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The Socialist Phenomenon: A Historical Survey of Socialist Policies and Ideals

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56 Highlights

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 393

> In conclusion, it is interesting to note that religious problems are given a good deal of space in the dialogue, and are clearly connected with the question of the ideal state. However, this linkage is treated in a quite rationalistic fashion—religion does not set the state any goals, but rather plays a protective and educational role. Myths, many of which are specially invented, as Plato says, with this purpose in mind, facilitate the development of characteristics useful to the state. Almost everyone who has written on Plato's Republic has remarked on the ambiguous impression produced by this dialogue. Plato's scheme for the destruction of the subtlest and most profound features of human personality and the reduction of human society to the level of an ant hill evokes revulsion. And at the same time one cannot help being impressed by the almost religious impulse to sacrifice personal interests to a higher goal. Plato's entire program is founded on the denial of personality—but on the denial of egoism as well. He understood that the future of mankind is not dependent on the victory of this or that contending group in the struggle for material interests, but rather on the changes within people and on the development of new human qualities.

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> These basic notions were the source of the socialist doctrines disseminated among the Cathars. They rejected property as belonging to the material world. The perfecti were forbidden to have any personal belongings, but as a group they controlled the holdings of the sect, which often were considerable. Cathars enjoyed influence in various segments of society, including the highest strata. Thus it is said that Count Raymond VI of Toulouse always kept in his retinue Cathars disguised in ordinary attire, so they could bless him in case of impending death. For the most part, however, the preaching of the Cathars apparently was directed to the urban lower classes, as indicated in particular by the names of various sects: populicani (i.e., populists, although certain historians see this name as a corruption of "Paulicians"), piphlers (derived from "plebs"), texerants (weavers), etc. In their sermons, the Cathars preached that a true Christian life was possible only on the condition that property was held in common. (12: p. 656) In 1023, a group of Cathars were put on trial in Monteforte, charged with promulgating celibacy and communality of property and with attacking the accepted religious traditions. It

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> In the period when socialist ideas were developing within the framework of the ideology of the heretical movements, they acquired a series of new features which cannot be found in antiquity. In this epoch, socialism

> turned from a theoretical, scholastic doctrine into a rallying point and a motivating force behind broad popular movements. Antiquity knew harsh national catastrophes that culminated in the ruination of states. The most impoverished groups of the population did on occasion seize power, kill the rich or oust them from towns; property was taken and divided: in Kerkira in 427 B.C., in Samos in 412 and in Syracuse in 317. In Sparta, King Nabis, in 206 B.C., divided among his followers not only the property but also the wives of the rich. However, the popular movements of antiquity did not know the slogans of communality of property, communality of wives, and they were not directed against religion. All these traits emerge in the Middle Ages. Socialist doctrines themselves change, acquiring an intolerant, embittered and destructive character. The idea of dividing mankind into the

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> Socialist ideology is imbued with the notion of a coming fundamental break, of the end and destruction of the old world and the beginning of a new order. This concept is interwoven with the idea of “imprisonment” and “liberation,” which, beginning with the Cathars, is understood as imprisonment of the soul in matter and as liberation in the other world. Later, the Amalricians and the Free Spirits saw the idea as spiritual liberation through the achievement of “godliness” in this world. And finally, the Taborites and the Anabaptists conceived of it as material liberation from the power of the “evil ones” and as the establishment of the dominion of the “elect.”

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> was standard practice to refer to the community of Apostles in Jerusalem as a model founded on the principles of communality. It is to Christianity that socialism owes its concept of a historic goal, the idea of the sinfulness of the world, its coming end and the Last Judgment. Such a close link can hardly be explained by the desire to be in accord with accepted authority or (as Engels has argued) by the fact that the language of religion was the only available idiom in which to express general historical conceptions. The fact that socialism borrowed some of its fundamental ideas from Christianity shows that this was a matter not of mere transference but of a deeper interaction. The existence of certain related elements in Christianity and socialism is indicated, for example, by the phenomenon of the monastery, which seems to realize socialist principles within Christianity (e.g., the abolition of private property and of marriage). It would be extremely important to discern the aspects shared by Christianity and socialism, to trace how the Christian concepts are redirected within socialism and ultimately turn into a denial of the fundamental principles of Christianity (for example, when God’s judgment over the world is reinterpreted as the judgment of the “elect” over their enemies, or when the resurrection of the dead is translated into “deification” in the sect of Free Spirits). Such an analysis would undoubtedly explain a great deal about socialist ideology.

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> But if Utopia is considered as a work of chiliastic socialist literature, it seems surprisingly moderate. There is no mention of any abolition of the family or of communality of wives; there is no public upbringing of children. It seems that the new and secular movement in socialism did not at first base itself on the extreme beliefs that had been formulated within the heretical movement.

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> We shall attempt to sum up those new features of socialist ideology that we have encountered in utopian socialism and in works of the Enlightenment. 1. If in the Middle Ages and during the Reformation socialist ideas developed within movements that were religious, at least formally, utopian socialism tends to break with religious form and gradually acquire a character hostile to In More and Campanella we were able to point out an alienated and at times ironic attitude toward Christianity. Winstanley is openly hostile to contemporary religions. Deschamps rejects all religion, declaring the idea of God to be a human invention, the result of mankind's oppressed state and an instrument of oppression. In its stead, he puts forward the enigmatic conception of God who is Nothing. Finally, Meslier bases his world outlook on a hatred of religion and Christianity—and of Christ in particular. Thus one can speak of a gradual merging of socialist ideology and atheism. 2. The Socialism of this epoch borrows the idea derived from medieval mysticism (Joachim of Flore's, for instance) that history is an immanent and orderly evolutionary However, the goal and the driving force invested in this process by the mystics—knowledge of God and merging with Him—is eliminated. Instead, progress is recognized as the motivating force of history, and human reason is seen as its supreme product.

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> 3. Socialist doctrines preserve the notion of the medieval mystics about the three stages in the historical process, as well as the scheme of the fall of mankind and its return to the original state in a more perfect The socialist doctrines contain the following components: a. The myth of a primordial "natural state" or "golden age," which was destroyed by that bearer of evil called private b. A castigation of the way things are. Contemporary society is pronounced incurably depraved, unjust and meaningless, ready only to be scrapped. Only on its ruins can a new social structure be built, a structure that would guarantee people every happiness of which they are c. The prophecy of a new society built on socialist principles, a society in which all present shortcomings would disappear. This is the only path for mankind to return to the "natural state," as Morelly put it: from the unconscious Golden Age to the conscious 4. The idea of "liberation," which was understood by the medieval heresies to be liberation of the spirit from the power of matter, is transformed into an appeal for liberation from the morality of contemporary society, from its social institutions and, most of all, from private

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> At first, reason is recognized to be the driving force of this liberation, but gradually its place is taken over by the people, the poor. In the world view of the participants in the "Conspiracy of Equals," we can see this conception in finished form. As a result, new concrete features appear in the plan for the establishment of the "society of the future": terror, occupation of the apartments of the rich by the poor, confiscation of furniture, abolition of debts, etc.

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> In stark contrast to the superb organization of the Inca state, its level of technical knowledge was astonishingly primitive. Most tools and weapons were made of wood and stone. Iron was unknown, as was the plow, and land was tilled with a wooden hoe. The only domestic animal was the llama, from which meat and wool were obtained but which was not used for farming or transportation. All farm work was performed manually, and

> travel was either by foot or by palanquin. Finally, the Incas had no writing system, although they could transmit great amounts of information by means of quipu, a complex system of knotted strings.11 Hence the low level of technology had

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> The population of the Inca state was divided into three strata: 1. Incas—the ruling class, descendants of a tribe that in the past had conquered an ancient state near Lake Various authors refer to them as aristocracy, the elite, the bureaucracy. From this class came the administrators, the army officer corps, priests and scholars—and of course, the absolute ruler of the country, the Inca. This class was hereditary, but chiefs of conquered tribes and even soldiers distinguished in war might occasionally enter it. 2. The bulk of the population—peasants, herdsmen, They had two types of obligation to the state: military and labor. Both of these will be described below. Sometimes they were utilized in other ways by the state, for instance to settle a newly conquered territory, or to provide material (women) for human sacrifices. 3. The state slaves—yanacuna. According to legend, they descended from a tribe that had once rebelled against the state, had been crushed, and had been sentenced to extermination. But in response to a plea by his wife, the Inca changed the sentence to perpetual slavery. Thereafter the members of this group occupied the lowest position in the country. They worked the state lands, herded the llamas belonging to the state and served as servants in the houses of the Incas. (57: pp. 124-125)

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> Socialist principles were clearly expressed in the structure of the Inca state: the almost complete absence of private property, in particular of private land; absence of money and trade; the complete elimination of private initiative from all economic activities; detailed regulation of private life; marriage by official decree; state distribution of wives and concubines. On the other hand, we do not encounter either communal wives or communal upbringing of children. A wife, though given by the state to the peasant, was his alone, and children grew up in the family (if the special class of girls chosen to be “elect” is excluded). Nevertheless, the Inca state seems to have been one of the fullest incarnations of socialist ideals in human history. This is indicated by the striking similarity between the Inca way of life and numerous socialist utopias, sometimes down to the smallest detail. In his work The Incas of Peru, Baudin tells that during a report on the Inca state at the Paris Academy of Sciences, a member asked whether it would not be possible to show an influence of the Incas on Thomas More’s Utopia. (56: p. 165) This would have been quite impossible, of course: More’s Utopia was written in 1516, while Peru was discovered by the Spaniards in 1531. The similarities are, therefore, all the more striking and show how socialist principles inevitably led to the same conclusions in the centuries-long practice of the Inca administrators and in the mind of the English philosopher.

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> But later socialist writers undoubtedly were under the strong influence of what they had heard of the “Peruvian Empire.” In one of his works, Morelly describes a society that lives in “natural conditions” and without distinction between “thine” and “mine,” and says that the “Peruvians” had laws of this kind. We have already quoted (in Part I) a similar passage from the article “The Legislator” in the Encyclopédie, and we invite the reader to compare Diderot’s description (pp. 112-114 above) with the historical facts. It is quite possible that the

> Inca model provided numerous details in the depiction of the future society by the writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is easy enough to imagine how readily they absorbed the stories then current in Europe of a real society so close in spirit to their ideals. This leads to a general problem of great interest—that of the influence exerted on the socialist literature, beginning with Plato, by the "socialist experiment," that is, by the practical implementation of socialist ideals in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Peru.

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> The Jesuits in Paraguay (and elsewhere in the world) fell victim to their own success. They became too dangerous: in the reductions, they had created a well-equipped army of up to twelve thousand men, which was apparently the predominant military force in the region. They interfered in internal conflicts and took the capital of Asunción by assault on more than one occasion. They defeated Portuguese troops and delivered Buenos Aires from a British siege. During a mutiny, the viceroy of Paraguay, Don José de Antequera, was defeated by them. Several thousand Guarini participated in the battles, equipped with firearms and including some cavalry units. The Jesuit army began to inspire more and more apprehension in the Spanish government. The fall of the Jesuits was greatly hastened by the widespread rumors of the enormous riches they were supposed to be accumulating. There was talk of gold and silver mines and of fabulous revenue from foreign trade. The latter rumor seemed particularly plausible in view of cheap Indian labor and the unusual fertility of the land. After driving the Jesuits out, government officials rushed in to look for hidden treasure—and discovered nothing. The storehouses in the reductions proved bitterly disappointing and contained none of the riches that they were supposed to yield: the economy had not been profitable!

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> Somewhat later, however, a new tendency appeared: the desire to make use of the higher technical and intellectual level in order to create a strictly centralized society in which the individual, to a far greater degree than before, would be under control of the state. It seems that this is not the only time in history that developments have taken such a turn. For example, H. Frankfort (83) believes that the first states in Mesopotamia and Egypt arose in an analogous fashion, i.e., as a result of subjecting the economic and intellectual achievements of the temple economies to the goals of a central government. A

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> Shang Yang's teaching is reminiscent of a social utopia, a description of an "ideal state," in which "private interests are eliminated," love for kindred beings is replaced by love for state order, all aspirations are concentrated on the One Thing and the entire structure is maintained by a system of informers, guilt by association and harsh punishments. But in one respect Shang Yang occupies a special place among authors of such treatises. Many of them made attempts to implement their ideals. Plato, for instance, sought a ruler who would organize a state in the spirit of his teaching. Plato's attempts ended when the Syracuse tyrant Dionysius, upon whom he had set his hopes, sold him into slavery. Shang Yang, however, found his ruler and had the opportunity to realize his ideals. The prince of the state of Ch'in made him first minister and Shang Yang succeeded in carrying out a number of reforms. Here is what is known of Shang Yang's legislation: 1. Farmers ("those engaged in the essential thing") were freed from obligatory 2. Those discovered engaging in "nonessential" activities were turned into 3. Ranks of nobility were obtainable only through military High

> positions in the government could be given only to those who had already earned the rank of nobility. Those without rank were forbidden to display luxuries. (In this way, the ruling class was transformed from a hereditary aristocracy into officials dependent on the favor of their superiors and the monarch.)

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> 4. The state was divided into provinces ruled by state 5. Large families were split up, and grown sons were forbidden to live with their (This measure is seen as an attempt to destroy the village community.) 6. Fields were marked offwith boundary A number of historians see in this the destruction of community and the subordination of the peasantry directly to officials; others view it as indicative of the freedom to buy and sell land. (The spirit of Shang Yang's book would seem to render the latter interpretation quite unlikely.) 7. Capital punishment was introduced for the theft of a horse or an 8. Every five households were united into a unit of shared responsibility and linked to another If one member of the group of ten households committed a crime, the others were to report him—otherwise they were to be cut in half. The informer was to be rewarded in the same manner as one who had killed an enemy.

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> The point of these measures was to deprive the population of the means of independent study. Private persons had no right to possess any books except those devoted to very narrow utilitarian problems. Many books were preserved in state depositories to which only special officials had access. But historical works on kingdoms other than the Ch'in empire were completely destroyed. Books were not the only victims of persecution. At the order of the emperor, 460 Confucian scholars were buried alive, and a far greater number were exiled to frontier regions. Subsequently, when Confucianism became the official ideology of the Chinese empire, Ch'in Shih Huang's persecutions came to be seen as an epitome of barbarism. But hostility toward Confucian teachings on the part of rulers manifested itself in the later periods as well. It is said of the founder of a dynasty that succeeded the Ch'in that he "does not like Confucian scholars. When a man in the headdress of a 'guest' or a Confucian enters, he quickly tears the headdress off and urinates into it on the spot." (79: p. 389) In our day, the Communist Party of China

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> The basic works of Marxism are utterly alien to the most fundamental characteristic of scientific activity—the disinterested striving for truth for its own sake. And although the scientist's duty is sometimes proclaimed, the truth, in practice, always remains a "party truth"—i.e., it is subordinated to the interests of the political struggle. This attitude toward science is expressed, for instance, in the conclusion of the preface to Marx's Critique of Political Economy: "My views, no matter how they are judged and how little they agree with the egotistical prejudices of the ruling classes, are the result of many years of conscientious research." (3: XII: p. 9) In this way, Marx immediately suggests that any objections to his views are the product of "egotistical prejudices."

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> Thanks to this indifference toward truth in Marxism, we so often come across contradictions even a few of which would ruin any genuinely scientific theory. We have cited, for instance, Wittfogel's remarks on the

> appearance and sudden disappearance of the “Asiatic formation” in the works of Marx and Engels. Numerous examples of this kind could be brought forward. In the Communist Manifesto we read: “The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant…they are all not revolutionary but conservative. Nay, more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history.” (3: V: p. 493) Lassalle incorporated the same thought in his Gotha program: “In relation to the proletariat, all other groups constitute a single reactionary mass.”

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> But it was precisely at this time that Marx was competing against Lassalle (and not very successfully) for influence on the German social democratic movement. And he writes: “Lassalle knew the ‘Manifesto’ by heart, and if he distorted it so grossly, he did so only to justify his own betrayal of the working class.”

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> Marx’s Capital of course imitates the style of a scientific treatise far better than Fourier’s Theory of Four Movements. Marx includes tables and a great number of quotations (even from Greek, as he was fond of noting). But in its essence, Marx’s Capital is equally far from being a scientific work, for the basic statements in it are merely asserted and not deduced. It was Bulgakov who (in 100) drew attention to a footnote in Volume I of Capital: “Of course, it is much easier to find the earthly essence of religious notions by means of analysis than the other way round, i.e., from the given real relations to deduce their religious forms. The latter method is the only materialistic one and, therefore, the only scientific one.” But Marx only remarked on this matter in a note and nowhere attempted to apply his “only scientific” method. In the same way, neither Marx nor Engels tried to show in what manner “the hand mill yields a feudal society with a suzerain at its head.” They simply could not have done so, of course, since the hand mill was known in ancient Sumer and in other societies as well. Examples such as these could be cited at length.

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> The attitude of the classics of Marxism toward science is vividly illustrated by what Engels wrote about mathematics. Indeed, it is in this connection that he says (in the preface to Anti-Dühring): “Awareness of the fact that I have not sufficiently mastered mathematics has made me careful: no one will be able to find me trespassing against the facts.” (98: p. 7) Nevertheless, in that work we find the following statements: “We have already mentioned that one of the main principles of higher mathematics involves a contradiction which consists of the fact that under certain conditions a straight line and a curve are one and the same thing. And higher mathematics provides another example of a contradiction: two lines that intersect before our eyes must nonetheless be considered parallel lines five or six centimeters from the point of intersection, i.e., lines that cannot intersect even if extended to infinity.” (98: p. 120) “The virgin state of absolute signification, the indisputable proof of everything mathematical, is gone forever; an era of discordant opinion is upon us, and we have gotten to the point that the majority perform differentiation and integration not because they understand what they are doing, but simply because they believe in something that up till now has always obtained correct results.” (98: p. 85) (We must point out that when this was written, half a century had already passed since Cauchy proposed a rigorous foundation for differential and integral calculus and his ideas had long become textbook knowledge.)

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> “Mathematical axioms are an expression of an extremely limited intellectual content, which mathematics is obliged to borrow from logic. They may be reduced to the following two: “1. The whole is larger than the part… “2. Two quantities separately equal to a third are equal to one another.” (98: p. 34) (It would seem that even a mediocre secondary school student ought to have remembered at least the axiom on parallels!) As for political economy or history, Marx and Engels clearly did not believe that they had “not sufficiently mastered” these subjects; nothing prompted them to be “careful” as with mathematics. One may well imagine how resolutely they operated in these areas. The correspondence between Marx and Engels provides further striking examples of views that are extremely difficult to reconcile with the usual understanding of the scientific method. For instance, Engels points out to Marx one passage in Capital that would obviously provoke objections and suggests this objection be taken into account. Marx replies: “Had I wished to foresee all objections of that kind I should have spoiled the dialectical method of exposition. On the contrary. This method has the advantage of setting traps for these gentlemen at every step and compelling them to reveal their impenetrable stupidity.” (3: XXIII: p. 425) Or in another letter to Engels: “Dear Fred! In my opinion you are unjustly afraid to treat the English philistine reader of the magazine to such simple formulae as M-G-M, etc. If you were compelled to read, as I am, the economic articles of Lalor, Herbert Spencer, Macleod and others in The Westminster Review, you would see that they all abound in economic banalities (all the while knowing that their reader is thoroughly bored with it all) and that they try to spice up their articles with pseudo-philosophic or pseudo-scientific jargon. Despite the imagined scientific character, the content (equal to nothing, of course) becomes in no sense clearer. On the contrary, the trick is to mystify the reader.” This paragraph closes with the advice: “In fact, you are too shy. The new is required—the new in form and in content.” (3: XXIV: pp. 60-61)

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> It is interesting to juxtapose the attitude of Marxism toward science with a closely related question—Marx’s use of Hegel’s dialectical method. Here we may again refer to S. Bulgakov. In a work already cited (100), he shows that Capital,especially the first chapter of Volume I, is written in a Hegelian fashion but that, at the same time, it demonstrates a very superficial grasp of Hegel’s philosophy and of German classical philosophy in general, a quite primitive manipulation of subtle and profound categories. In fact, Marx at times seems to see dialectics in a quite unexpected light.

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> “I took the risk of prognosticating in this way, as I was compelled to substitute for you as correspondent at the Tribune. Nota bene—on the supposition that the dispatches we have gotten up till now are correct. It is possible that I may be discredited. But in that case it will still be possible to pull through with the help of a bit of dialectics. It goes without saying that I phrased my forecasts in such a way that I would prove to be right also in the opposite case.” (3: XXII: p. 217) Returning to the comparison of Fourier’s “scientific method” with Marx’s, it must be stated that in some instances they differ very little—e.g., in their use of mathematics. Take, for instance, the argument Fourier gives in support of his idea that society is ruled on the “basis of geometric principles”: “The properties of friendship duplicate the properties of the circle. “The properties of love, those of the ellipse.

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> “The properties of fatherhood, of the parabola. “The properties of ambition, of the hyperbola. “The collective properties of these four passions duplicate the properties of the cycloid.” This is quite comparable with the passage in Capital in which Marx writes (in connection with one of his conclusions): “This law clearly runs counter to experience.” But he extricates himself from the predicament as follows: “The solution of this seeming contradiction requires many more intermediary links, as in elementary algebra, where many intermediary links are required to comprehend that 0/0 may represent a real quantity.” (3: XVII: p. 337)23 Karl Jaspers is closer to the truth, no doubt, when he sees Marxism not as science but as “mythmaking” based on certain notions borrowed from magic, as for instance the belief that the destruction of the existing world will lead to the birth of new man. (101) The concept of “the scientific method” was of extraordinary importance for the development of nineteenth-century socialism. Hence it was steadily and persistently elaborated, first by Fourier and Saint-Simon (in a very naive form), and later in a much more sophisticated manner by Marx and Engels. The scientific method provided the socialist doctrines with a “sanction” of the first order. Furthermore (and this is especially important), the theses of socialist doctrine thereby acquired the appearance of objectivity

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> and a certain inevitability, being presented as a consequence of immanent laws independent of human will. In calling for the destruction of society, revolutionaries of the Babeuf and Bakunin type had to argue that it was loathsome and unjust. But in doing so, they made each person a judge and left open the opportunity for the counter-argument that the process of destruction itself was even more loathsome and unjust. But when, for example, Bukharin (102) proclaimed that execution by shooting constituted one of the forms for the “elaboration of communist humanity,” he was invulnerable from the Marxist point of view. Indeed, Engels could think of only one function in history for the concept of justice—as a phrase useful for agitation. (98: p. 352) How, then, is one to verify an expert in Marxism like Bukharin? Perhaps his method of elaborating communist humanity does proceed from the “immanent laws” or the “dialectics of production?”

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> In the contemporary world, hypnotized as it is by the notion that science can solve any question and sanction any action, will many find the courage in such a situation to adhere to the unscientific ten commandments rather than to the scientifically proved “immanent law”? It was natural enough, therefore, that socialist Marxists of the nineteenth century were highly attracted to science as the supreme sanctioning authority. In particular, Marx and Engels, with their prodigious energy and capacity for work, processed huge amounts of data from the fields of political economy and history. But what they were seeking in science was not the source but the confirmation and sanction of the age-old theses of socialist ideology. The logic of their endeavor is explicitly stated in the preface to Anti-Dühring:

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> Marxism here emerges not as a result of objective scientific research but as a response to a set task—to prove the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and its replacement by socialism. This task became relevant for the creators of Marxism as the result of a series of labor disturbances in Europe.

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> Finally we come to Marxism. Despite the role that the exposure of the injustice, cruelty and inhumanity of capitalism plays in it, we can encounter quite similar views. Thus, in the article “Exposé of the Cologne Trial of Communists,” Marx writes: “We say to workers: you must survive fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil war and international strife not only to change existing relations but to change yourselves and become capable of political supremacy.” (3: VIII: p. 506) If we recall the cruelty and hunger which were the consequence of three years of civil war in Russia, we may imagine vaguely what those fifty years of civil war would mean—the years that the workers must survive, according to Marx. In describing the terrible living conditions of the workers of the day, Marx and Engels showed no interest in any improvement. On the contrary, they actually tried to see features of the future society in these conditions. It was impossible for the worker to have an uninterrupted family life? Well, in the future society the bourgeois family will wither away. Proletarian children were compelled to work? In the future society children would “combine education with productive labor.” At a time when “bourgeois philanthropists” such as Dickens and Carlyle were fighting against child labor, the Geneva Congress of the First International adopted a resolution composed by Marx: “The Congress regards the tendency of contemporary industry to draw on the labor of children and juveniles of both sexes in the great task of social production as a progressive, sound and lawful tendency, though under the rule of capitalism it turns into a terrible evil. In a rationally organized society, each child from the age of nine ought to be a productive worker.”

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4317

> It is striking how socialist thinkers, in exposing injustice and exploitation of the people, refer so often to these very people with contempt and even malice. For instance, Meslier wrote on the cover of his Testament: “I came to know the errors and the misdeeds, the vanity and the stupidity of the people. I hated and despised them.” Describing the peasants’ suffering, he wrote: “It is justly said of them that there is nothing more corrupt, more crude and more deserving of contempt.” (114: p. 56) Fourier calls the same French peasants “living automatons” and adds: “In their extreme crudity, they are nearer to animals than to the human race.” (97: p. 93) In a letter to Marx, Engels calls the peasants Germanic bumpkins. (3: XXI: p. 39) And the French peasants are referred to as “a barbaric race,” that is “by no means interested in the form of government, etc., striving first of all to destroy the tax collector’s house…to rape his wife and to beat him to death if they should manage to catch him.” (Letter to Marx, 3: XXI: p. 312) About the workers he writes: “The masses are frightfully stupid.” (Letter to Marx, 3: XXIV: p. 160) Speaking of certain unjust contracts, Marx for his part calls them “contracts to which only the completely degenerate rabble could agree.” (Letter to Engels, 3: XXIV: p. 30) Another time he exclaims: “To hell with these popular movements, especially if they are pacifist into the bargain. The Chartist movement drove O’Connor mad (have you read his last speech at the trial?) made Garny weak in the head and caused Johnson to go bankrupt. Voilà Ie dernier but de la vie dans tous les mouvements populaires.” (Letter to Engels, 3: XXI: p. 328)

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4400

> It is possible to consider Fourier as an immediate predecessor of Freud: in his striving to understand man and human society in the light of the most primitive instincts, in a pathological underdevelopment of the emotional sphere which prevents any appreciation for the higher aspects of the human psyche, in the hypertrophied role he ascribes to relations between the sexes. (According to Fourier, even economics ought to be based on attracting

young people into labor armies by the prospect of love affairs; in this way huge industrial building projects could be carried out.) Of course, Fourier's mythological construct describing the cooperation of man and the cosmos finds no continuation in Freud's works. (As we shall see below, Freud had his own mythology.) But while Fourier, with the infantilism so characteristic of him, sees amid "the passions we call vices" nothing more terrible than "passion for sweets and the delights of love," Freud goes much further. Among the forces to which he attempts to reduce culture and the spiritual life of man, Freud does not bypass either malice or lust for domination, destruction or the death wish. He considers all culture to be based on the suppression of the instincts —the deepest part of the human psyche, which strives to act according to the "pleasure principle." Unhappiness, in Freud's view, is a necessary cost for civilization. Happiness does not fall within the range of cultural values. Moral norms, elaborated by that part of the psyche that is of later, cultural, origin, are factors which are destructive and mortally dangerous to the organism. Freud compares morals with products of decay which are manufactured by a cell and then become the cause of its death. The next episode in the history of socialist doctrine after Fourier—Marxism—was based on analogous concepts of human personality. Dividing all human activity into "base" and "superstructure," Marxism assigned to the "base" that mode of production "from which, by force of inner dialectics and immanent laws, a social and state system is derived with all its legal, philosophical and religious views." In an even more striking formulation, Marxism proclaimed that this superstructure is "given" by the hand or steam mill. The mechanism by which the base creates a superstructure is held to be the struggle of material and economic interests (that is, egotism in the form of the class struggle). In its more general views of man, Marxism denies the freedom of will and any independent spiritual life or consciousness, the last being determined by one's "social existence." In the preface to the first volume of Capital, Marx wrote: "For me the ideal principle is a material one that has passed through the brain."

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4419

Still, the negation of the higher aspects of human existence in Marxism is not as radical as it is in the movement given shape by Fourier and later developed by Freud. Marxism sees the basic stimulus of human life and the explanation of the riddle of history in man's baser actions, but nevertheless in human activity and even in activity that unites people in a "social existence." Freud, however, reduces mankind to a still lower, purely biological level. While Marxism proclaims the division of human society into antagonistic classes (at least throughout recorded history), Freud strives to accomplish the same stratification in the human personality. He singles out the most ancient and the most extensive area—the id, the unconscious—which functions exclusively according to the pleasure principle, outside any notion of time or contradiction. There is no distinction here between good and evil, no morality or any other kind of value, save pleasure. Under the influence of the external world a derivative area—the ego—is formed, and from this, in turn, the superego takes shape under the influence of social factors. Here we can observe (under the name of suppression or repressive organization) the same exploitation and oppression in which Marxism sees the basic factor of social life. Freud compares the role of the areas of the psyche created under the influence of civilization to that part of the population which "seized power and exploits the rest of the population for its own profit.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4430

The fear of an uprising of the oppressed becomes the source of more severe measures." (Civilization and Its Discontents) In particular, sexuality, which has for the id the sole aim of deriving pleasure from different parts of the body, is forcibly subordinated to the function of childbearing and is transferred exclusively to the

> genitalia. Subconsciously the organism retains a recollection of the ideal condition of unlimited rule of the pleasure principle (cf. pre-class society) and attempts to break out of bondage. The ego and superego create in response the concept of morality and classify such attempts as “perversion” or “amoral actions.” This results in a civilization where labor brings no satisfaction and instead becomes a source of

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4435

> unhappiness, a civilization which inevitably breeds suffering. One may add to this picture the conception of history as a traumatic reaction to an ancient crime—the murder of the father, the leader of a primitive band.

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> It might seem that Freud has distracted us from the main task of sketching the concept of human personality in socialist ideology. In fact it would have been a miracle if systems like those of Freud, so close to the views elaborated by socialist thinkers (Fourier and Marx), had not been incorporated into the socialist world view. No miracle occurred: the attempt to achieve a synthesis of Freudianism with socialist concepts (called “neo-Marxism” or “neo-Freudianism”) became the biggest event in the development of socialist ideology in the post-World War II years; it had a very strong ideological impact on socialist trends that took shape during this time. In this regard Marcuse’s book (119) stands out as the most consistent and vivid attempt to achieve such a synthesis. Freud’s system is skeptical and pessimistic; he considered suffering and mental diseases to be the inevitable cost of civilization, which in its turn is more and more undermined by elements of the psyche that have broken away from its control. Marcuse, in contrast, undertakes to alter this view so that its pessimistic evaluation is directed only against modern society. Furthermore, he adds the prediction of a future “liberation.” To do this, he divides the suppression to which the instincts are subjected into two parts: the repression that inevitably comes from the objective claims of the external world on each organism and another type, which is caused by the striving of certain groups of individuals to attain privileged positions in society. The second form of repression he calls surplus-repression, and he considers the excessive burden that this factor imposes on the human psyche to be a peculiarity of modern civilization. Included in surplus-repression by Marcuse are the following: the necessity of work that does not bring direct satisfaction and whose reward appears in the form of ever more delayed pleasure; the repressive role of genital sexuality and the suppression of more primitive forms of libido, which permit the whole body to be the instrument of pleasure; the dominant role of reason, which subjects

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> all life to itself; the transformation of science and religion into a means of the total mobilization of man; the control exercised by such categories as “conscience” and “morality” over man’s inner world. Surplus-repression is directly connected to the fact that the demands of society are not satisfied collectively and in accordance with individual needs but are organized by the dominant part of society.

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> The most active socialist current of recent times, the New Left, proved to be extraordinarily receptive to Marcuse’s teaching and was to a considerable extent influenced by it. Marcuse’s basic propositions are closely

> paralleled in the slogans of this movement and serve as their theoretical foundation. For instance, the liberation of sexual instincts finds expression in the “sexual revolution,” and the suppression of repressive reason is demonstrated in the “psychedelic revolution,” that is, in the mass use of hallucinogens. Even ostentatious slovenliness can be theoretically justified, for according to the theory, ego and superego suppress the instincts connected with the sense of smell and enforce the perception of strong smells as “disgusting.” (Furthermore, the dominant classes associate garbage with the lower classes, which are perceived negatively as “the dregs of society.”) These views also serve as a theoretical basis for “left art,” which fosters the idea of “anti-cultural” (or “cultural”) revolution, of the destruction of “repressive” or “stifling” culture, up to and including a heightened interest (in both literature and ,art) in garbage and excrement as means of “exploding bourgeois culture.”

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> We provided several examples to illustrate the “anthropology of socialism.” Had we considered other developed socialist theories in this connection (for instance, Deschamps’s system), we would have been obliged to come to the same conclusion, namely, that socialist ideology seeks to reduce human personality to its most primitive, lowest levels and, in each epoch, relies upon the most radical “criticism of man” available. For that reason, the concepts of man in socialism and in religion are diametrically opposed. So that if socialism is a religion, it must be recognized as a quite special religion, different in principle from all others and antithetical to them in many basic questions. (How else are we to understand Bulgakov’s statement that socialism is “a religion based on atheism”?) Otherwise it would be necessary to expand the definition of religion to the point where it would have no meaning at all.

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> There are two essential points here. First, socialism is seen as the natural consequence of the decline of religion (Dostoyevsky has in mind socialism in Western Europe and the decline of Catholicism). Socialism is in this sense that which remains of the spiritual structure of mankind if the link with God is lost. Second, socialism aims at organizing human society according to new principles which are compared to the instinctive actions of insect societies.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4678

> Trotsky developed the same thoughts in greater detail in his book directed against Kautsky. (121) Once again we encounter the idea of militarization, labor armies and the theory according to which forced labor under conditions created by the dictatorship of the proletariat will be more productive than free labor. Trotsky supports this conception by means of the following significant analogy: “Even serfdom was, under certain circumstances, progressive and led to an increase in the productivity of labor.” (121: p.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4688

> These constructs were far from being pure theory. General labor conscription was actually announced. Instead of passports, which had been abolished, working papers were introduced for the entire work force. In Moscow and Petro grad, anyone venturing out on the street was obliged to have his working papers with him. By the time of the introduction of NEP (1921), eight labor armies had been organized.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4984

> Finally, “scientific socialism” proclaims that the historical process is controlled by immanent laws which are independent of human will. An understanding of these laws makes history predictable. This conception was formed under the obvious influence of the advances of natural science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, above all, the success of astronomy in predicting the discovery of planets, the return of comets, etc. Fourier asserts that mankind is ruled by the laws of “attraction of the passions,” which are in his view precisely analogous to Newton’s law of gravitation, whereby “the unity of the physical and the spiritual worlds is manifest.” In terms of this analogy, individuals correspond to the elemental particles of matter, which must be identical (at least, from the standpoint of properties essential to the phenomenon under consideration—that is, history). As for Marxism, one thinks of an analogy with another physical theory. This is the kinetic theory of gases, according to which a gas is the aggregate of molecules that come into collision, with the result of each collision determined by the laws of mechanics. A very great number of molecules transform the statistical laws of their collision into the general laws of the physics of gases. The only form of social contact of the producers of goods in capitalist society is exchange (just as for gas molecules the only form of interaction is collision). The interaction of a great number of producers engenders that “social production” which, in its turn, determines their political, legal and religious notions, and the “social, political and spiritual processes of life in general.” It is evident that such a conception makes sense only on the assumption that separate “molecules” (producers) are identical. Otherwise, instead of an explanation (or an “understanding,” as Marx puts it), there would be only the individual properties of a huge number of people, and one enigma would be replaced by a mass of enigmas.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4998

> Proceeding from these examples, it is possible to attempt to formulate the specific concept of equality inherent in socialist ideology. The usual understanding of “equality,” when applied to people, entails equality of rights and sometimes equality of opportunity (social welfare, pensions, grants, etc.). But what is meant in all these cases is the equalization of external conditions which do not touch the individuality of man. In socialist ideology, however, the understanding of equality is akin to that used in mathematics (when one speaks of equal numbers or equal triangles), i.e., this is in fact identity, the abolition of differences in behavior as well as in the inner world of the individuals constituting society.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5004

> From this point of view, a puzzling and at first sight contradictory property of socialist doctrines becomes apparent. They proclaim the greatest possible equality, the destruction of hierarchy in society and at the same time (in most cases) a strict regimentation of all of life, which would be impossible without absolute control and an all-powerful bureaucracy which would engender an incomparably greater inequality. The contradiction disappears, however, if we note that the terms “equality” and “inequality” are understood in two different ways. The equality proclaimed in socialist ideology means identity of individualities. The hierarchy against which the doctrine fights is a hierarchy based on individual qualities—origin, wealth, education, talent and authority. But this does not contradict the establishment of a hierarchy of internally identical individuals who only occupy different positions in the social machine, just as identical parts can have different functions in a mechanism. The analogy between the socialist ideal of society and the machine is certainly not new. For example, speaking about the ancient states of Mesopotamia and Egypt (which, as we have seen, were to a considerable extent based on

> socialist principles), Lewis Mumford expresses the view that their social structure was the first to be based on the idea of a machine. He supports this idea by referring to the drawings of the time that show warriors and workers as completely identical, like the stereotyped details of a machine. (141: p. 150) Even more convincing is the evidence of a man who was clearly competent in this area: I. V. Stalin. He once expressed his social ideal by calling the inhabitants of the state ruled by him “nuts and bolts.” He proposed a toast to them. And in contemporary China the papers glorify the hero Lei Fen, who wrote in his diary about his desire to be Chairman Mao’s “stainless-steel cog.”

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5017

> The preceding considerations lead us to the conclusion that at least three components of the socialist ideal—the abolition of private property, the abolition of the family and socialist equality—may be deduced from a single principle: the suppression of individuality. There is also a large body of direct evidence that demonstrates the hostility of socialist ideology to individuality. Some examples: Mazdak taught that the confusion of light

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> It is striking that the mystique of destruction is here the only motivation; rapture in it is offered as the only reward, but one which must outweigh every sacrifice. And this is entirely consistent with a definition Bakunin and Nechayev constantly repeated: “A revolutionary is a doomed man.” (151: p. 468) Death among universal destruction this was subjectively the ultimate goal with which they lured their adherents. Higher feelings could not have fostered this activity, for they were utterly denied. “All

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5300

> The facts hardly support such a view. Nihilism of the Bakunin type and Marxism developed from the same source. The differences between them (which explain, incidentally, why Bakunin has far less influence than Marx and Engels on history) lie not in the fact that Marxism renounced elements of nihilism but that it added to them some new and very significant elements. Marxism is based on the same psychological foundation as nihilism—a burning hatred for surrounding life that can be vented only through complete annihilation of that life. But Marxism finds a means of transferring this purely subjective perception of the world onto another, more objective plane. As with art, where passion is kept in check and transformed into creative works, Marxism accomplished a transformation of the elemental, destructive emotions that ruled Bakunin and Nechayev into a structure that seemed incomparably more objective and hence convincing—the concept of man’s subordination to “immanent laws” or “the dialectics of production.”

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5451

> The death of mankind is not only a conceivable result of the triumph of socialism—it constitutes the goal of socialism.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5552

> The aim of this process is Nothingness, achieved through the voluntary renunciation of will. “No will: no representation, no world. “Before us there is certainly left only nothing;

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5558

> To this system Hartmann adds the idea that the world process began through an initial irrational act of will and consists of the gradual preparation for the elimination of real existence. The aim is to return to nonexistence, implemented by the collective suicide of mankind and the destruction of the world, both of which are made possible by the development of technology. The notion of Nothingness, which entered philosophy from theology through Hegel's system, plays an increasingly important role in the nineteenth century, until in the twentieth it becomes one of the dominant conceptions. For example, Max Stirner ends his famous book The Ego and His Own with the words: "I am the owner of my might and I am so when I know myself as unique. In the unique one the owner himself returns into his creative nothing, of which he is born. Every higher essence above me, be it God, be it man, weakens the feeling of my uniqueness, and pales only before the sun of this consciousness. If I found my affair on myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say:

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5567

> But it was within the framework of modern existentialism, especially in the works of Heidegger and Sartre, that Nothingness found its most important expression. Heidegger believes that man's individuality perishes in the leveling and the impulse toward mediocrity that is produced in society (something that is conveyed by the untranslatable German locution "man"). The only true individuality is death, which is always the death of a particular man and in which nothing links him to others. Therefore, a man can gain genuine existence only on the verge of death, only in what he calls "being-unto-death." (162: p. 144 f.) The being of every individuality is, from this point of view, merely Noch-nicht [not yet], a sort of period when death has not yet ripened. (162: p.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5573

> This concerns existence in general also: existence is Nothingness and Nothingness is—existence itself. (163: p. 104) Nothingness is the limit of existence determining its meaning. For Heidegger Nothingness is evidently an active force, for it functions—Das Nicht nochtet. It determines history's meaning, which is revealed in the attempts to overcome the senselessness of existence and to break through into Nothingness. Nothingness is also the central category in Sartre's principal philosophic work, Being and Nothingness.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5615

> The conclusions we have drawn as a result of our analysis of socialism are also confirmed, as we see, by a series of independent arguments. We may formulate these conclusions as follows: a. The idea of the death of mankind —not the death of specific people but literally the end of the human race—evokes a response in the human It arouses and attracts people, albeit with differing intensity in different epochs and in different individuals. The scope of influence of this idea causes us to suppose that every individual is affected by it to a greater or lesser degree and that it is a universal trait of the human psyche. b. This idea is not only manifested in the individual experience of a great number of specific persons, but is also capable of uniting people (in contrast to delirium, for example) e., it is a social force. The impulse toward self-destruction may be regarded as an element in the psyche of mankind as a whole. c. Socialism is one of the aspects of this impulse of mankind toward self-destruction and Nothingness, specifically its manifestation in the sphere of organizing society. The last words of

> Meslier's Testament ("…with this nothing I shall end here") express the "final mystery" of socialism, to use Feuerbach's favorite expression. We have arrived at this view of socialism

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5732

> The last hundred years, particularly the twentieth century, have brought socialism unheard-of success. This has been primarily a success of socialism in its Marxist form, mostly because Marxism has been able , to answer two questions that always stand before socialist movements: where to seek the "chosen people"—i.e., who is to destroy the old world—and what is the supreme authority sanctioning the movement? The answer to the first question was the proletariat; to the second, science. At present both answers have become ineffective, at least for the West. "The proletariat has become a support for the system," Marcuse complains. "What is a proletariat if it is not revolutionary? And it is, indeed, not revolutionary," Sartre confirms. And science has lost its prestige and its role as unquestionable authority; it has become too popular and widespread, and ceased being the secret knowledge of a select few. Moreover, many of its gifts have recently proved to be far from beneficial. For this reason, Marcuse calls for replacing science with a utopia, for granting the role held by reason to fantasy.
