

## CONCLUSION

The historical continuity of the Marxist theory of the state consists in the fact that although it indicates theoretically the primary aspects of the bourgeois state power and its role in enforcing class relations, it nonetheless offers political solutions that perpetuate those same relations and consequently the same form of state. Engels, for example, pointed out that suffrage under capitalism was an instrument of bourgeois rule, a means to deceive the masses, and yet expected suffrage to deliver the socialists into power. Lenin emphasized that armed force, not parliamentary politics, was the central issue in the struggle for power, and yet he consistently engaged in and advocated parliamentary politics at the expense of the armed organization of the working class. Marx declared that the bourgeois state must be "smashed," but in practice limited this measure to non-parliamentary republics. All advised that the workers must create their own form of state, and yet offered as a model Paris Commune type reforms entirely acceptable to capitalism and particularly to the middle class. And as we have seen, the variations on this general theme are seemingly endless.

The ability of the socialist intelligentsia to attract the working class depends in large part on its skill in articulating what the workers experience in their daily lives. If the intellectuals were able to tell the entire truth, they would likely talk themselves out of the picture altogether. By a subtle and often unconscious mechanism of class instinct and conditioned prejudice, however, the intellectuals stop short of class reality and begin adapting their scientific views to their prejudicial ones. Thus while a premise of socialist theory is that the liberation of the working class must be achieved by the workers themselves, this is interpreted broadly enough to include the leading and ultimately dominant role of the socialist intelligentsia.

In addition to this ideological monopoly, the radical intelligentsia is favored by the fact that the periods of greatest working class unrest generally coincide with the periods of greatest middle class unrest. Hard times, either of war or economic depression/recession, tend to put all social classes into motion, although their apparent motion must be distinguished from the actual. Four recent historical examples will illustrate this point best.

The mechanized horror introduced by the First World War alienated wide sections of the intelligentsia that had previously supported or at least been neutral towards their respective governments. Young middle class officers could no longer watch the rank and file slug it out from a comfortable distance, but were themselves being blown to bits by indiscriminant fragmentation bombs. The pacifistic, internationalist and antigovernment sentiment fostered by the intellectuals' disillusionment resulted in a greater sympathy for the ongoing socialist movement, and particularly for its left wing, the Russian Bolsheviks.

Where, as in Germany, Eastern Europe and Russia, the working class movements were most active, restless intellectuals and other middle class elements often enrolled in or allied with the established socialist or emergent communist parties. Ostensibly, these people gave themselves to the cause of working class emancipation, but in reality simply joined other intellectuals who had previously gone through the same process of middle class radicalization. At the very moment when the ruling classes were most vulnerable and

the workers were in the best objective position to break the state power, the influx of intellectuals and petty bourgeois sympathizers gave the socialist intelligentsia the additional forces for insuring that even the most radical revolution would not violate general middle class interests.

Likewise, the alliance between the workers' parties and the official petty bourgeois parties (for example, the Left S.R.'s in Russia), did not mean that the middle class had abandoned its own interests in order to join the workers. It simply indicated that a section of the middle class recognized that its interests could be fulfilled through such an alliance. Thus when the working class moved, large sections of the middle class also moved, but at its head and at its flanks, and this encirclement effectively contained the working class movement.

A similar phenomenon was repeated during the 1930s worldwide depression. Here the primary cause of middle class disaffection was not war, but economic hardship. Respectable petty bourgeois were ousted from their comfortable occupations by the hundreds of thousands, and so sought the political means to reclaim their rightful place in class society. At the same time, the spontaneous workers' movements were employing unprecedented tactics (armed confrontations with police and strikebreakers, sit-down strikes and plant seizures, etc.) to enforce their economic interests.

It is no coincidence that the 1930s witnessed the most rapid development of both fascist and socialist tendencies within the middle class. As expressions of middle class outlook, the main difference between the two ideologies is, after all, simply that the fascists openly proclaim national chauvinism, whereas the socialists only practice it. The struggle between fascism and socialism during the 1930s was not a fight between social classes, but a fight within a single class to determine which fraction would have the honor of leading the middle class to victory. As it turned out, the fascists won the battles, but the socialists won the war.

The popularity of socialism during the 1930s among both the middle and working classes developed from a number of factors. In the first place, the existence of established socialist and communist parties with definite programs of economic reform beneficial to the middle class provided a natural attraction for newly ousted but politically unformulated elements. The extant socialists and communists were, so to speak, the pioneers of middle class salvation, who had already marked and cleared the way to the final aim. In addition, the propaganda tasks of the socialist intelligentsia were simplified by the influx of unemployed artists, writers, actors and other professionals into the movement as sympathizers or active party cadre. And further, the socialist intellectuals were joined by representatives of the traditionally populist rural petty bourgeoisie through various attempts at creating worker farmer alliances.

Perhaps the most significant influence of middle class sentiment on the workers, however, occurred within the trade union movement itself. Increasing unemployment and business failures within the middle class forced many former insurance salesmen, former managers, ousted farmers, ex-students, etc., to take working class jobs when they could find them. Since these new arrivals to the working class were generally more articulate, better educated and more uncomfortable with factory life than common workers, they naturally

gravitated to and assumed leading positions in the industrial union movement. Whether or not these middle class trade union leaders viewed themselves as socialists or (as was often the case) had connections with one or another fraction of the socialist intelligentsia is immaterial. Their class influence was conducted through the simple affinity between trade union and middle class reformism. Thus in addition to the ideological, political and cultural environment created by the middle class radicals, the workers were given their economic leadership as well.

When the workers struck or seized factories to enforce the right to unionize, to establish better working conditions, shorter hours, or a living wage, it was primarily the socialist intellectuals, the new arrival trade unionists, and labor aristocrats that benefited the most. The already privileged craft unions benefited, since the higher wages won through hard struggle by the industrial workers meant an automatic increase for the skilled trades. The trade union leaders benefited, since the establishment of industrial unions meant the creation of an extensive union bureaucracy and a middle class standard of living for its officialdom. And the socialist intelligentsia benefited, since greater working class activity meant greater political influence, the ability to win reforms from the government, and not unimportantly, more credibility in fundraising, a primary source of income for the socialist intellectuals themselves. Again, when the workers moved, sections of the middle class moved. But while the workers won only minor improvements in their situation, the middle class elements won a new way of life.

A generation later, the 1960's student and national minority rebellions provided one of the most graphic examples of the coincidence of working class and middle class unrest. This movement was unique in that its underlying causes included not only the Vietnam War and civil rights injustices, but the inability of capitalism to gainfully absorb what was in fact an overproduction of middle class intellectuals. Conceived during the postwar baby boom, the sons and daughters of the middle class had matured by the mid-1960s and began to overpopulate the universities and professional occupations. The superfluity of educated youth and the scarcity of viable middle class occupations resulted in a widespread disenchantment with the system, and a portion of the intelligentsia dropped out from the intense competition on the excuse of finding alternatives. One of those alternatives was, as might be expected, political activity within the working class.

By the 1960s, however, the majority of socialist and communist parties had settled into such reformist respectability that they could no longer attract the new generation of radicals. Instead of attaching themselves to the old socialist movement, the more militant intellectuals created their own: the New Left. By the early 1970s, the New Left had, in turn, split into a number of trends, the most populous of which was the "antirevisionist" Marxist-Leninist movement.

When, as in France during May, 1968, or in the U.S. during various strikes and trade union reform efforts, the working class movement began to gain momentum, it was already inundated with socialist intellectuals and ex-student "workers" willing to lend a hand, and in fact to assume leadership.

And more recently, the coincidence of working class unrest and middle class opposition movements throughout Eastern Europe and within Russia repeats the same basic formula

with an ironic twist. The common ground on which both the working and middle classes stand is the standard of living. Solidarity did not, after all, initially strike for free markets or pluralism, but against price increases in life essentials. It is at the head of Solidarity, and at the head of the other East European reform movements, that the mixing of intellectuals and trade union leaders results in political platforms that, while preserving a socialist, working class cast, will promote those conditions most favorable to the middle class as a whole.

To be sure, socialist intellectuals are often the motive force behind valid trade union reforms won through the workers' collective action. But the workers ought not thank them on that account. Historically, trade union reformism, economic strikes, and even labor legislation are all activities rank and file workers can handle very well on their own. So no special debt is due to the anxious intellectuals who agitate for beneficial reforms. On the contrary, regardless of the subjective good intentions and sincerity of the socialist intelligentsia, its propaganda and organizational efforts within the working class are objectively geared towards perpetuating the workers' subordinate position and thus securing the privileged status of the middle class. The workers must therefore at some point learn that the leafleteers who appear during shift changes or the ex-student militants who agitate at union meetings are not attempting to break the old chains of class oppression, but are in reality forging new ones.

The actual class motion of the socialist intelligentsia may not be apparent in the early stages of a working class movement, but it becomes obvious as soon as they take state power. The practical experience of the past 70 plus years, however, is a high price to pay for such an elementary education. As we have seen, from the *Communist Manifesto* onwards, the Marxist theory of the state has all along inadvertently indicated the actual intentions and prejudicial limitations of the socialist intelligentsia. The present-day socialist states, with their class privileges, bureaucracy, suppression of strikes, and so on, are thus in no way a perversion or revision of Marxist theory, but its fulfillment.

If the working class is to go beyond this historical stage, it must reclaim the leadership of its own movement, and oppose the theory and practical program of the socialist intelligentsia with its own. While it may be a matter of speculation as to whether this will actually come about, there is no doubt that middle class intellectuals themselves will do everything in their power to postpone it. Marxism-Leninism is, after all, the last of the truly great religions, and if its influence in the working class dies, the last hope of the middle class dies with it.