of modern capitalism that were hitherto outside of the stream of Western history, and these colonial areas now participate in the international class struggle. This class struggle more and more takes on national forms: What was formerly a struggle between the possessing class and the working class is now supplemented by a conflict between exploiter nations and exploited nations, and for this reason communism can incorporate the colonial nations' striving for independence into its program. Again, precisely how to make this accommodation became a matter of never-ending dispute. At the same time, it must be recognized in the West that this preoccupation with imperialism and therefore with underdeveloped areas was probably an important step in reviving the meaningfulness of Marxism in the modern world. The communists are the first who have dealt systematically with the problems of underdevelopment, and by thus obtaining a virtual monopoly in an important theoretical area, they have added to the attractiveness of their doctrine. At the same time, Marxism has become more realistic in yet another respect: Whereas the *Communist Manifesto* foretells the almost immediate deliverance of mankind from the evils of class society, the new theory of revolution derived from the thoughts on imperialism paints a much gloomier picture that incorporates a whole era of world wars and revolutions, thus drawing out the period of violence, and furthermore implies that the revolutionary take-over will have to be followed by a long period of economic construction, during which economic austerity and political dictatorship will prevail. The new communist theory of revolution thus incorporates a theory of totalitarianism, at least by implication.

Totalitarian government, however, in its turn has theoretical consequences. It tends to impose thought control and create an artificial intellectual conformity to a rigid dogma. This indeed has taken place in Russia and other countries ruled by communist parties. All fields of enquiry, from current affairs to philosophy, from social science to physics and biology, have been made to conform to doctrinal standards elaborated by party theorists, undoubtedly to the detriment of science and learning. The origins of this kind of anti-intellectualism are probably found in the un-

willingness of the communist regimes to describe their own societies realistically. They obviously do not wish to admit to their citizens, their party comrades, or even to themselves that communist societies have not yet done away with injustice and inequality, that they have failed in many of their aims, that hardship and sacrifice are an inevitable part of their regimes. Because they were unwilling to look at themselves realistically, they transformed their doctrine into a deceitful myth designed to prove that Soviet society is the best of all possible worlds.¹⁵

World War II and its aftermath wrought profound changes in the communist world. They led to the emergence of the USSR as one of the two leading industrial nations of the world; and they brought about the creation of a whole set of communist nations in Eastern Europe and East Asia, thus ending the isolation of the Soviet Union. Communist Marxism today is far stronger than it has been before; and it is likely to gain yet additional strength.¹⁶

These tremendous successes, however, have brought new theoretical and political divergences within the communist ranks, because communism today must operate in widely diverse areas and solve problems of distinct local character. It should really be astonishing if the governing problems of communist rulers in East Germany or Czechoslovakia could be solved according to rules of thumb that applied also to Northern Viet-Nam or China. As a consequence of the heterogeneity that has been introduced in the communist camp, conflicting views are now coming to the fore concerning the nature and government of communist societies. With due regard for changed circumstances, we can observe that many of these discussions echo the disputes that racked the Russian Communist Party in the decade or so after its coming to power; and this time it will be difficult for another Stalin to seize control and impose his will over the entire communist movement. In this sense, the unity of world communism, however artificially it was created, is now giving way to diversity. Moreover, the arguments over the nature and governing of communist states are further exacerbated by fundamental disagreements over the international policy that communism is to follow. While the radicals, whose views are stated by the Chinese leaders, insist that the world revolution cannot proceed without the application of additional vio-

lence, i.e., through another major war, the moderates, represented by the Russian communists, seem to believe that further gains can and will be made without violence. This disagreement is nothing else than a variation of the older argument between the communists and the socialists, or between the Bolshevik and the Menshevik fractions. In that sense, Mao may be said to be today's Bolshevik, and Khrushchev, today's Menshevik.¹⁷

Meanwhile, as Mao and Khrushchev still maintain comradely relations, there are anti-Soviet heresies that have split off from the communists, and which we should at least mention. Some of these splinter groups split off because communist policy seemed too conservative for them; others became critics for the opposite reason. The former group is typified by the Trotskyites, the latter, by Tito and his followers in and out of Yugoslavia. Regardless of the reasons that compelled them to break with communism, these and similar groups usually concentrate on procedural or organizational criticism: they score the dictatorial manner in which the communist parties are run and the bureaucratic government as well as the new class divisions that have arisen in communist countries.¹⁸

In the Western world, meanwhile, Marxism still exists as an intellectual and political current in its non-communist form. To be sure, the socialist parties in the Western world, and to some extent even those in Asia, have almost completely severed their ties with Marxist theory, thus concluding the evolution which began with the Revisionist rebellion. At the same time, interest in Marxism has increased quite markedly in certain intellectual circles of the Western world. To some extent, this was stimulated by the collaboration of many diverse elements with communists during and shortly after World War II. In addition, the crisis through which the Western world has gone since the end of that war has increased our awareness of some of the fundamental defects of our social system. For anyone who concentrates his attention on such negative aspects of contemporary social life, Marxism offers considerable attraction. Two elements of Marxism exert this attraction. One is the message of inevitable doom, derived from the analysis of the capitalist economy. To a slowly growing number of people in the West, this seems still to be the most cogent explanation of the world in which we live. The other is the humanist side of Marxism—

the emphasis on all the evil features of modern civilization, the romantic anger at all institutions and practices that degrade, oppress, dominate, or exploit some men, and the sanguine belief in the inherent goodness of mankind, which, under favorable circumstances, can and will be liberated from its fetters and corruptions. Since the end of the last war, there has been a rapidly increasing interest in this humanist philosophy of Karl Marx and in the very early writings of his in which it is expressed. Finally, there is some increase in the interest that social scientists have in Marx as a precursor or pioneer of contemporary social science. Western scholarship at first ignored Marx. After his death it began to take notice of him, but only in order to sneer at him or refute him; and only gradually is he now being recognized as a scholar with advanced, provocative, and quite disturbing views, but nonetheless a man of genius and tremendous learning, some of whose contributions are only now being recognized as part of contemporary scholarly method.¹⁹

NOTES

¹ The complete works of Marx and Engels have never been published in any language, but a Russian edition is in preparation, and a substantial number of their works are available in various English-language editions. The most scholarly bibliography available is Maximilien Rubel, *Bibliographie des oeuvres de Karl Marx* (Paris, 1956), which should be consulted together with the same author's *Karl Marx: essai de biographie intellectuelle*.

For biographies of Marx and Engels, see Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx*; E. H. Carr, *Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism*; Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx*; Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*; B. Nicolaevsky & Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx*.

General introductions to Marxist theory are also provided by the following works: G. D. H. Cole, *The Meaning of Marxism*; Sidney Hook, *Marx and the Marxists*; Sidney Hook, *Toward an Understanding of Karl Marx*; L. B. Boudin, *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx*; Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx*; Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*; E. B. Mayo, *Introduction to Marxist Theory*; Alfred G. Meyer, *Marxism, The Unity of Theory and Practice*; John Plamenatz, *German Marxism and Russian Communism*; Rudolf Schlesinger, *Karl Marx: His Time and Ours*; Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*; Adam Ulam, *The Unfinished Revolution*; Vernon Venable, *Human Nature, the Marxist View*; Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station*.

Sharp critiques of Marxism include the following: Eugen Boehm-Bawerk, *Karl Marx and the Close of His System*; W. Gurian, *Bolshevism, Theory & Practice*; Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. II; John U. Turner, *Challenge to Karl Marx*.

² On the history of Marxist Socialism between 1870 and 1914, see G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vols. II and III; Alexander Gray, *The Socialist Tradition*; J. Lenz, *The Rise and Fall of the Second International*; James Joll, *The Second International, 1889-1914*.

³ Samples of Revisionist thought are Edward Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*; Max Eastman, *Marxism, Is It Science?*; Henry DeMan, *The Psychology of Socialism*.

⁴ A few of the works of Karl Kautsky, foremost orthodox theorist, have been translated into English; so have some of G. V. Plekhanov's writings. The earliest writings of Lenin also are in the orthodox tradition.

⁵ Among the best-known examples of literary and artistic criticism by Marxists are Franz Mehring, *The Lessing Legend*; Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*; and the voluminous writings on European literature by Georg Lukács.

⁶ Theories of imperialism were inspired by a non-Marxist work, Hobson's *Imperialism*. Marxist contributions include R. Hilferding, *Finance Capital*; Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*; V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism*.

⁷ Few of Rosa Luxemburg's writings are available in English. Her biography is given by Paul Frölich, *Rosa Luxemburg*. See also M. K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland*.

⁸ While no complete translation of Lenin's works exists in English, there are several multivolume editions of selections and a host of individual books, pamphlets, and speeches. For biographical accounts of Lenin, see David Shub, *Lenin*; D. S. Mirsky, *Lenin*; Mark Aldanov, *Lenin*; René Fülöp-Miller, *Lenin and Gandhi*; Maxim Gorki, *Days with Lenin*; N. K. Krupskaja, *Memories of Lenin*; I. D. Levine, *The Man Lenin*; L. D. Trotsky, *Lenin*. Introductions to Lenin's theories are provided in Leopold H. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism*; Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*; Donald W. Treadgold, *Lenin and his Rivals*. On Communist theory in general, see also Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon*; Nathan Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism*; Nicolay A. Berdyaev, *The Origins of Russian Communism*; Stefan Possony, *A Century of Conflict*. Also the works cited in notes 9 and 11 below.

⁹ On Marxism in Russia, see the works by Haimson, Meyer, Treadgold, and Berdyaev cited in note 8. Also Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution*; Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*; John Plamenatz, *German Marxism and Russian Communism*; Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism*.

¹⁰ The origins of the Communist International are treated in Angelica Balabanoff, *My Life as a Rebel*; Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the War*; E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Vol. I; Franz Borkenau, *The Communist International*; L. D. Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International*; Michael Florinsky, *World Revolution and the USSR*; Hugh Seton-Watson, *From Lenin to Khrushchev*.

¹¹ Classical accounts of the Russian Revolution are the following: N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution*; John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World*; William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921*; L. D. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*; Victor M. Chernov, *The Great Russian Revolution*; E. H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia*, Vols. I-III.

¹² On the oppositional struggles within the Russian Communist Party, we now have a major work, Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*. See also Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin*; *The Prophet Armed*; and *The Prophet Unarmed*; Alexander Erlich, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate*; Gustav Hecker, *Moscow Dialogues*; Boris Souvarine, *Stalin*; Ruth Fisher, *Stalin and German Communism*.

¹³ The literature on the history of world communism and the Third International is of vast proportion. As introductions, we might name the following: Hugh Seton-Watson, *From Lenin to Khrushchev*; Franz Borkenau, *The Communist International*; G. D. H. Cole, *Communism and Social-Democracy, 1914-1931*; Michael T. Florinsky, *World Revolution and the USSR*; Stefan Possony, *A Century of Conflict*; Mario Einaudi et al., *Communism in Western Europe*.

¹⁴ For the clash between revolutionary and national interests, see the works by Borkenau and Seton-Watson in note 13; chap. vii of Alfred G. Meyer, *Communism*, and the literature cited on p. 208 of that work; also G. Hilger & Alfred G. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies*.

¹⁵ A convenient summary of Soviet Marxism is provided in John Somerville, *Soviet Philosophy*. See also Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*; Gustav Wetter, S. J., *Dialectical Materialism*; Raymond A. Bauer, *The New Man in Soviet Psychology*; and chap. viii of Alfred G. Meyer, *Communism*.

¹⁶ The literature concerning communist successes since World War II and the ensuing cold war is of very large proportions. Convenient bibliographies can be found in Hugh Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*; and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*.

¹⁷ The internal dissent within the communist bloc is treated in Paul Zinner (ed.), *National Communism and Popular Revolt in Eastern Europe*; Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*; Howard Boorman (ed.), *The Moscow-Peking Axis*; to cite only a few introductory works.

¹⁸ Trotsky's criticism of Soviet Russia is summarized in his *The Revolution Betrayed* and in his biography of Stalin. In the United States, the Trotskyite position is advanced by a small political sect, the Socialist Workers Party. Tito's position can be learned from Adam Ulam, *Titoism and the Cominform*; H. F. Armstrong, *Tito and Goliath*; S. Clissold, *Whirlwind*; F. W. Neal, *Titoism in Action*; and the authorized biography by V. Dedijer, *Tito*. A further development of Titoism is the criticism of Tito's own policies expressed in Milovan Djilas, *The New Class*; and *Anatomy of a Moral*.

¹⁹ Western accounts stressing the humanist heritage in Marx include Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*; the forthcoming book by Robert Tucker, *The Alienated World of Karl Marx*; Vernon Venable, *Human Nature, The Marxist View*. We might also mention two interesting attempts to find a synthesis of the Marxian and the Freudian schools of thought: Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*; and Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*.

For the relationship of Marxism to social science, see Alfred G. Meyer, "Marxism and Contemporary Social Science," in *The Centennial Review*, Vol. III, No. 4, 423-436.

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