REASONS for ANGER

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A caricature of the author by the Dutch artist, Fokko Mees.
more firmly upon the people the fiction that the powers which rule them are the expression and not the source of national existence.

There is nothing in that propaganda of cultural nationalism that can serve even remotely the interests of culture. That the artist or the writer should deal with what he knows is common prudence in the interest of his art; that he should feel under the obligation of conforming to a nationalistic prescription on the ground that it is national, that he should on that ground confine himself to “the American scene,” or any other scene, or be enslaved by a tradition because it is national, is not to the interest of what he shall produce.

Art, literature, science, and thought have, on the contrary, no more dangerous foe than nationalism. Their interests are international. The far-flung freedom of cultural contacts is the very breath of their vitality, the condition of their growth and sanity. That has ever been so; it is more momentously true today than at any time in the past. The propaganda, be it Nazi or other, which would set up Chinese walls around any culture does an ill service to all those nations whose salvation it professes to seek.

The Human Mind in Revolution

The turmoil which disturbs the contemporary mind began to manifest itself at a time when bourgeois civilization stood on a pinnacle of unshaken power, prosperous and triumphant. In the closing decade of the last century those symptoms were already discernible which have today ripened into a crisis.

In all externals the scheme of bourgeois civilization seemed justified by the richest fruits. The world was marching to the tune of “progress.” The cornucopia was flowing. Technology daily brought forth new marvels; and people speculated wistfully, in those fin de siècle days, upon the wonders which the new century surely held in store. Science, aglow with enthusiasm, was opening up undreamed-of horizons and battling for new freedoms of thought. The mysteries of life, of man’s upgrowth from animality and savagery, were being unveiled. Literature echoed with paean and flashed Pisgah views. Poets sang of the onward march and of the coming brotherhood of man.

Yet into the hearts of men a secret uneasiness was creeping. A breath of doubt and cynicism was abroad.

Recovery Through Revolution, Covici-Friede, 1933.
Instead of basking as hithertofore in the mellow dignity of broad-based custom, the minds of men and women put forth strange exploratory tentacles in search of some unknown thrill of change. The complacent standards of established taste suffered the shocks of startling eccentricities. Exotic, semibarbaric modes, *art nouveau*, revolt against the seemingly secure academic canons surged into movements that pronounced the eternal ideals old-fashioned. A new literature and a new art took overt pleasure in the sport of *épater le bourgeois*. Oscar Wilde was the wicked young god of the English decadents. Baudelaire and Verlaine were in many quarters displacing Tennyson and Browning. Swinburne was chanting bacchanalian lyrics. The Russians were the rage. On the boudoir table of an evil-eyed Salome, Aubrey Beardsley placed the novels of Zola. In moral Victorian England the word was going around that it was smart to be naughty, and amid a satirical cynicism tinged with disillusion, a new generation was seeking solace in outbursts of frivolous gayety that prefigured the jazz age.

What had happened?

The great social structure which had blossomed into nineteenth-century civilization was the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie. A liberal priest had proclaimed the new sovereign ruler when, in the eighteenth-century revolution, the dictatorship of aristocrat and autocrat had been overthrown. "The Third Estate should be everything," the Abbé Sièyes had declared. The power of that dictatorship was supreme. The material, social, economic foundations of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie seemed as solid as rock. But the emotional, sentimental, intellectual premises that constituted its mental founda-

ations were showing signs of sagging. Men and women, whether clearly conscious of the fact or no, believed no longer in the solidity of those foundations as their fathers and their grandfathers had believed.

No more sharply defined and rounded mental scheme ever served as the basis of a great social structure. The principles of "bourgeois ideology" were more categorical than any Marxian orthodoxy which is heard of today. The dictatorship of the bourgeois bore the inspiring name of democratic liberty. The language of liberal democracy was couched in the phrases of a lofty moral idealism. Its policies were ennobled by humanitarian sentiment, inspired by concern for the welfare of the lower orders and anxiety to carry the torch of bourgeois civilization to backward peoples and to shoulder the white man's burden. The moral sentiments of civilized democracy centered upon the sacred institutions which were the cradle of society: the rights of private property, the hearth, the home, the family. Reverence for the dignity of womanhood, the purity of childhood, the holiness of the marriage tie—those were the emotions which, together with the nobility of labor, the duties of industry and thrift, and respect for law and order, lent their glow to thought and purpose, inspired art and literature, heightened patriotism, and were the bulwarks of civilized society.

For over a hundred years those deep realities had furnished the unchallengeable mental foundations of the social order. In their contemplation the mind had been filled with an agreeable self-approving optimism which was of the nature of a duty. To divert attention from that moral excellence to such things as social injustice,
suffering, poverty, was a mark of depravity, in much the same manner as concern with certain sexual values was admittedly a stigma of degeneracy. There were, of course, in the world, things which lay outside the rounded scheme of beseeching bourgeois optimism—things unpleasant, unseemly, base, ugly. But, as in art only the pleasant and pretty were admissible, so in every outlook. To seek out things unseemly and unpleasant was the morbid propensity of base and ignoble minds. To be virtuous was to look upward, so as not to see the ground on which one trod.

Yet before the century of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie had drawn to a close, the whole structure of that "ideology" was crumbling down in the minds of thoughtful Europeans. While yet no current consciousness of clearly formulated criticism had exposed the colossal falsity of that ostrich ideology, human feeling, surfeited with the orgy of moral righteousness and lofty idealism, had revolted against the sheer fulsomeness, meanness, and ugliness of the outward expression of that complacency, in life, in art, in sentiment. No feudal, aristocratic, despotic culture of the past had brought forth such intrinsically sordid mediocrity as bourgeois democratic liberty. Voicing the revolt of wounded human sensitiveness against its repellent offensiveness, the founder of the French realistic movement in literature had gone so far as to declare that "to hate the bourgeois is the beginning of all virtue." The blatant hypocrisy of those high moral sentiments, those sublime ideals, was, in the European 'nineties, coming to be openly and generally derided and denounced. Against the fraudulent smugness of bourgeois optimism, the philosophic pessimism of Schopen- hauer had acquired a vogue which expressed the protest of intelligence against the ostrich ideal of bourgeois virtue. The fabric of Victorianism, the foundations of bourgeois society were, to ordinary honest intelligence, becoming incredible. They were, in fact, collapsing. The same thing was happening on the American side of the Atlantic. While academic pundits, such as William Dean Howells, were exhorting loyalty toward "those more smiling aspects of life, which are the more American," a generation of American writers was violently breaking away from the scheme of self-approval in indignant revolt, protest, and disgust, and were fiercely "muckraking" the ideals of bourgeois civilization.

The revolt of the human mind, that decadent authority of bourgeois ideology, took place with almost no reference to social or political issues. The fin de siècle rebels against bourgeois bad taste, blinkered fatuity, fulsome mediocrity, were for the most part uninterested in social theoretical issues. If their revolt included any criticism of the structure of bourgeois society, it took mostly the form of vague restatements of liberal principles, fanned into new Shelleyan flame, as in Swinburne’s Republicanism, Walt Whitman’s democracy, William Morris’s, Ruskin’s, Edward Bellamy’s idealistic socialism. Seldom did it venture beyond the restrained reformism of the Fabian Essays or of Henry George’s Progress and Poverty—audacities as wicked, in their day, as any Bolshevism is today. But those incidental links with social theory were without importance, and bore no direct relation to the change that was taking place in the minds of men and women. It was against the mental structure, against bourgeois ideology, its smug, stuffy values, and
the musty flavor they imparted to life, not against the social structure of society, not against the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, that revolt, or rather, failure of belief, manifested itself.

That revulsion grew during the opening decade of the new century. A lonely thinker who had, mostly at his own expense, published books that had remained unread and unintelligible until explained to bewildered minds by Georg Brandes, became after his death the dominant articulate expression of the intellectual stirrings of the prewar era. Nietzsche not only denied that bourgeois ideology which Flaubert had held up to execration, but smashed it with hammer blows of penetrating thought, exulting in the transvaluation of its most consecrated values. Coinciding curiously with another obscure thinker, Marx, he recognized in those values, those "ideologies," the products and astute weapons of a social situation. Bourgeois values, Christian values, owed their mediocrity, their meanness, to the conscious inferiority of the timid, servile parasite, the emancipated slave. They were "slave morality," the shell of fatuity wherein the poltroonery of the craven found shelter. They were the exudation of the bourgeois soul, the incrustation of its greed, and crouching envy. Drawing from premises similar to those of Marx an exactly opposite conclusion, Nietzsche proclaimed the proud aristocratic values which had created the splendor of pagan cultures, the master morality of the amoral individual, which were, at least, not mean, craven, and mediocre.

The beseeming world of bourgeois ideology suffered a further affront, felt to be perhaps more horrible, more revolting, than antichristian Nietzschean amoralism, at the hands of a Viennese physician. Freud came forth with the horripilating declaration that sex—the thing which in the bourgeois scheme of beseeming ostrichlike outlook had been suppressed out of existence by the discretion of complete silence—was actually the mainspring of life, the secret motive power of the mind's activities. Truly a transvaluation more shameless than any Nietzschean wickedness! What was a respectable bourgeois world coming to?

Amid such shocks and such perplexities, on the shifting foundations of a mental world in a state of flux, did the intelligence of bourgeois Europe face the cataclysm of the War.

The intellectual bewilderment was itself without systematic foundations. Its restless uneasiness was unconnected with social or political configurations. Entering the colossal conflagration to the blare of the slogans of liberal ideology, the Allies represented that if those slogans had fallen somewhat short of their promise, that was chiefly because they had not as yet had an opportunity for complete fulfilment. Germany expressly threatened to impose upon European civilization its Kultur, that is, Prussian militarism and junkerdom, the blood-and-iron philosophy of a revived and glorified feudalism and autocracy opposed to democratic liberty. The War was to "make the world safe for democracy." It was to give the noble ideals of liberalism a free hand to initiate a new era. It was, among other things, a war against militarism, a war to end war. And bewildered intelligence, unreasoned, unthinking of its own social and economic foundations, was willing to lend an ear once more to high idealism, and to conceive the hope that the
invalidities of bourgeois civilization would be rectified by so gigantic an ordeal.

The issue was the most opprobrious anticlimax of grotesque ignominy that has ever affronted human intelligence. No touch of irony was lacking to complete the fantastic sordidity of its cynical buffoonery. In order still further to emphasize the unspeakable effrontery, hypocrisy, and falsehood of the idealistic formulas, the American Presbyterian schoolmaster descended upon the scene chanting incredible moralistic psalms. The sophisticated old bourgeois politicians, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, not only kicked the solemn Presbyterian American about like a ridiculous clown, but convicted him, out of his own mouth, of being nothing but a hollow hypocrite, the worst kind of hypocrite, an unconscious one. The slogans and psalms and sacred formulas of liberal idealism were but wind. He himself meant not a word of them. No liberal windbag really meant a word of his prayer-mill formulas. The American Presbyterian babbled of permanent peace as the English Victorians had blathered of the brotherhood of man. But no babbler of high pacific purposes is willing to surrender a single imperialistic bayonet, any more than any capitalist economist is willing to surrender a cushion of his comforts or a coupon of his dividends for "social planning" or the brotherhood of man. It was all blather and wind. The bleating Presbyterian Savior of Mankind was left foolishly perorating in mid-air; and with him all slogan-belching and prayer-mill-grinding democratic liberalism, idealism, and humanitarianism. Not peace, but war; not idealism, but naked predatory greed; not humanitarianism, but unabashed business and graft; not

charity, but ruthless, murderous cruelty; not sweetness and light, but brazen lies and frauds—that was the fulfillment of liberal eloquence, of the opportunity to make the world safe for bourgeois democracy.

If in the doubting prewar period the windy foundations of bourgeois society had been sagging, the War, and the issue of the War, dissolved them into the limbo of exploded incredibilities. It dealt the fatal blow, not to the material structure of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie only, but to its mental foundations, to bourgeois ideology.

Among the thinkers who in the nineteenth century had unmasked the frauds of bourgeois ideology, and whose leaven had, for reasons presently to be noted, been excluded from the general cultural pabulum of the intellectuals, was a German philosopher, Karl Marx by name. He had, like Darwin, hit upon a key thought, a master key, by means of which the relations of the basic facts of human society and of its mental foundations might be unlocked. Why, he had asked, as does every desolated thinker, those monstrous dishonesties of the human mind? Whence the passionate mendacity upon which every social system is built, and upon the defense of which every astuteness and perfidy of human power is desperately bestowed? And his answer was that the forms of men's ideas and opinions are not primarily determined by varying intellectual points of view or capacities of apprehension, but by social interests. Nor is it the social interests of the individual, who has little power to depart widely from the world of ideas which his social environment transmits to him, which mold his
views and beliefs, so much as the interests of the social group, or class, to which he belongs, which determine the tenor of his concepts and sentiments. By those interests, and more particularly by the basic economic interests to which all others are in final analysis reducible, are shaped the interpretations, the ideas, the systems of opinions and values, the ideologies of a social class. The human mind is a social product. Naked, nescient, creedless, amoral, speechless, and thoughtless is the individual born into a world of speech that reverberates the formulas and fantasies and frauds that are of good repute. His mind is clothed with the cast-off garments of ages of sharp practice and deception. Whenever a human being, or a group of human beings, has wielded power over others, the purpose of their thought has been to confirm and protect that power, to make it appear “good.” The natural function of thought, developed from the slime onward by stern experience of the disasters attending misapprehension of facts, the will to know, is supplanted in a social configuration where power over men is the economic foundation of life, by a more powerful motive. Thought ceases to perform its natural function as a cognitive instrument, and becomes power thought, performing instead a social function as a weapon of class power.

The key thought of Marx, explaining as it did for the first time the true nature of class ideologies, of passionate devotion to lies, was, by virtue of the very law which Marx had stated, providently prevented from impinging upon the ears and intelligence of those intellectuals who had ceased to credit the fatuous fictions of bourgeois ideology. For had they permitted such a thought to penetrate their minds, they would have found themselves placed in a terrifying predicament. They would have found themselves pitted not merely against ideas, tastes, theories of art, values, doctrines, but against the very structure of bourgeois civilization of which those ideas and doctrines were but the reflection, and against its power. Quite another predicament for a distracted thinker. It would have meant the conversion of thought into action. And the intellectuals were, after all, bourgeois, dependent economically, materially, in a culinary, sartorial, perambulatory, and in every easeful sense upon that very structure. They too, like the Presbyterian schoolmaster, Wilson, were willing to talk, and to do anything that might be accomplished by talking. But there are wide distinctions between academic controversies and controversies with the police, between signing a declaration of faith and signing a check. Intellectuals were willing to revolt in terms of impassioned eloquence and cutting satire against ideologies, but not against the social structure which the ideology supported. Hence the wholly unpalatable nature of Marx’s key thought—that the ideology and the structure were in fact one and the same thing.

Bourgeois intellectuals sought, on the contrary, every means and device whereby it might escape from the terrifying necessity of apprehending that key thought. In the same manner as the sufferings inflicted by man’s depredation of man had formerly been, and are still by vicars of God and Presbyterian preachers, set down to the divinely appointed order of the universe, or by academic perorators to the perversity of human nature tainted by original sin, so have many sought to convince themselves that it arises from the erroneous theories
or defective information which misdirect the anxious efforts of humanitarian idealists at Versailles, or Wall Street, or Washington, or Kentucky, or California to benefit the human race. Or they set down the ruin and misery resulting from those efforts to an innate propensity of the human mind to mendacity, blandly disregarding the trifling circumstance that the mind of social man and its mendacities are conditioned products of social, and not of biological causes.

One favorite surrogate for the economic source of the uneasiness produced in their minds by the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie has by many been discovered in the Christian provisions for the suppression of the sexual functions. The preservation of those provisions has served the useful purpose of protecting the sacredness of the bourgeois family, the medium for the transmission of real and personal estate, and has likewise fed the high moral tone which, with the complement of pornography and prostitution, sustains the lofty idealism of bourgeois civilization. That intolerable mutilation has been supposed, by such as D. H. Lawrence, to be the main cause which has prostrated their mangled and crippled life force. Sexual liberation is accordingly sought through the repudiation of superstitious taboos and bourgeois marriage, through promiscuity, nudism, sex expression, and an intensified study of sexological literature which, by providing a thoroughly scientific, and therefore perfectly frigid and impotent approach to sex, has had the pleasant effect of aggravating a thousandfold the neurosis it was intended to allay. The revolt against sexual taboos, rife in all quarters today, serves the useful purpose of a welcome alternative to revolt against economic taboos.

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Unfortunately, the only effective way of abolishing the former is to abolish the latter, and it is quite impossible to reduce sex to sanity within a Christian civilization, or for women to cease being burdened by the marketable price of their pelvis under the dictatorship of bourgeois business.

Similarly of every surrogate evil which, in its desperate effort to avoid perceiving the source of it, crippled intelligence devotes itself to contemplating. Some devote their energies to the cause of pacifism, while carefully omitting to perceive that the monstrous evil of war is inseparable from the structure of bourgeois civilization, and can no more be rationalized away while that competitive structure for markets is retained than the depletion of the world’s resources by capitalistic exploitation can be remedied by the efforts of the exploiters. So of all “causes” and reforms; not one can be effected without reforming away bourgeois civilization, of which those evils and those falsehoods are compounding elements.

And the reformer or intellectual is thus condemned to batter his head in despairing futility against stone walls so long as he persists in regarding any of those elements as an independent evil, and turns away his gaze in terror from the economic social structure which is the determinant of those evils and lies.

Karl Marx, who long ago envisioned the sole means of escape from those intellectual dilemmas, perceived that the alternative to the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Why the proletariat? The proletariat is the antithesis to intellectual culture. The mob, through no fault of its own, of course, is gross, crass, crude, ignorant, bestial,
and barbarous. How may the amendment of civilization be brought about by the barbarous mob? Thus: the proletariat is the only class which is not interested in deflecting the functions of its mind by power thought. It is the only class which is not interested in being irrational, in guarding against perceiving the truth, in evading and circumventing social facts. It is, on the contrary, interested in giving the lie to ideologies whose sole function is to uphold the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie. The destruction of those mendacities constitutes the ideology which corresponds to the social and economic interests of the proletariat. And, once it is conscious of those interests, the mob, the gross proletariat, is not held back by any of the cautious qualifications that the intellectual bourgeois finds it so hard to set aside. The professed calm, dispassionate, “judicial” attitude, the detachment of judgment of the academic intellectual, is but one of the tactical devices whereby he may escape from facing squarely unacceptable facts. It is one more subterfuge for evasion.

The substitution of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat for the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie does not, therefore, represent the substitution of one falsified class ideology for another, for power exercised by the proletariat over the bourgeoisie does not mean the subjection of the bourgeoisie, but its abolition. It does not mean the exercise of the power of one class over another, and the protection and justification, by a falsified ideology of power thought, of the class wielding power, but the abolition of classes, class power, and therefore of falsified ideologies and power thought. It means the abolition of the causes which have not only produced human social suffering, but have also brought into being intellectual irrationality and consequently the mental suffering arising from inner conflicts and contradictions.

Marx, like Nietzsche, was led, as a logical consequence of his key thought, to set aside ethical values, to pass beyond bourgeois good and evil. Good means social good, all values being social values; and therefore the good of one class is necessarily the evil of another class. The usual judgment of the bourgeois intellectual produced by a moralistic civilization is that it is unjust. Marx, being logically compelled to discard ethical values and judgments, did not, and could not, any more than Nietzsche, denounce bourgeois civilization as “unjust.” But the ethical term connotes nevertheless a social fact. Class civilization is made up of impracticable self-contradictions, among which is the class conflict, whereby class civilization inevitably brings about its own disintegration, and results in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, that is, a classless society. Class civilization is an unstable mechanism, a badly constructed putative society, which automatically causes its own destruction. It has destroyed itself over and over again. Theocratic power has been destroyed by military power; autocracy by landed aristocracy; landed aristocracy by the trading and industrial bourgeoisie; trade and industry themselves are being destroyed by speculative finance. The bourgeoisie must in like manner inevitably be supplanted by the dictatorship of another class suffering from “injustice.”

The self-destructive and impracticable character of class civilization (its “injustice”) is necessarily associated with the irrational character of its ideology, which consists of lies, in the same manner as its morality consists of
injustice. The bourgeois intellectual may not be vitally interested in the social mechanism so long as he does not greatly benefit or greatly suffer from it. Marx was a bourgeois intellectual, Nietzsche was a bourgeois intellectual, Lenin was a bourgeois intellectual. I am a bourgeois intellectual. The bourgeois intellectual is able to attach greater importance to the values of ideas than the bourgeois solely absorbed in attention to business is able to do, and finds more satisfaction in the power of ideas than in economic power, which he is accordingly better able in some measure to renounce than the bourgeois who is incapable of ideas. The intellectual may thus revolt, as bourgeois intellectuals have done again and again, against the irrationalities and falsifications of bourgeois ideology without necessarily revolting against bourgeois economic dictatorship. The intellectual is, in other words, an idealist, that is to say, he has faith in the instrumental importance of ideas. Marx, who utterly repudiated idealism (by the theory of economic determinism), was an idealist. He had, it should be noted, the insight to distinguish between personal idealism, which he practiced, and class idealism, which he repudiated. The individual can be an idealist, but not the class, for the behavior of a group or class is always determined by the lowest common denominator of motives, that is, by the most concrete, the economic motive.

The revolt against bourgeois ideology took place, as was noted at the outset of the present article, before the revolt against bourgeois material domination, and independently of it. This appears to be in contradiction with the Marxian formula of economic determinism. In the eighteenth century intellectual revolt against feudalism and absolutism also took place before the outbursts of social revolt. So again intellectual revolt in the form of religious protestantism preceded direct action. But the contradiction of those facts with Marx's key thought of economic determinism is only apparent. By misrepresentation it has been suggested that Marx, substituting economic or material determinism for idealistic determinism, repudiated and ignored the latter. Of such stupidity Marx was not capable. An idealist himself, he did not repudiate idealistic determinism, but affirmed its invariable association with economic determinism. The very means by which the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie (as of all classes) is enforced is by idealistic determinism. Marxian communists are at present chiefly engaged in propaganda, that is to say, in idealistic determinism. The obstacle which they are mostly concerned to overcome is the effect of bourgeois ideology upon the proletariat, which serves the purpose for which it is intended of preventing them from being aware of their class interests, from being "class-conscious."

The entire strategy of Karl Marx and of Marxian communists depends upon idealistic determinism, or intellectual preparation, without which the perception of class interests, or "class consciousness," is not possible. That intellectual preparation, antecedent to social action, is nowise in contradiction with Marx's key thought of economic determinism, for class dictatorship and class ideology are one. The ideology against which the intellectuals of the late nineteenth century revolted was itself a product of the economic dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. As Marx and Engels expressly stated, phrasing the relation in the then influential Hegelian jargon,
“Cause and effect are one, and effect becomes cause.” The intellectual who is interested in rationality (or “truth”) revolts against the lies of class ideology without perceiving that those lies are but an aspect of economic dictatorship. But it is an economic situation against which he, unwittingly, is nevertheless revolting. In the same manner the petty bourgeoisie of the seventeenth century revolted against Popery, under the impression that they were interested in theology, whereas they were, in reality, interested in their social situation, in their “class struggle.” Puritanism was merely a disguise of the bourgeois class struggle against aristocratic feudalism.

The abolition of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie and the substitution of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the Union of Soviet Republics is naturally viewed as a social, economic, and political fact. The bourgeois judges it in Marxian terms. But to that political, social, and economic fact there corresponds an ideological fact. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat has not only abolished the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, but by so doing has also necessarily abolished bourgeois ideology. It has not only abolished social maladjustment, or “injustice,” but has also abolished intellectual and mental maladjustment or the disabling of the human mind by the power thought of bourgeois ideology.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is vitally important to the intellectual. That dictatorship is the only means by which his aims, rational validity of thought, can be attained. That aim cannot by any possible means be attained under the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, which requires the falsification of thought. In the same manner as pacifism, the rationalization of the relation

between the sexes, or any other rational social aim can be attained only in a classless society, so the liberation of the human mind from the traditional falsifications, that is, the vested interests of a class society. All the titanic imbecilities and dishonesties of thought which swarm under the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, and drive the rational intellectual to despair, become impossible in a classless society, without vested interests. The ideologies of morons, of well-to-do old ladies, of Babbitts, the pseudoscientific forgeries of a Professor Keller, or a Professor Osborne, the idiocies of a Millikan, to cite but some fragments of the falsification of all thought under the Dictatorship of the Bourgeois, would be impossible and unthinkable under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. They would be impossible, not because they would be censoriously repressed, but because they could not arise; they would be devoid of motivation. Such stupidities and mental contortions cannot occur in Russia.

The proletariat, concerned with its own class interests and not with the intellectual’s interest in valid thought, is nevertheless fighting the battle of the intellectual, and is indeed the only force that can fight that battle to a finish.

That is why the intellectual, who is more interested in the mental than in the economic issue, is vitally interested in the overthrow of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie. His economic interest, which he is willing to sacrifice under that dictatorship by the advocacy of “unpopular” thought, is secondary to his intellectual interest. But the latter requires the overthrow of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, it is natural that during the period
of increasing strain and war between the two ideological structures, the contrary effect will be produced upon a large number of intellectuals whose economic interests outweigh their intellectual interests. This we daily perceive. Bourgeois ideology sets up in their minds defenses whose purpose is to prevent them from effecting the identification expressed in the Marxian key thought. Such a strategy of mental defense develops, as is well known, all the powers of ingenious astuteness of which the human mind is capable. Defense mechanisms may take the form of criticism of Marxian thought, which is, of course, no more invulnerable than is Darwinian thought; such criticism, as in the case of Darwin, being totally irrelevant so far as the key thought is concerned. But the intellectual critic detecting an error in some portion of Marx’s thought, say, in his theory of value, will dismiss Marx’s key thought, with the same satisfaction as the theological critic, detecting an error in Darwin’s theory of natural selection, will dismiss organic evolution in order to entrench himself in fundamentalism. Or the shallow intellectual performing verbal puns on the words “materialism” and “idealism,” without any clear conception of their philosophical meaning, may declare his opposition to “materialism.” Or he may protest the indispensability of “individualism,” setting aside the fact that belief in intellectual validity is inconsistent with belief in the equal validity of opposite opinions. Or he may turn for comfort to the fetish of calm and judicial suspension of judgment. Innumerable in form may such defense mechanisms be, and the more paltry they are the more will they be clung to with the stubborn persistence of a drowning soul.

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From such defense mechanisms in the mind of the bourgeois intellectual, who is partially liberated from the toils of bourgeois ideology, to passionate reactionary opposition is but a step. The present time is a time of war. One of the consequences of the state of revolutionary war is the impossibility of middle terms. So long as war did not exist, people could wander un concernedly in no man’s land. They find such promenades increasingly unpleasant. In war there are two contending camps; there are no middle terms.

Parallel with the widespread advance of modern intellect toward a perception of actuality, liberated from bourgeois ideology, there is, of necessity, an enormous stiffening and hardening of that ideology. Whereas in the closing years of the last century, men of science, inspired by new key thoughts, were battling against the mythologies of bourgeois ideology, and offered inspiration to intellectuals striving for freedom from those fictions, official, academic science is today almost to a man conscripted in the desperate reactionary defense of the mythology. Academic science, which but thirty or forty years ago was the beacon of intellectual liberation, is today the bulwark of bourgeois ideology at bay. The physical scientists blab of theology; social science and anthropology are mere passionate pleas for the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie and its institutions; economic science is the pimp of business and finance; historical science is the serjeant of nationalism; biological science cleaves to outworn formulas and uses them to defend militarism and the elimination of the unfit, that is, of misfits in a bourgeois civilization; philosophical science blandly formulates the instrumentalism of industrial bourgeois
civilization and does not blush to offer to “save the children of fortune from the uprisings of the poor.” As with conscripted academic science, so with intellectualism in general, in press, in literature. Mere defense mechanisms are being, and to a still greater extent, will be, cast aside, and bourgeois ideology will fight in the open, as unmasked Fascism, for unabashed reaction. Economic determinism is tightening its grip over every manifestation of the human mind.

Such a state of war has a very definite effect on logic. The ideal fallacy of liberalism or “democratic liberty”—in other words “freedom of opinion”—and (religious) toleration, was the abolition of rational validity. All opinions are equally free before “democratic liberty,” alias religious toleration. Such freedom and equality demand and imply the repudiation of rational grounds for validity, for the opinion which is totally irrational is just as “free and equal,” that is, valid and respectable, as the opinion which is rationally valid. The fiction of democratic liberty, or religious toleration, has thus enabled any inconsistent combination of the most disparate ingredients of lunatic thought to disport itself unchecked in every no man’s land of vague opinion. The state of war between bourgeois ideology and the rationalism resulting from its repudiation as a class weapon compels irresponsible opinions to evacuate an unhealthy no man’s land. Bourgeois ideology is compelled to fight under its true colors; it is compelled to withdraw from positions of spuriously judicial detachment and to entrench itself in undisguised reactionary emplacements. In political parlance, all bourgeois ideology is driven more and more to the right, and all opposition to it more and more to the left. A clear alignment of forces is thus being substituted for the chaotic disorder of “democratic liberty” and the illogical unrealities of bourgeois liberalism. The distress of many intellectuals arises from the increasingly unhealthy climate of no man’s land. The Marxian key thought is thus becoming more concretely and visibly illustrated. The pretense that diversities of opinion are the outcome of valid differences of logic, or individual mentality, is growing less and less plausible, and those diversities are compelled to show themselves more clearly for what they really are—ideologies determined by class consciousness and the vested economic interests of the social structure. The tolerant and detached objectivity of liberalism is, in fact, compelled to descend from its spurious and judicial seat, and to take its place behind the machine-guns pointed against revolutionary thought.

In such a situation the place of idealistic determinism, that is, of argument, is becoming entirely changed. The basic fallacy of idealistic determinism lies in the fact that, notwithstanding the real power of ideas, they cannot alone, and independently of economic and social causes, determine events. Idealistic determinism is indispensable in the form of intellectual preparation operating in conjunction with economic determinism. But idealistic determinism, that is, reason and argument, is of no account against entrenched class ideology. There are, we know, people with whom one cannot argue. To argue with a Christian, a business man, a senator, an old lady of independent means, or an influential university pundit, is puerile. The absurdity of idealistic determinism is daily demonstrated by the impossibility of making an argumentative impression on entrenched bourgeois interests
and ideologies. In the last resort, other means than idealistic determinism, other means than discussions, have to be substituted. The only instruments of persuasion relevant to the case are lethal weapons. Force is the only argument. Those who cannot be persuaded must perforce be liquidated. The social revolution, and incidentally the intellectual revolution, cannot be effected without a considerable liquidation of irrationalists. Idealistic determinism must of necessity pass into materialistic determinism; words into deeds; thought into action. Failure of gentle intellectuals to perceive that necessity is one of the most pathetic effects of their failure to apprehend the Marxian key thought, the actual relation between ideology and class power. Argument is of no account against economic determinism.

The interests of intellectuals are thus, by the force of the social process, reduced to terms of economic social determinism. Thought becomes, willy-nilly, transformed into action; idealism into materialism. The cultural history of all intellectual development is the history of that process. At a time when the uncontested power of bourgeois dictatorship was at its height, intellectualism disported itself in detached realms of thought, and quite sincerely imagined that those realms had no connection with social facts. Intellectuals were not concerned with social facts. They were concerned with the art of Botticelli, or of Marcel Proust, with folklore, with archeology, or linguistics, or numismatics, or what-not. They sought, and seek, refuge in ivory towers. They were concerned with purely aesthetic and intellectual detached criticism of bourgeois taste, bourgeois superstition, bourgeois anthropological ignorance, bourgeois taboos. They

were not concerned with social theories, and had scarcely heard of Marx. And now, lo and behold! it doth appear, to the dismay of terrified intellectuals, that while they had been innocently descanting on the theories of art, of science, of ethics, they had all along been sapping the sacred foundations of the bourgeois economic and social order, of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie. For it was not the doctrine of bourgeois aesthetics, or this or that scientific, literary, or philosophical theory that was at fault. It was the structure of a society which rendered base artistic theories, false and mean literary and scientific theories necessary in order that the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie might be exalted and protected against intelligence. That social structure and dictatorship, not bad taste or false science, or imbecile philosophy, was the cause of the colossal defeat of reason. It was the cause of the intellectuals' suffering and mental martyrdom.

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;
Let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars!
It is the cause.

No ideal theory, but the economic and social structure of bourgeois civilization is the cause.

That strange fellow of whom vague reports had been heard—the Jew, Marx—could have told them that almost one hundred years ago. Alas that it should have needed the stern voice of facts, a menacing Union of Soviet Republics, proclaiming far and wide the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the end of the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie, to bring to the notice of thoughtful people Marx's key thought, that intellectual theories are but products of economic determinism.
The intellectual, whose perplexities, verging in these
days upon agony, have been created by that situation,
must learn a new test of thought, a new measure of its
validity. Is his thought the outcome of his undeviated
individual judgment? Hardly; for is he not, he and his
thought, a social product? Is not his thought the “power
thought” of bourgeois ideology, designed not to bestow
upon his mind the apprehension of facts, but to safeg-
guard the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie? No longer
can the thinker evade that question. He supposed that
he was free to disport himself in detached realms of pure
intellect, disinterested, unconcerned with the turmoil and
dust of sordid social issues. He must now face the fact
that, not only can he not be unconcerned, but that before
the validity and worth of his thought can be appraised,
it is necessary that he should have decided the social
question.

Is his thought the product of the Dictatorship of the
Bourgeoisie, and of the mountain mass of falsifications,
distortions, mental deformities that dictatorship requires?
Or is it the product of a human society which has de-
clared itself classless, strifeless, nationless, priestless, and
which therefore has no need for fraud, forgery, and
fiction? That question is indispensable to the appraisal
of all thought. Even more than the proletarian, the in-
tellectual, he who values the things of the mind, the
worth of thought and ideas, is interested—vitally inter-
ested—in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Sex in Religion

In the tradition of modern Western civilization no
two spheres stand more sharply opposed than that
of religion and that of sex. The manifestations of the
latter are in that tradition the type of sin, the head-fount
of that evil and impurity with which the religious spirit
cannot be brought into touch without defilement and
dissolution. Between religion and eroticism the antithe-
sis is scarcely less than between religion and atheism. Yet
a glance at the various religions of the world, outside
Christianity and one or two closely allied systems and a
survey of the religious rites of lower phases of culture,
show that the antithesis does not exist. Those religions
and those rites are, on the contrary, shot through and
through with riotous sensuality; the manifestations of
the sex impulse, instead of being accounted incompatible
with the religious spirit, are associated with it in the
closest manner; and religion, in those phases, is almost
as much concerned with sex as with ethics or theology.
The religious art of New Guinea, of Polynesia, of Indo-
nesia, of Africa, of South America, is as pornographic as
that of the temples of India and of Japan. In earlier
phases of culture, from that of primitive hunting tribes
to the great agricultural societies out of which our own

1 Sex in Civilization, The Macaulay Company, 1929.