

The more accurately we recognize and observe the laws of history and class struggle, so much the more do we conform to dialectic materialism. The more insight we have into dialectic materialism, the greater will be our success.

J. Stalin

The more accurately we recognize and observe the laws of nature and life, . . . so much the more do we conform to the will of the Almighty. The more insight we have into the will of the Almighty, the greater will be our successes.

Martin Bormann

Intelligent idealism is closer to intelligent materialism than stupid materialism.

V. I. Lenin

Stalin's little book on philosophy

By Lance Hill

In 1938, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union commissioned a new history; Stalin's personal contribution was the chapter entitled "Dialectical and Historical Materialism." The impact of this philosophical work has been substantial over the years; it is widely studied as an authoritative elaboration of Marxist theory. Part of the reason for this is that this pamphlet was published in millions of copies in all languages, while Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* and *Grundrisse* and Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* lay on the shelves gathering dust. Its significance as an example of the continuity of contemporary Soviet theory is reflected in the fact that it is one of the few works of Stalin

that survived the official censorship by the new regime after his death, and to this day it still graces the publication list of International Publishers. Since the article is the source of many contemporary Marxist theories, we think it merits analysis. Moreover, this analysis should be made independent of a consideration of Stalin's historic role. (One thing which should be noted here is Stalin's regular practice of distorting positions he dis-

agrees with. In the article under consideration, this is most evident in the discussion of idealism, which he treats with consistent contempt, in contrast to Lenin, who characterized it as "*one of the shades . . . of the infinitely complex knowledge [dialectical] of man.*"¹)

Some may object from the start that Stalin's article was intended to be a simplification of Marxist theory, and any critique should make allowances for such a popularization. The assumption here is that any simplification of Marxist theory can occur without making fundamental distortions.

In fact, Marxism as a theory of history involves a complex method, one which is a decisive break from conventional logic and common sense. Any attempt to generalize such a challenge to common sense in a period when common sense is the dominant mode of thinking will eventually subordinate the real content of the theory to vulgar and contradictory explanations. This is not to say that we can not attempt to present aspects of Marxism in a popular way. It only asserts that there is a minimum level of analysis demanded if we are to avoid fundamental distortion, and accordingly the process by which people begin to approach a popular understanding of Marxist

method involves a demand upon Marxists themselves to prepare the class intellectually.

Materialism and Dialectics: The Duality of Stalin's Theory

Stalin begins his exposition of Marxist theory by presenting Marxism as two theories, or more accurately, "sciences." "Dialectical Materialism" is the first part, and is referred to as such because "its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them is dialectical, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is materialistic."² The other part of Marxist theory is "Historical Materialism," which is "the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life. . . ."³ Following this outline, Stalin then sets out to examine each independently.

This presents a serious problem from the outset. Such a distinction occurs nowhere in the writings of Marx, and with good reason. In what sense can we separate the process by which we apprehend a phenomenon, or "study" a phenomenon, from the process by which we "interpret" or attribute meaning to a phenomenon? Is it

possible to study anything without proceeding from some initial assumptions about its meaning? Are not the categories by which we study a phenomenon themselves a product of some kind of "interpretation" of previous phenomena? Any kind of separation of approach and interpretation can only mean a separation of dialectics as a *method* from materialism as a *method*. It is purely an artificial construction on Stalin's part. As we shall see, it leads him to separate man from nature and social life from material production. In order to avoid these dualisms, we have to view dialectics as a system of thought, a theory of knowledge inseparable from the subject matter we are dealing with.

In *Philosophical Notebooks* Lenin observes: "Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development 'of all material, natural and spiritual, things,' i.e., of the development of the *entire concrete content of the world* and its cognition, i.e., the sum-total, the conclusions of the History of the Knowledge of the world." (emphasis added)⁴ Stalin separates the study of nature and the social world (i.e., social relations): dialectical materialism and historical materialism. This distinction implies that man's existence can be separated out from nature, understood apart from nature. It is an important distinction for Stalin, since further on in the article he maintains that man's social life is a simple reflex of his material life, an assertion difficult to make without initially setting man apart from the natural world. How did Marx view this relationship between man and nature?

Labour is in the first place a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord, regulates and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own

forces, setting into motion arms and legs, heads and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's productions. . . . By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. . . ."⁵

and

Here again, as everywhere, the identity of nature and man appears, in that the limited relation of men to nature determines their limited relation to each other, and their limited relation to each other determines their limited relation to nature. . . ."⁶

Here nature and man appear in somewhat of a different relationship from what Stalin presents us with. The point is that production, material production, is a process carried out by people. History is only the history of man as a force of nature organizing himself into social relations necessary for the reproduction of life. And as Marx points out above, he does not merely "wish" his way into social relations, but in fact has the boundaries and possibilities set by his limited relation to nature. In the particular case of capitalism, this is realized through the domination of living labor by dead labor (capital). In either case Marx is emphasizing the dialectical unity of the two. For Stalin, the separation is the initial stage for excluding man's purposive activity from the central role in history, removing man as the subject of history. The implications of this error become clear in the section on the role of the proletariat and revolutionary consciousness.

Stalin's Dialectic

With this understanding we can turn to his exposition of the ele-

ments of dialectics and materialism, which are treated separately. In the first section he outlines *four aspects* of the dialectical method.

Interdependence. The first aspect is the law of interdependence. This passage seems to be harmless enough. It establishes that "a phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena."⁷ Closer observation begins to unravel what is, in fact, a fundamentally different notion of interdependence from what we find in Marx or Lenin. Stalin poses it as a question of how a separate entity is shaped by that which *surrounds* it. Phenomena are "acted upon" in this sense, take on their meaning through this conditioning (later on he gives examples of this), and there is no sense of a reciprocal unity within a totality. Movement is not through this unity, but rather externally determined. Here, again, Lenin:

the entire totality of the manifold relations of this thing to others . . . the internally contradictory tendencies (and sides) in this thing . . . the relations of this thing (phenomenon, etc.) are not only manifold but general, universal. Each thing (phenomenon, process, etc.) is connected with each other.⁸

Interconnection, manifold and universal — this is something more complex than simple conditioning; it implies a unity, a contradictory unity within the thing itself. Again Stalin separates that which exists in a mutual unity.

Stalin's Movement. The second point of Stalin's is the constant movement of the phenomena, thus "dialectics holds that nature is not at a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and

change."⁹ This is all quite true, but there is no sense of the *supercession* of phenomena (Hegel's term *Aufhebung*). For instance, the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat flows from the conception of socialism as a transitional stage that developed out of and through capitalism, thus capitalism does not "collide" (Stalin speaks of the "collision" of opposites) with the forces of socialism and then get carried out dead on a stretcher. And neither does socialism develop separately from capitalism. Stalin's movement is of distinct forces, and the reason he can not account for the source of movement is precisely because he does not see the fact that it occurs through contradiction

the old and the emergence of the new."¹⁰

From this exposition we can see that change is not just death of something but the transformation of a thing into its opposite, as well as the fact that this change finds its source of movement through contradiction and is *self-movement*. Thus every phenomenon, labor, capital, etc. contains within it its own opposite, and the struggle within it of these contradictory tendencies is the source of change.

Quality and Quantity and Contradiction. Stalin argues that qualitative changes occur "not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and

two, for once again Stalin has separated them out from their unity into a simple linear process of change. The examples he uses remind us of the theory of phenomena being "conditioned" by surrounding phenomena, an external force (in this case heat) applied to a separate object (water).¹² As Gramsci notes:

In the case of man, who is this external agent? In the factory it is the division of labor, etc., conditions *created by man himself* (emphasis added). In society it is the ensemble of productive forces. . . . However in

every phenomenon, labor, capital, etc., contains within it its own opposite, and the struggle of these contradictory elements is the source of change.

of identical opposites. Lenin gives a distinctly different analysis:

The identity of opposites (it would be more correct, perhaps, to say their "unity," although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense they are both correct) is the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society). The condition for knowledge of all processes of the world in their "*self-movement*," in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites . . . [this] alone furnishes the key to the "self-movement" of everything existing; it alone furnishes the key to the "leaps," to the "break in continuity," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of

gradual quantitative changes."¹¹ We should note that this is only one aspect of this category of dialectical logic. It is the more "commonsensical" side of the problem. The more difficult question is how, concretely, do different quantities of the same thing change the quality of it, or why is it that a phenomenon is something other than its constituent parts taken separately. For instance, a thousand soldiers fighting together on a battlefield constitute qualitatively something different from a thousand fighting separately. Common sense tells us it is concentration that makes the difference. Yet a thousand soldiers fighting separately, scattered throughout the countryside, can sometimes be more effective than a thousand in concentration. As we can see, it is an aspect of dialectics that is not only complex, but forces us to recognize the unity of the two sides. Yet in Stalin the quality-quantity process becomes more one of causality. Small incremental changes in abstract quantity create large qualitative leaps. There is no room for how these new qualities affect the quantity. There is no appreciation of the reciprocal relation of the

the philosophy of praxis (Marxism — ed.) quality is also connected to quantity and this connection is perhaps its most fertile contribution.¹³

But there is another role that quantity plays in Stalin's formulation, and that is its relationship to contradiction:

the struggle between opposites . . . constitutes the internal content of the process of development, the *internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative change*.¹⁴ (emphasis added)

This wording poses change as occurring through incremental quantitative changes, the content of which is contradiction. But it is self-evident that changing the quality of something can change the quantity. For instance, the quality of labor can affect the quantity of labor. For Stalin, this is a one-way process; change occurs through quantity exclusively. But what is the

quantitative change that occurs which would drive the Russian proletariat from trade unionism to soviets? This is a paradox that Stalin would be at a loss to explain.

Categories of Thought

Nowhere in Stalin's treatment of the dialectical method do we find that concept of changing categories of thought, a very important aspect of dialectics that received particular attention in Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*. Because the process of comprehending an object or phenomenon involves the actual cognition of the thing in its process of change, the categories that we attribute to this thing or phenomenon will necessarily embody these contradictions also. Thus the very categories with which we analyze the world around us are also in the process of change, and cannot be taken as fixed, immutable definitions. The *viewpoint* we use to analyze society is itself subject to change. Lenin:

If everything develops, then everything passes from one into another, for development as is well known is not a simple, universal and eternal *growth, enlargement* (respective diminution), etc. If that is so, then, in the first place, evolution has to be understood *more exactly*, as the arising and passing away of everything, as mutual transitions. And, in the second place, if *everything* develops, does not that apply to the most general *concepts* and *categories* of thought? If not, it means that thinking is not connected with being. If it does, it means that there is a dialectics of concepts and a dialectics of cognition which has objective significance.¹⁵

In fact, it was soon after Lenin's study of this notion of Hegel's that

he analyzed the fixed use of the phrase "defense of the fatherland," as meaning one thing in the imperialist nations and quite another in the oppressed nations.

Stalin's error in this respect can be seen in his example of the role of slavery when he observes that the slave system is senseless and stupid "under modern conditions" yet quite natural and "understandable" during the disintegration of the primitive communal system. Here he makes two errors. The first, of secondary importance here, is the assumption that the various stages of economic development and "their" social forms are compulsory, natural and fixed. Second, and most important, while Stalin sees the various productive systems changing, he neither sees the content of the slave system changing nor the category of "slave" in our thought changing. For him, the concept remains the same, denoting the same content. Thus a slave under conditions of Roman conquest would be the same as a slave in the pre-Civil War U.S. The problem arises when we attempt to analyze society and production by using the categories such as "slave," "proletariat," "socialism," "war," etc., without understanding their transitional character.¹⁶ The omission of this aspect of dialectics allows for many other erroneous observations by Stalin, and certainly plagues most of the Marxist movement today.

Matter and Consciousness

Stalin's view follows a process of formal reasoning: thought is a product of the human brain, the human brain is a product of matter, thus thought, consciousness, is "secondary, derivative, since it is the reflection of matter."¹⁷ It is through this process that Stalin confirms both the authenticity of our thought and the objectivity of the material world. We end up with an "objective reality existing outside and independent of our mind."¹⁸

But what is objective reality? While there is certainly a world of matter, it cannot be confused with the substance of this matter. People are of matter. So are noses. But when, through a historical process, we abstract from our practical interaction with people that what is essential to them is their Humanity, then we are participating through thought and action in the process of constructing a reality. Further, through the different relations that these "material" people enter into, we begin to view them not only as people in general but also as *classes*. And the process continues on as we develop a deeper understanding of what this matter *essentially* is. In fact, no "reality" exists independent of man, since man is constantly creating new realities through his own activity and thought. As Lenin notes:

Man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it.¹⁹

and

i.e., that the world does not satisfy man and man decides to change it by his activity.²⁰

This process of gaining knowledge is not one of "passive" man being stamped with material impulses, rather:

Knowledge is the reflection of nature by man. But this is not simple, not immediate, not complete reflection, but the process of a series of abstractions, the formation and development of concepts, laws, etc., and these concepts, laws, etc., (thought, science = "the logical Idea") *embrace* conditionally, approximately, the universal law-governed character of the eternally moving and developing nature.²¹

Practice as An Aspect of Knowledge

Unlike Stalin's photographic, passive reflection of the world, we see instead that our knowledge of reality is a process of development, one which involves and takes on meaning through active experiences. As Gramsci notes, objective reality is always a question of *viewpoint*, thus "humanly objective." The difference between this and relativism or idealism, which assumes that reality is purely a human construction, is that:

(east and west) these references are real: they correspond to real facts, they allow us to travel by land and by seas, to arrive where one has decided to arrive, to "foresee" the future, to objectivise reality, to understand the objectivity of the external world. Rational and real become one,"²²

The mediating element is practice — human practice. Practice is often thought of as laboratory practice, or exclusively the practice of the party. Often it is posed as serving

Stalin's Conclusions

Party and *Consciousness*:

Stalin's view that ideas emanate from reflecting on a material world distinct from consciousness or human activity leads to another political paradox. While it is clear that the material basis for reactionary ideas exists in the material fabric of capitalist society, whence arise revolutionary, socialist ideas and consciousness? There is nothing in the material world (using Stalin's definition) that is "socialist" in content. At this point, Stalin avoids the paradox by merely asserting that there are "new" ideas and "old" ideas, and that the new ideas serve the advance of the forces of production.²⁴ But into whose minds do these ideas first appear, out of what experiences, and in what way can an idea be derived from a material world that is its opposite?²⁵ The answers to these questions cannot be found in Stalin. He sees the proletariat as essentially an object, carrying out the demands of history rather than history carrying out the demands of the proletariat. Compare the following, first Stalin:

He sees the proletariat as essentially an object, carrying out the demands of history...

theory, the way that we "test" theory.²³ It must be understood as as much a part of gaining knowledge as thought itself. And it must be understood as Human practice, the practice of all humanity, which does not exclude social classes and their practice over a period of years. The concept of Human activity as a way of confirming and creating a reality is outside Stalin's theoretical framework. He has separated Man from Nature, "approach" from interpretation, and made thought a vulgar reflection of the objective world.

Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilize and organize them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces which hamper the development of the material life of society.²⁶

then Engels:

History does nothing, it "possesses *no* immense wealth", it "wages no battles". It is Man, and not "History", real living man, that does all that, that possesses and fights; history is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve its *own* aims; history is *nothing* but the activity of man pursuing his aims.²⁷

Instead of Feuerbach's determinist "History" we have Stalin's one-sided "material forces of society" using man, feeding him ideas by which he merely facilitates the inevitable material march of the forces of production. Actually, he breaks from his usual analysis here since the revolutionary ideas arise not from the material world, but from the "new tasks" of the material world, and these ideas organize man. In Stalin, man vacillates from being the hopeless puppet of matter to being the hopeless puppet of ideas. At no point is revolutionary consciousness attributed to a contradiction between his conditions of life and his essence as creative man.

The Party:

With the above notion of revolutionary consciousness as derivative ideas, it is relatively easy to view the party as *distinct from*, external to, the proletariat. It appears that the party alone possesses the ability to discern the laws of the material world. The party is by Stalin's definition that section of society which takes the ideas to the class since, as the first sentence of the article states, "Dialectical Materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party." In this process the proletariat is treated as the object

of the material forces of society and the party relates to the proletariat as such an object. It follows that no practice on the part of the proletariat outside the guidance of the party can be revolutionary, and again, this conception of the role of the party flows from the Stalinist analysis of consciousness and how it develops.

Revolutionary Consciousness:

What, then, is the source of consciousness and revolutionary consciousness from a Marxist dialectical view? If we were to start from the assumption that the source of movement, and in this case the particular development of different aspects of proletarian consciousness and their movement, is to be found in the internally contradictory sides of a thing, then it becomes clearer how both bourgeois and revolutionary ideas can emerge. If we were to ask what causes the proletariat to accept bourgeois and revolutionary conceptions of itself (not just where these different world views originate), then we would have to look at the contradictory sides of the proletariat *within itself*. It is, at the same moment, both a subordinate class as wage labor and yet the subject of history, the producing class. It has on the one hand its real existence (its *being*) as alienated labor and on the other hand its essential humanity struggling to be expressed (its *essence*). Both these aspects exist together in a contradictory struggle, and each can only be defined by reference to the other. Marx illuminates this perspective in his reply to Feuerbach, responding to Feuerbach's notion that one's being corresponds to one's essence (which is very similar to Stalin's formulation that, "What-ever is the being of a society . . . such are the ideas"):

Thus if millions of proletarians feel by no means contented with their living conditions, if their "being" does not in the least correspond with their "essence",

then, according to the passage quoted, this is an unavoidable misfortune which must be borne quietly. These millions of proletarians or communists, however, think quite differently and will prove this in time, when they bring their "being" into harmony with their "essence", in a practical way, by means of revolution.²⁸

From this we can see that the class is itself contradictory, between what it both is and is not. Whatever the process is by which it "borrows" bourgeois ideas about itself, the source of this acceptance is that aspect of the contradiction of being subordinate, its being. And yet its essence, born out of its daily life in production, struggles with this, its position as the producer, and herein lies the source of its revolutionary consciousness. In this constellation, the role of the party becomes something other than the source of revolutionary ideas abstractly gleaned through the science of Marxism. The knowledge of the party and the knowledge of the class are but two moments of the same process of the gaining of knowledge of the class. On the contrary, the conventional strict division of the "spontaneous" activity of the class and the "revolutionary socialist" activity of the party finds its theoretical argument in Stalin.

Stalin's Motive Force of History:

Now we come to the question, what is the source of historical movement? Stalin introduces his theory with a description of the forces of production and the relations of production, here again as two distinct elements that collide or contradict. Within the forces of production he includes the instruments of production (factories, tools), and the people who operate the instruments. The relations of production are defined as the social "mutual relations of one kind or another," necessary to produce.

From this, Stalin postulates that "a second feature of production is that changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and, in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production."²⁹

Stalin concedes that the productive relations "influence" the forces of production by "accelerating" or "retarding" their development. But the essential relationship between the two is that one element is derivative. Again this is based in his notion of interdependence as "*conditioned* by surrounding phenomena" (emphasis added). He even extends this to argue that the forces of production and the relations of production cannot lag behind each other since that would violate "the unity of the productive forces and the relations of production."³⁰ This is a harmonic, not a contradictory, unity. Was there ever a period in the development of capitalism when the proletariat, as a force of production and the producer of these relations, could exist in harmony with the relations of production? Of course, no such situation could ever exist, since the proletariat has always embodied the contradiction within itself as both being and essence. It, and it alone, is the common element found in both "forces of production" and "relations of production."

Having removed man from his central role in history, having reduced him to an agent of the material forces of society that can at best condition, retard, or accelerate the material forces of production, Stalin has absolutely nowhere else to look for the source of movement in history other than the transformation of matter, i.e., inventions. But the "invention" itself is not *just* a cause in any sense of the word. *All* inventions are also an effect, the effect of *human creative activity*. Unfortunately for Stalin, even his technicist, non-contradictory source of movement contains

within it the very element which he sought to abolish:

Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of human will over nature, or of human participation in nature. They are *organs of the human brain, created by the human hand*; the power of knowledge objectified. The development of fixed capital indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a *direct force of production*, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it.³¹

Not only is Stalin lacking a real concept of self-movement and contradiction; the very method he uses prevents such an analysis. Any formulation that divides production into two separate entities and has them collide can hardly account for movement. We make reference to an observation from the "mature" Marx:

Forces of production and social relations — two different sides of the development of the social individual — appear to capital as mere means, and are merely means for it to produce on its limited foundation. In fact, however, they are the material conditions to *blow this foundation sky-high*.³²

Conclusions

There are many currents of thought regarding Stalin's theory. Some, such as Bettelheim's, treat it as an ideological formation that has to be viewed within the context of

the history of the Soviet Union.³³ That certainly helps explain some formulations: the exclusion of human practico-critico activity would be important for representing soviet society as free of internal contradictions in production.

But regardless of the origin of this thinking, it is still taken seriously, at least in the U.S. left, and is still taken to be something of an authority on Marxism. While there are some disturbing gaps, and while Stalin is prone to conjuring up phrases with ambiguous and interchangeable meanings, there is a consistency to the presentation, a congruence between method and conclusions. Far from being a simple popularization, it is a complex vulgarization of different elements of Marxism. But we can no more theorize away the legacy of Stalin than he could theorize away the active, subject role of the proletariat. They are both quite real.

Footnotes

1. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 38 (Progress Publishers, 1972), page 363.
2. J. V. Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (International Publishers, 1975), page 5.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Lenin, *op. cit.*, page 93.
5. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume I (New World Paperbacks, 1974), page 177.
6. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, cited in T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel's *Karl Marx* (McGraw-Hill, 1964). Bottomore's translation differs from the International Publishers "Marx-Engels Collected Works." International Publishers translated the word "relation" as "attitude," although this passage occurs within an analysis that makes

continual reference to "relations." In either case, it emphasizes the inseparability of these two aspects.

7. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 7.
8. Lenin, *op. cit.*, pages 221-222.
9. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 7.
10. Lenin, *op. cit.*, pages 359-360.
11. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 8.
12. Here Stalin relies heavily on Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*, which was not available until after Lenin's death. Certainly the context within which Stalin cites this passage suggests that this alone is the essence of the Marxist concept of quantity-quality. It should be noted that even Lenin had difficulty with Engels' "popularizations." Cf. Lenin, *op. cit.*, page 357.
13. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (International Publishers, 1975), page 469.
14. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 11.
15. Lenin, *op. cit.*, page 253. Original emphasis.
16. Trotsky was guilty of the same error, particularly regarding his analysis of the Soviet Union. Cf. C. L. R. James, *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (Facing Reality).
17. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 16.
18. *Ibid.* This schema is still quite acceptable to sections of the U.S. left. Irwin Silber argues that the incompatibility of Marxism and religion rests with the "underlying premise . . . that there is only one world, the world of matter." (*The Guardian*, May 23, 1979) Compare this argumentation to the slightly more complex analysis of Marx in *The German Ideology: The Leipzig Council III. Saint Max*.
19. Lenin, *op. cit.*, page 212.
20. *Ibid.*, page 213.
21. *Ibid.*, page 182.
22. Gramsci, *op. cit.*, page 447. Gramsci also notes that the concepts of east and west are part of a reality that reflects the history of man. The fact that Hawaii is considered to be

- west of the northamerican United States, and that Japan is to the east, denotes the historical origins of the terms, and their ideological content.
23. The most thorough popularization of this aspect appears in Mao's "On Contradiction," which has been used predominantly as an admonition to "do it." It is difficult to deny that Mao's contribution in many ways fills a void in contemporary Marxist theory, in a popular sense. Yet there are some serious problems with his formulation, particularly the implication that practice that enlarges the knowledge of the class occurs exclusively through the party, and that production and class practice are in some way distinct. See Glaberman, *Mao as Dialectician* (Bewick/ed, 1971), although Glaberman seems to suggest that the practice of the party cannot be a part of the development of the proletariat's self-knowledge.
 24. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 23.
 25. It is interesting that even Stalin's attempt to render a Marxist authenticity to his view betrays a questionable intent. On page 21 Stalin says, "Whatever is the being of a society . . . such *are* the ideas, theories, political views and political institutions of that society." (emphasis added) Yet the quote from Marx states, ". . . their social being that *determines* their consciousness." (emphasis added) The difference between "determine" and "are" is not just nitpicking. "Are" implies a reflexive identity, and it should be clear that Marx attributes this to only the most primitive stage of man's development (*The German Ideology*, Marx-Engels Collected Works, page 36). "Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men at this stage still appear as the direct efflux of their material behavior."
 26. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 23.
 27. Engels, *The Holy Family*, cited by Lenin in *op. cit.* page 36.
 28. Marx, *The German Ideology*, page 58.
 29. Stalin, *op. cit.*, page 31.
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. Marx, *Grundrisse* (Vintage Books, 1973), page 706.
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. Bettelheim goes beyond just this aspect of Stalin, but it would be a mistake to see his analysis as a clear break, since many aspects of Stalin's underlying theory influence Bettelheim's analysis. He argues that Stalin did not understand the difference between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the proletariat through the party. Bettelheim sees no real problem with the *party* acting as the instrument of this dictatorship. In this sense he represents a growing tendency within the Stalinist left that challenges aspects of Stalin, but not the theoretical foundations of Stalin's materialism.

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