

THE COMMUNIST

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M A Y 1968

Number 15

ECONOMIC THEORY AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The revisionists who attacked Stalin in 1956 and after made a pretence of attacking him for deviating from Marxism. Perhaps many of them believed at the time that they were upholding Marxism against Stalin's distortions of it. But in objective fact "Stalin's errors" meant "Marx's errors". The substance of the revisionist position was not that Stalin distorted Marxism but that Marxism was erroneous. But theory tends to lag behind practice: the revisionists broke with Marxism in practice long before they began to write

off "Capital" in their theoretical writings. It required a decade of revisionist practice before they became daring --or degenerate-- enough to openly attack "Marx's errors". Recently the first comprehensive "refutation" of Capital by a modern revisionist made its appearance: "Economics And Ideology" by R.L. Meek.

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'THE COMMUNIST' is published by Dave Laurie for the COMMUNIST WORKERS ORGANISATION.

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In Capital Marx undertook to reveal the laws of motion of capitalism. Scientific socialism based itself on Marx's analysis of capitalism and its contradictions. If this analysis was false then the scientific nature of Marxism was

an illusion giving consolation and idealistic dreams to the oppressed, as with Christianity 1900 years earlier. Meek quite definitely regards Marxism, not as a science, but as just another ideology, which 100 years ago took note of certain superficial phenomena of capitalism but by no means made a scientific analysis of its essential laws. He writes:

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ideology, which 100 years ago took note of certain superficial phenomena of capitalism but by no means made a scientific analysis of its essential laws. He writes: "Now it is a simple fact that most of Marx's 'laws of motion' have not revealed themselves on the surface of economic reality, at any rate during the last quarter of a century and at any rate in the advanced capitalist countries...Clearly we should not 'blame' Marx for this any more than we should "blame" Ricardo for the even worse failure of most of his predictions. In Marx's time the tendencies which he described and analysed had in fact been revealing themselves on the surface of economic reality -or at any rate were commonly believed to have been doing so (my emphasis; B.C.)-for some considerable time. All Marx really did was to extrapolate these tendencies into the future." (Page 109.)

So it is not even certain that Marx even gave an accurate description of the surface phenomena of mid-19th. century capitalism: Meek thinks he might only have retailed what 'were commonly believed' to have been the surface phenomena. Marx might only have compiled a list of popular illusions about the superficial aspect of the system, and mistaken these illusions about superficialities for the fundamental laws of motion of the system. In other words, Marx, as far as a scientific political economy goes, was either a fool or he was a bloody fool.

Meek gives what he considers to be the main laws of motion that Marx claimed to discover; 1. Falling rate of profit; 2. Increasing severity of cyclical crisis; 3. Concentration of capital; 4; Increasing misery of proletariat. He comments: "Now of these four laws I think it is fair to say that during the last half-century only the third has manifested itself on the surface of reality in a reasonably unambiguous manner, at any rate in the more advanced capitalist countries. In the case of the other three laws, things turned out to be substantially different from what Marx expected". (Page 126/7). Or in plain language they weren't laws at all.

THE BOURGEOIS WORKING CLASS.

A closer look at Meek's comments on the law of the increasing misery of the proletariat will be relevant to a controversy that has gone on in the anti-revisionist movement since 1964.

Since 1966 the Finsbury Communist Association has been peddling the notion that the British working class is a labour aristocracy which collaborates with the British imperialists to exploit the colonial workers in return for a share in the surplus value extracted from the colonial workers by imperialism. This was criticised from a Marxist point of view mainly by the late Frank Shieff of Forum, and by the C.W.O. The F.C.A. replied with the cry of 'trotskyist'.
At a public meeting of the 'Spirit of Bandung Committee' held in

March 1968 an American journalist, Mrs. Edwards, expanded on the F.C.A. view, explaining that the workers in the imperialist countries are a labour aristocracy whose objective class interest lies in helping imperialism to suppress the national liberation movements. Strikes in the imperialist countries, she declared, were struggles between various imperialist forces to determine the sharing out of imperialist super profit. The objective class interests of the working class as a whole in the imperialist countries to suppress the national liberation struggles which endangered imperialist exploitation.

These fascist views were put forward in the name of Marxism and were enthusiastically supported by the F.C.A., (I.Kenna declaring that even the workers on national assistance grants were part of the privileged labour aristocracy), A.H.Evans (editor of Britain's first anti-revisionist paper in 1964), and thirty or forty students.

Theoretical support for these views is to be found only (apart from fascism, Toryism and social-democracy) in the ultra-right wing of revisionism, among the Marx critics, Meek, like Mrs. Edwards, the F.C.A. etc., equates the value of labour-power with subsistence wages: with "'subsistence' in the ordinary sense of the word" (Page II), i.e. just above starvation level. Labour power sells above its value if wages enable the worker to buy such 'luxurious' as television sets. Marx expected that wages would remain at subsistence level-or go down from it. That is the meaning of the law of increasing misery. "...the prediction of 'increasing misery' was not a minor or incidental part of Marx's analysis. On the contrary, it formed an essential and extremely important constituent of his general theory of the transition from capitalism to socialism...And the prediction of 'increasing misery' is not by any means the only one of Marx's predictions which has been falsified by the facts: it is merely the leading species of a genus which embraces a significant number of Marx's most famous and most crucial 'laws of motion of capitalism' ".(Page 126).

"The most effective answer I have heard to those who deny these facts was given at a meeting by Mr. J.R.Campbell held a few years ago...'I live in a typical London working class suburb', said Mr. Campbell, 'and my neighbours are typical London working class people. If those neighbours of mine are the end-product of a long historical process of 'impoverishment' all I can say is that their grandfathers must have been rich men' ". (Page 123).

In fact what Meek, Campbell etc. ridicule is their own caricature of the law of increasing misery which they put forward many years ago in the name of Marxism, and which they now refute as Marx's law. Marx never suggested that there was a law of absolute impoverishment. He did not define the value of labour as the cost of maintaining it at marginally above starvation level. His wages theory did not recognise any upper limit except the total product. He wrote a pamphlet to refute the notion that there

4. was an 'iron law of wages' that made trade union activity futile. He described the value of labour historically as the cost of reproducing labour power at the living standard which the workign class could compel the bourgeoisie to recognise as normal (or vice versa). It is established historically in the class struggle, not physiologically (Only its lower limit, starvation level, is established by physiology).

The pseudo Marxist bourgeois intellegentsia (Meek Dobb etc.), petty bourgeoisie (Kenna etc.) and the labour aristocracy (Campbell etc.) have no subjective experience of the conditions of life of the mass of the workers in Britain, and between them have not as much of the scientific outlook as a flea. Their arguements are the exacts. arguements put forward by Bernstein in 1897. All they see is the increased quantity of things in the capitalist market. They see only the rise in money wages. They dont bother to find out to what extent this is mere inflation, and how much goes in direct and indirect taxes. They dont bother to find out the increasing percentage of wages that goes in rent.

If we take the case of a married worker with only one child, who gets a take-home pay of £15 per week (and who is therefore, nowhere near the bottom of the working class in this respect) and who has to rent a furnished room-can it be said that the social misery which he has to undergo is less than a worker in an equivalent position had to undergo before 1914?(As to the 'luxury' items such as television sets which the oppurtunists always mention in this respect: these extend social oppression in the cultural field and disrupt the elements of working class culture. Religion was not regarded by Marx as a luxury but as an opiate. Television in a bourgeois society has the same function as religion, and it certainly has not a higher content of culture).

Marx's law of misery refferred to social misery. Social misery is not an absolute (as starvation is) but a relative matter. It is judged by standards which are established socially not physiologically. To represent it as a law of absolute impoverishment is to caricature Marxism. And it is doubtful whether absolutes can be measured in this respect apart from the absolute fact of starvation. (This matter needs more comprehensive treatment than it can recieve here).

" STALIN'S ERRORS ".

" My generation of Marxists were brought up to believe that mass unemployment could never be eradicated under capitalism; and it is not very long ago since we were told on the highest authority that the industries of the major capitalist countries would operate more and more below capacity in the post-war world". (Page 128)

James Connolly said that the only true prophets were those who carved out the future which they predicted. Stalin's prediction about the world market was certainly also a statement of intent. It has been proven wrong. No one can deny that. Things have turned out better for capitalism, in the short run, than Stalin predicted in 1952. Stalin was wrong. Meek points out that he was wrong. This too is no mere academic observation. Meek and his ilk do not only point out that Stalin's prediction was false: they were instrumental in making it false. Stalin's prediction about capitalist industry working more and more below capacity was 'disproved' mainly by the economic and political consequences of de-Stalinisation.

At a critical moment in the development of the capitalist world market modern revisionism came to the aid of capitalism. It liquidated a great part of the socialist camp, disrupted the anti-colonial struggles, facilitated the development of neo-colonialism and thereby greatly relieved the pressure on the world market. If, over the past 15 years, there had been a united socialist camp from the Pacific to Central Europe, continuously revolutionising itself internally and developing farther and farther away from capitalism, and pursuing a coherent revolutionary policy externally (and it was on the basis of such a situation that Stalin's prediction was made) there is no doubt that the cyclical crises of capitalism would have been far more severe than they have been and that capitalist industry would have been forced to work increasingly below capacity; and it is more than likely that the absolute growth of the capitalist world market would have been stopped, which would spell absolute doom for capitalism.

The only reason why this has not happened is because of the seizure of power by the modern revisionists in the Soviet Union and E. Europe. This has led to a considerable extension of the capitalist world market (there is no doubt about this: even the revisionist World Marxist Review continuously states that the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. belong to the same market).

The 'Keynesian Revolution'

And it is not a matter of a Keynesian revolution but of a revisionist counter-revolution. But of course Meek prefers to talk about a 'Keynesian Revolution' than about his own treason. He writes: "Marx did not appreciate that 'Bourgeois' economics would eventually come round to a frank and widespread recognition of the fact that the economic process was not after all free from 'inherent hitches' ". (Page 182).

In Marx's day and in the half century following his death, bourgeois economic theory was virtually useless to the capitalist economy. Its function was to engender metaphysical confusion in the field of political economy in order to hold back the political development of the working class movement. But in the past half-century the capitalist system has come close to death twice. In 1918 it gained a reprieve through the development of social-democ-

racy. In the 1950's it gained a second reprieve through the development of Khrushchevite revisionism. By the 1930's bourgeois economic theory had become an absurdity. It was producing books about books about books. The development of the Soviet Union and the chronic slump of the 1930's drove it into the heads of certain bourgeois economists that unless something drastic was done there was very little future for the system. Then there began a frantic of economic processes with the object of enabling the capitalist class to take steps to modify the trade cycle. Keynesianism was born.

Keynesianism, and the more modern input-output analysis, did not, as has been claimed by the revisionists, make bourgeois political economy scientific once again. They did not concern themselves with political economy. They are mere developments of economic technique which enable the capitalist state to intervene in the trade cycle. Keynes and Leontiev were no more political economists than cost accountants or market researchers are.

Keynesianism, coupled with the development of modern revisionism has enabled capitalism to modify its trade cycle so as to avert slumps of the pre-war kind. But the boom and the slump are an example of the unity of opposites. The measures taken to modify the slump mean that a boom of the old kind becomes impossible, since the slump was a product of the boom and vice versa. The effect of these measures is a more or less chronic state of crisis.

The historical laws of capitalism have not been eliminated by the 'Keynesian method'. And Keynes and his successors have not had a word to say about these laws. They are strictly business economists: not political economists. The revisionists too have substituted economic technique for political economy, and thus have become Keynesians.

There is nothing in Marx's writings which denies the possibility of the bourgeoisie, if the system lasted long enough, finding out enough about the functioning of the trade cycle to modify its functioning. If they had abolished the trade cycle they would have proved Marx wrong. They have not abolished the trade cycle: whatever illusions opportunists like Meek may wish to circulate, the specialist economists of the bourgeoisie have themselves no illusions on that score.

Meek also rejects the Marxist theory of value (i.e. the theory that the value of a commodity is the amount of socially necessary labour time needed for its reproduction). This theory, he says, is fearfully abstruse and complicated. It had, he concedes, a certain polemical rise in Marx's day, but it has now become worthless (See Page 105). He quotes a bourgeois obscurantist, Joan Robinson who thought it bad form that Marx should drag his theory of labor into even his theory of prices. Meek thinks that that was an right in the 19th. century. but: " Today...it does seem to me that

Marx's method of making the quantitative tie up between economics and sociology tends to obscure the impotence of the infusion of sociology rather than the reversal". (Page I06-Translation: If it keeps on harping about about class exploitation all the time, Marxism will find it more difficult to make headway with the bourgeoisie). " IN my more heretical moods I sometimes wonder... whether much of real importance would not be lost from the Marxian system if the quantitative side of the analysis of relative prices were conducted in terms of something like the traditional supply and demand apparatus..." (Page I06).

Generations of bourgeois economists, from Petty to Ricardo, laboured to see beyond mere price fluctuations, the most superficial aspect of the system, to its basic laws. Building on their work Marx laid bare the fundamentals of the system. The working class learned from Marx how to abolish the system of capitalist class exploitation and build socialism. And now in the name of Marxism, revisionism would have the working class abandon Marxist political economy and go back to a supply and demand algebra of which Marx is contemptuous in Capital.

Why does revisionism propose that? Because Like Keynesianism its objective is to help the functioning of capitalism. There is no doubt about this. The only use which Meek sees for Capital in a 'Keynesian' economy is that it "...may still be useful as a sort of awful warning of what might happen if the tempo of social legislation and trade union activity were allowed to slacken". (Page I09).

Apart from that, "what now remains of Marxian economics...?" (ibid) Very little. Meek has already written an obituary on Marxism: "In the long run, let us face it- none of us can expect to go down in history as more than just another genius: and no one is exempt from the universal law of the mutability and eventual diffusion of all systems of thought". (Page I28).

Meek sees Marxism as already living in 'diffusion' (and clearly thinks it should have diffused about 1890). In its diffusion certain aspects of it will be absorbed by bourgeois economic theory: there will be a 'sort of infiltration of Marxism ideas into economic theory' (He uses the words of Joan Robinson, who has been labouring since the 1930's to bring about the 'diffusion' of Marxism). This 'infiltration' has already occurred to some extent. Even an unmistakable bourgeois like Roy Harrod is now a bit of a Marxist it seems.

Under the influence of the 'mighty impulse given by Keynes', Bourgeois economic theory has become scientific." Keynes helped to pave the way for a new type of economic thinking which may well transcend all previous economic systems". Because of the inadequacy of Marxism, and the development of scientific bourgeois theory, 'for the first time in the history of modern economics some kind of 'synthesis' has now been possible' (Page 222).

8. Marxism is to be scrapped except for certain aspects of which can find a place in the economic technique of capitalism.

Meek must of course disagree with Marx's statement that after the of Ricardo (1827) the bourgeoisie, because of the strength of the working class movement, become incapable of further developing the science of political economy; and that bourgeois economists then ceased to be scientists and became 'hired prize-fighters' of the bourgeoisie.

It must be conceded that it would be misleading to describe Meek as a prize-fighter. He's more like a spiv.

B.Clifford.

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YUGOSLAVIA PART 4.

Support for South Korea.

Tito's main concern after breaking with the socialist camp was to establish a position for Yugoslavia among the 'neutral' countries, and gain a following for Yugoslav type socialism amongst the non-communist left in other countries.

It was during the Korean War that the usefulness of this position to world imperialism became especially clear. When the war broke out, the President of the Yugoslav Federation of journalists (also editor of Review of International Affairs) wrote:

"the discussion is first of all who is guilty of aggression in this conflict". (Review of International Affairs 27-7-1950).

Long technical articles on the lines of 'On the Problem of ascertaining the Aggressor' were published in the main Yugoslav English language journal (Review of International Affairs). The question of 'aggression' was not seen in class terms not even in national terms, but cloaked in legalism and moralising.

However, after a while a more openly political line began to emerge—a line which opposed North Korea and supported South Korea and imperialism. In September 1950 the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kardelj made an official statement:

"Yugoslavia has...always supported the right of the Korean people to unification, to independence and to elect their own government and choose a way of life without any influence from foreign powers. Unfortunately this did not come to pass in Korea. This country became the object of struggle between foreign interests, struggling for domination of the world..." (therefore) "...the armed actions of the North Korean government are not leading to the true liberation of the people..."

"the peoples of Yugoslavia cannot help comparing the events in Korea with the fact that the furiously aggressive campaign being carried on ceaselessly with socialist Yugoslavia by the Cominform governments, headed by the U.S.S.R....

All their clamour about peace and the aggressiveness of others will not be able to conceal their share of the responsibility for the war in Korea and the threat to world peace in general". The Yugoslav government was going to take a neutral stand.

Thus the official position of the Yugoslav revisionists was that the South Korean puppet government was the innocent party in the war. The fact that but for the U.S. it would never have come into existence, let alone maintained itself, was not mentioned at all. Because the socialist camp supported the North Korean government (which was actually composed of anti-Japanese fascist fighters, who had liberated the country) it was labelled the aggressor.

However, we can agree with one aspect of Kardelj's statement: he compares the opposition of the socialist countries to South Korea with their opposition to Yugoslavia. He does it to 'prove' the aggressive nature of socialism towards supposedly 'peace-loving' neo-colonies like South Korea and Yugoslavia, but he only succeeds in throwing mud at himself by coupling Yugoslavia with reactionary South Korea.

The 'Review of International Affairs' developed an all-out attack on the socialist forces in Korea. Editorials referred to: "the attack on South Korea"---"the aggressive policy of the U.S.S.R. and the policy of suppressing liberation movements of peoples fighting for national unification and self-determination". "Korea was being used by Moscow for the attainment of its imperialist policy". (27-9-50 and 4-7-51). When the Chinese communists came to the help of the anti-imperialist forces, Kardelj said: "just as we were against the North Korean attack on South Korea and just as we were against the armed intervention of the U.N. forces, so we must be against the Chinese intervention in Korea, also". (3-1-51).

By opposing the anti-imperialist forces in the Korean war the Yugoslav modern revisionists enabled many of the pseudo-left forces all over the world to escape from the unpleasant duty of supporting the anti-imperialist side. For instance the trotskyists 'International Socialism' group in England also felt able to adopt a neutral position. There can be no doubt that there are similar pseudo-left forces today who would wish for a Trotsky or a Tito with sufficient counter-revolutionary guts to attack Ho Chi Minh and release them from the embarrassingly awkward position of having to support a Stalinist revolution because of its popularity. Of course these counter-revolutionary tendencies have only enough courage to attack the Vietnamese revolution in the glaring publicity of the public house.

OTHER YUGOSLAV FOREIGN POLICY.

It should also be mentioned It should also be mentioned that Tito supported the Union of Egypt and Syria in 1958.

"The union of Egypt and Syria...is now a powerful centre of attraction for the Arab peoples and also constitutes a solid base for stabilising peace in that part of the world." (Report to the 7th. Congress of League of Yugoslav Communists).

This union took place for the principle reason of smashing the strong Syrian communist and left movement which was too strong for the Syrian ruling classes to crush on their own. (See The Communist. August 1967).

In April 1953 B.Vukovic wrote an article in the Review of International Affairs explaining the nature of the U.S. This article in its way is a masterpiece of apologetics for imperialism. He explains that the U.S. did not have an aggressive policy because it is economically powerful. "In the contemporary world the chief danger to world peace comes from the Soviet Union and its aggressive policy". However Vukovic finds it rather hard to explain why the Soviet union always supported the revolutionary forces and the U.S. the reactionary forces. The answer is simple. The Soviet Union 'harnesses' the colonial movement to its ends. This forces the U.S. to "compromise in several places with obsolescent colonialism. If the U.S. did not do this it would be defeated and then the liberation movements would find out about the 'imperialist character of the U.S.S.R.". So its all really for their own good.(!).

THE U.S.S.R. and YUGOSLAVIA.

In our articles up to the present we have shown how economically and politically Yugoslavia under Tito became progressively more entrenched in capitalism, how the economic 'reforms' brought about an unplanned free market economy open to investment by imperialism. The only thing that the Yugoslav modern revisionists cannot fairly be accused of is inconsistency. Since 1948 they have pursued a steady course. It is therefore a good indication when judging the politics of other countries and political trends to examine their attitude to Yugoslavia.

Up to 1955 the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe steadfastly opposed the Yugoslav revisionists and exposed the un-Marxist nature of their politics. So firm was this attitude that even trade ceased between them. Yugoslavia even appealed to the U.N. in 1951 to get the socialist countries to behave. The motive factor in this firm attitude was the communist leadership of the C.P.S.U. under Stalin, which took the initiative in exposing modern revisionism.

However, after Khrushchev had consolidated his position as Stalins usurper the Soviet attitude underwent a very sharp change. Khrushchev became a man of peace much like Tito. In June 1955 Khrushchev visited Belgrade where he came to an understanding with Tito. Khrushchev declared:

"we have seen that in spite of the difficulties experienced by Yugoslavia as a result of the disturbance in relations with our two countries, Yugoslavia has not sacrificed her sovereignty and has completely preserved her national independence in face of the imperialist camp". (World News. 18-6-1955).

It only seemed that way!

The two revisionist leaders signed the Belgrade Declaration, amongst the principles of which were the

" recognition and promotion of peaceful coexistence of peoples, irrespective of their ideological differences and differences in social structure, which presupposed co-operation between all states in the sphere of international relations in general and economic and cultural relations in particular...

cessation of any and all forms of propaganda and misinformation and all other activities which sow distrust...

recognition of the fact that the policy of military blocs heightens international tension, undermines confidence between peoples and increases the danger of war".

Pravda welcomed the Declaration as being 'in accord with the interests of the working class in all countries" (3-6-1955); whilst the Peoples Daily (Peking) described as 'having a good effect on the world situation' (See World News 18-6-1955). Here it must be pointed out that this was not only a complete change in principle for the C.P.S.U. but also for the C.P.C., for up to that time China had disappointed its liberal fans by completely supporting the exposure and isolation of Yugoslav revisionism.

What happened is really quite simple. In all the Communist Parties there is a constant struggle between opportunism and Marxism. After the 2nd. World War the opportunism in these parties on a world wide-scale took on the form of modern revisionism. The Yugoslav C.P. was the first C.P. in which the opportunist side captured the control of the party.

In the C.P.S.U., Stalins death left the Marxist forces leaderless and in their struggle with the opportunist forces they too lost. The C.P.C. was no exception. A long struggle took place and is still taking place between these two sides. In 1955-57 the opportunist forces were dominant. They threw the weight of the C.P.C. behind Soviet revisionism, and thus helped to isolate the Marxist forces in all the CP's (for it is strange that this abrupt turn in policy was accepted so meekly). However the opportunist forces in the C.P.C. were not able to maintain their dominant position for more than a couple of years. The marxist forces were fortunate in still having their leadership headed by Mao and were able to continue struggling until they were able to regain the upperhand. The result of their gradual regaining of control was confused period in 1957-63, when the international communist movement was subject to a mixture of revisionist and marxist principles.

Next months article will continue to examine the attitude of the international movement towards Yugoslavia--- Angela Clifford.

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THE INTERNATIONALISTS.

It is now roughly a year since the 'Internationalists' group made its appearance in London, but no attempt to assess its significance has yet been made in the anti-revisionist movement. The Internationalists 'Necessity for Change' conference held last August was published in the preceding months in 'Workers Broadsheet', and anti-revisionists were urged to support it. Subsequently the L.W.C. decided that the Internationalists leadership was opportunist, but failed to give the reasons for this change of opinion. At the final day of the conference a number of anti-revisionist groups, including the L.W.C., the Camden Communist Movement, and the Finsbury Communist Assoc., delivered messages of support for the Internationalists, while subsequently dismissing them in practice, though making no attempt to assess their significance.

If the approach of the anti-revisionist groups to the Internationalists had been more principled it is possible that the development of the Internationalists would have been more positive. In August 1967 the Internationalists was a vigorous student movement with great potential. It was not a Marxist movement, though Marxism was talked about. But up to that point it was undoubtedly a positive movement, and it could only have developed by becoming Marxist. It did not become Marxist, and inevitably it degenerated. It became a petty-bourgeois movement parodying Marxism. It ceased to have a positive content and became a source of confusion. It became merely one more of the many groups which are obstacles to the development of a Marxist movement.

A good example of how it parodies Marxism is its view of theory and practice. Supporters of 'The Communist' who attended the 'Internationalists' conference in Aug. 1967 criticised the view of the Internationalists leadership that practice was always primary, showing that this was contrary to Marxism, and showing that in the present situation in Britain theory is primary. Subsequently the Internationalists modified their position:

"Starting from the hiatus between theory and practice we can see that society is divided into classes of opposing interests antagonistic to one another, e.g., producers...and exploiters... We can see that the guardians of the hiatus help the bourgeois class and the expositors of the hiatus help the proletarian class, (Thought Control page 21) "Under imperialism the hiatus between theory and practice comes to maturity...The hiatus between theory and practice is the ideological effect of the system of exploitation and the consequent alienation of the producer from the product" (The Hiatus Between Theory and Practice page 2) "This is the system in which theory and practice have become diametrically opposed entities 'ibid page 4) "The hiatus between theory and practice was an advance from the retrogressive feudal consciousness. Capitalism was progressive in its early stages because it provided the masses with a scientific theory of the rights that a man can obtain in particular conditions"(ibid page 5).

Here a number of points arise. Why use the word 'hiatus' instead of 'contradiction', if both mean the same thing, since contradiction is the term always used in Marxism? Secondly hiatus (a gap) does not mean the same thing as contradiction, nothing like it. Thirdly even if it did the statement is wrong-or even meaningless. And lastly if 'hiatus' is not intended to be confused with the Marxist concept of contradiction, the differences should have been clarified.

A statement about economics is garbled in the same manner. Under imperialism it is said: 'A commodity having an exchange-value will have priority: but this exchange value is without regard to use value, which has become irrelevant. The commodities with more and more exchange-value turn out less and less value. This leads to over-production and over exchange, in terms of all forms of commodities, resulting in general crisis. Individually the crisis leads to emotional disturbances and ultimately to general breakdown...'

(ibid p.6.)

Here we may have a stringly felt subjectivist impression of things what we most definitely have not is scientific political economy. About 10 years ago J.P. Sartre said that Marxism was the only valid philosophy, but that the marxists had failed to develop therefore he had to be an existentialist. Existentialism existed merely 'in the margin' of marxism, and when the marxists arose from their dogmatic slumbers existentialism would become unnecessary. Meantime existentialism supplied what marxism was failing to supply. Sartre therefore was justified in circulating existentialist mystification.

The immediate question that comes to mind is: Why, in that case, didn't Sartre attempt to develop Marxism instead of developing a non-marxist attack? The same question can be asked of the Internationalists, who make essentially the same defence of their position as Sartre. Certainly by making up their own peculiar language, and by parodying Marxism, they are not helping things. They say: "It must be made very clear at this point that the way in which the Internationalists have developed is not the way any other organisation will develop. The only reason that the Internationalists developed in this manner was due to the fact that there has been no genuine Marxist-Leninist party to give revolutionary leadership to the people. Because there was no guidance, and because there was overt hostility to revolutionary ideology, the Internationalists had no other choice but to follow their own chosen course of action. The Internationalists firmly believe that only Marxist-Leninist Parties can creatively guide them, and must be developed to guide the people."

(Thought Control Page 22).

This is to say there is no Marxist Party therefore we parody Marxism and refuse to take the development of a Marxist Party as our aim. We would be marxists if there were a genuine Marxist Party, but since there isn't one we are not. But while parodying Marxism and developing our own peculiar ideology we never fail to stress the necessity for a marxist party to be developed by others. Nobody else, however, is entitled to develop their own peculiar ideology. We alone are justified in doing that.

Hegel remarked about German historians: "With us everybody invents something peculiar for himself, and instead of writing history we keep trying to find out how history should be written". And with us everybody talks about the need to develop Marxism; and instead of subjecting himself to the task of contributing to the task an orthodox (scientific) Marxist analysis of the situation, he invents something peculiar for himself in the way of subjectivism ornamented with Marxist phrases.

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SAY UNCLE! A REVIEW

The British premier of SAY UNCLE! by American Lester Cole was held at Unity Theatre in Camden Town on Friday 19th. April 1968.

The Unity production of this play was accompanied by a historical account of the struggle in Vietnam called Johnny, I hardly Knew You. This act exposed the hypocrisy of the U.S. leadership and also the way in which they have been forced to prolong and escalate the war. Even though this act ended with a cry of 'Victory to the N.L.F.' and was quite well acted, the political content was very much that of the Hampstead middle-class intellectual, by portraying the sufferings of the Vietnamese people instead of their tremendous victories and achievements.

Say Uncle! itself was not really well produced, even though some of the acting was good. The bad production spoilt the acting which at times was not at a high level when American accents were forgotten and so on.

The play begins with a group of young Americans are going through their final medicals and security checks in a draft centre, and we all know where they are headed!

The humour is often good and some of the characters portrayed well. There is the All-American (Fascist) Boy, who can't wait to get at those 'commie-gooks', and the Black Power supporting Afro-American, or the non-political Afro-American who would rather have an Army career even at the risk of death in Vietnam because he is dying in Harlem any way. And there is of course those who oppose the war.

The political content of the play should have come mainly from those who opposed the war, and it did. But again these youngsters who opposed the war opposed it on the basis of the senseless killing and the waste of American resources and men.

In other words the political opposition was on a classless basis, therefore the content of the play was a classless opposition to the war in Vietnam which can not be a consistent opposition to the war in Vietnam. Nor can this be effective and influential as propaganda among the working class, because when the workers take up a political stand even if it an extremely right-wing political stand, morals play no part in bringing it about.

The most effective way in influencing thinking among the working class on the question of the war in Vietnam is not by telling them that people are suffering in Vietnam, but by showing that it is in their material (first and foremost, even though political, cultural and social could be added) interests to support a victory for any force that is striking blows at imperialism.

They wont come to Unity intheir thousands if plays like this are shown but these that do will be far more influenced in giving their support for the N.L.F.

Or, are these plays produced for the benefit of the working class?

Dave Laurie.

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READERS LETTER.

The Edt̄or recently commented to the effect that supporters of the proletarian revolution in our country, should work with the 'cream of the working class. The British Y.C.L. rank and file and milit- ants were included among the 'cream'. The point I would advance for consideration is that the majority of then Y.C.L. membership is the scum, the trash of class harmony and collaboration, containing the 'big dreams' rubbish imposed by the Bourgeoise on the proletariat- made possible by the present moment of the historical deve lopment of the class struggle.

My evidence is empirical, and lacks an overall objective view. I may in the pitfall of the blind man assessing the elephant-but I stand to be corrected (or affirmed) on a scientific basis.

The present leadership of the Y.C.L. is more representative of the membership than seems the situation in the Soviet Union, and most certainly than China's, Khrushchev gang in the Peoples Republic of China. As such it is not a typical example of the revisionist few usurping power over the solid red majority. Rather it climbed the 'ladder of success' in a 'bussiness manner' to lead the swinging stink of the past tradition of 'ban the bomb' cowardice and sexual libaryines, on to the promised land of the new happy hippie consumer society-Anglo-Soviet style. (As peddled by the new monthly Consumers Challenge).

Objectively is this the situation? As far as I know there are no details of the composition (only evidence of the ideological and practical decomposition) class- background and present occupation of Y.C.L. members. Of my empirical knowledge of the Surrey and London area the following is true:

The majority are not from the manual production side of the working class, nor are they engaged in the manual productive occupations. There are a few like myself, engaged in manual productive occupations, but for almost all of those few the choice of doing this kind of a job (as is my case) is for other causes than a natural consequence of trying to earn a living, developing from their class backgrounds. The number that come from working class backgrounds of other sections are engaged in white collar jobs (non-manual productive or unproduc- tive) as a consequence of development from their class backgrounds and that section of their class. And on the whole, in some manner

or other carry forward the illusory aspirations of their parents. A large number come from petty-bourgeois backgrounds, and carry the characteristics and ideology contemporary to this background. Their occupations are various natural consequences of development from this class, usually downwards, as the polarisation of the proletarian and bourgeois class develops, and, the weaker petty-bourgeois become objectively proletarianised, while subjectively frantically developing their ideology.

Also today a large number of working class people change sections heading up the ladder via 'brains' and some even manage to reach objectively the petty petty-bourgeois class. (Those that become bourgeois are only a poxy handful-in all senses of the word) but few of these bother with the Y.C.L.

As a requirement of the revisionist plot to disable the people, clear class struggle is never waged, least of all internally, and no guidance is given to combat the ills of the various class-backgrounds and emphasise the great revolutionary internationalist and patriotic heritage of our people especially the working class and their heroic forefathers such as mentioned. As a result commodity ideology - the alarming evident result at home of the present stage of class struggle in the world reaching the height of Imperialism v anti-imperialism-commodity ideology, which has been developed by the monopolists, as a cultural tool in a last ditch attempt to fool the people and conceal the political and economic and historical truth of the capitalist system, is further strengthened.

Conclusions from this are.

1. The hard core of the working class(youth) is not in the Y.C.L. and never has been. 2. The majority of the Y.C.L. membership carry forward the line of their parents, which is acceptance of petty-bourgeois ideology (in a new form) is a good thing. 3. Consumer ideology in opposition to anti-imperialism is strengthened. Therefore the majority of the Y.C.L. membership is far from cream, but scum floating on top of the turbulent sea of our people. The people will rise! All scum will be swept aside! So why swill about with it? "The party organisation should be composed of the advanced elements of the proletariat; it should be a vigorous vanguard organisation capable of leading the proletariat and the revolutionary masses in the fight against the class enemy"-(Mao Tse tung).

R.Finlatson.

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The above letter refers to a statement made by Dave Laurie at a recent meeting, when he said something to the effect that it is ludicrous to aim our propaganda (even at its present low level of development) at the 'average mass worker', when even the advanced sections, the 'cream', of the British working class have not been won over to genuine Marxist-Leninist politics. (We could go in to the reasons for this, but they don't concern us in this reply).

When asked to describe what he considered the 'cream' he included sections of the C.P. militants and said that there were still some good elements in the Y.C.L., mainly the few young industrial workers who have remained in the Y.C.L.

This letter merely disputes the point of whether the Y.C.L. (i.e. small sections. In passing, at this particular meeting discussing this subject the most sensible remarks were made by a Maoist Y.C.L. er) can be included as part of the cream of the British working class or not, but the main topic of the discussion and what is far more important is whether we should aim to win over the 'cream' before the 'average mass' of the working class.

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LITERATURE AVAILABLE POST FREE.

STALIN: Economic Problems of socialism in the U.S.S.R. (1952) 3/-
Revisionism and Imperialism (a study of revisionism in Economics) 9d.

Mao: Quotations 3/-.

Subscriptions to 'THE COMMUNIST' 4/6 for 6 months
also ' THE IRISH COMMUNIST' 9/- for 6 months.

Orders to Dave Laurie, 75, Cromwell Avenue, London N.6.

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UNITY THEATRE.

Unity theatre, the workers theatre in Camden Town is now going through a crisis, resulting from the growth of revisionism. The way in which revisionism breeds oppurtunism and outright corruption was strikingly demonstrated in the E.T.U. where the party leadership was exploiting the Union.

In Unity theatre corruption of the basest kind has gone as far as ever it went in the E.T.U.: A long time ago Unity stopped being a genuine workers theatre and became merely a stepping stone to the West End theatre for carreerists. It became alienated from the working class. Though situated in the middle of a working class area it was ignored by the workers.

A few years ago a campaign to raise money for rebuilding the theatre was instatuted, and was successful. The middle class ellements tried to use the rebuilding to get the theatre moved to Hampstead, which would be more suitable for its middle class function. This provoked a strong reaction from the working class rank and file which was not expected by the revisionists and which caught them with their pants down. The more open oppurtunists were pusted from the domination of the Management Committee. The revisionists however were entrenched in the trust which controlled the funds but was not open to democratic lelection. The

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Trustees refused funds to the management committee for the functioning of the theatre. The new Management Committee in 1967 found itself faced with huge debts run up by the previous (revisionist) Committee. (£600 was owed to the Brewers). Then it came to light that there was about £6,000 missing.

At the A.G.M. held this March the democratic nature of the new management committee was strengthened. Alfie Bass (who climbed to the West End through Unity) was brought along by the revisionists to talk about 'us workers' and get the revisionists out of a tight spot with his reputation, which shows the contempt in which they hold the working class. But Alfie's reputation cut no ice, and his affected chumminess found no response except hostility.

The Trustees (Alan Bush, Alfie Bass and Mr. Platt Mills) presented their accounts. In March 1968 it was £7,000. No money was given by the Trustees to the Management Committee in the intervening months. Yet instead of increasing through accumulated interest, it decreased by £2,000. Where did it go? Platt Mills refused to account for it. But we can be sure that some revisionist parasite knows where it went.

The corrupt revisionists in Unity, like those who exploited the E.T.U., are heading for total exposure. The working class is not as dumb as they thought. It will not consent to be a doormat for sham communists any more than for open capitalists.

P.S. Phil Piratin, the former communist M.P. for Stepney who has become a millionaire through property speculation has been closely involved in these manoeuvres, and though not a member of the Trust has been in attendance at its meetings.

A UNITY MEMBER.

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** THE MARXISM OF JAMES CONNOLLY: CENTENARY MEETING **

IS TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY MAY 17th. 1968
AT THE CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE
LONDON W.C.1.
(Nearest Tube . Holborn).

ORGANISED BY THE IRISH COMMUNIST ORGANISATION
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