

## PREFACE

### I.

Nineteenth century materialism, the philosophical foundation of modern scientific theory and industry, was brought to its most sophisticated form by Marx and Engels. As a social and philosophical doctrine, Marxism is still superior to any other theoretical system, especially given that most modern philosophies have retreated from consistent materialism into a number of subjectivist trends.

A curious phenomenon occurs, however, when intellectuals begin to appreciate the materialist basis of Marxist ideology. They become enamored, not with scientific materialism, but with Marxism; not with a mode of thinking, but with a system of beliefs.

As in religion, dogmatism is not simply an affliction of a few extremists, but to a varying degree infects the entire congregation. A Marxist intellectual is first and foremost a believer, and like his Christian counterpart, upholds his faith proudly, defends it against attack, and tries to win new converts. The parallel holds true with embarrassing fidelity down to the reverential regard for the classic works, study groups, and compilations aimed at reinforcing the faith.

For the radical intelligentsia, the attraction of Marxism is not simply that it offers theoretical solutions to a variety of social problems. It excites the intellectual's ego appetite primarily by investing history with direction and purpose and by investing the intellectual with a central role. The material contradictions within feudalism gave rise to capitalism, and the contradictions within capitalism will give rise to socialism (or if not to socialism, to the annihilation of modern society). The role of the Marxist intellectual is, of course, to aid this forward motion of history and hasten the advent of the new society.

This sense of progression and aim in history, however, is a departure from consistent materialism, and accounts in part for the lack of further scientific development within Marxist thinking over the past hundred years.

As in natural history, social history has no intrinsic purpose, progression or aim other than simple reproduction. And as in nature, complexity and sophistication (whether technical or social) is only a consequence of variation, and in no way suggests progress or an inner drive to a higher order. Where Darwin was sufficiently conscientious on this point to incorporate it into his analysis of natural variation, Marx and Engels failed to do so and consequently invested their social dialectic with both historical hierarchy and final aim. Without this particular prejudice, a Marxist intellectual would be as lost as a Christian deprived of the notion of after-life. The idea of historical progression, of the unfolding of deep material forces and the class struggle towards socialism, is a cornerstone of Marxist ideology and a testament of the intellectual's faith, for it is precisely this device that gives the intellectuals narrow interests the momentum and grandeur of a world historical force.

## II.

Works on Marxist theory generally divide into two opposing kinds: those adamantly for and those adamantly against. The former denounce the injustice and inequalities of capitalism and rigorously defend socialism. The latter denounce the injustice and inequalities of socialism and adamantly support capitalism.

The most curious feature of this ongoing ideological struggle is that when judged by their respective social positions, economic status and prestige the partisans at either extreme are as nearly identical social species as one could bear to find. The pages of *Pravda* and *The New York Times* are not, after all, filled with polemical ditties fired off by angry factory workers during their lunch breaks in defense of their respective world outlooks or economic systems. Ideological struggle is the activity of ideologues, of intellectuals, of people whose energies are not violated by the demands of manual work and who thus tend to live as comfortably in the East as in the West.

It is this common class position that unites and identifies Marxist and anti-Marxist ideologues alike, regardless of their mutual hostilities. The ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism is therefore not a true class conflict, but an internecine dispute, a sibling rivalry within the intelligentsia as a whole.

The apparent mystery behind this peculiar state of affairs can be solved if we ignore the various principles, beliefs and values each side advocates, and consider instead the material interests each covertly defends.

The prime material prerequisite for the intelligentsia is that it be supplied from the store of society's goods with the necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, etc. The intelligentsia, however, would cease to be a unique social strata if, like the working population, it took a direct part in the production of life's essentials. To be a bona fide intellectual, one must be free to pursue 'interesting' ideas, to debate points of principle at the greatest length, to research material for works-in-progress, to fill reams of paper with the cherished fruit of one's long and arduous pondering. In short, to be an intellectual one must be freed from having to actually work for a living.

Behind the intelligentsia's formal activity, behind its verbosity, its idealized principles and value systems, stands its naked self-interest, its defense of a freeloading existence, its parasitism.

However bitter their polemical disputes may be, therefore, the ideologues of East and West in reality only disagree as to how the privileged status of their kind is to be secured. The intellectuals who support the traditional capitalism arrangement have formulated one solution. The socialist intellectuals have evolved another. The latter variation is the subject of the present work.