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# **LITERATURE & IDEOLOGY**

**FRANKFURT SCHOOL:  
AGENTS OF IMPERIALISM**

### ***Publisher's Note***

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# CONTENTS

HERBERT MARCUSE: THE IDEOLOGUE AS PAID AGENT OF U.S. IMPERIAL- ISM — <i>Eric Scheper</i> .....	1
THE BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY OF “SO- CIALIST HUMANISM” — <i>Sol Zollman</i> ....	20
MODERN MASTERS OF REACTION — <i>Sol Zollman</i> .....	34
REVISIONIST CRITICISM IN OUR TIME....	41



# HERBERT MARCUSE: THE IDEOLOGUE AS PAID AGENT OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

— *Eric Scheper* —

Herbert Marcuse's reputation as a "revolutionary" rests primarily on two books: *Eros and Civilization* (1955; Vintage Books paperback, 1962) and *One Dimensional Man* (1964) (a third one should also be mentioned: *An Essay on Liberation* [1969]). Since these books have had a minor influence on the American youth, especially in turning them from revolution to drugs, their basic arguments need to be exposed for their reactionary and pro-U.S. imperialist ideology. Marcuse spent about ten years in the 1940's in the Office of Strategic Services and in the Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State, after receiving his education in anti-communism in the Universities of Berlin and Freiburg as well as the notorious anti-communist Institute of Social Research, now in Frankfurt, West Germany.

There is nothing original or fresh about Marcuse's theories: they are the repetition of ideas which had been developed by various reactionaries in the 20th century in response to the rise of revolutionary movements under the leadership of the working class and its ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The sole purpose of reactionary ideology now is to confuse people about the basis of change, development and motion, the role of consciousness in history, and the relation of the superstructure to

its economic base. By using his pseudo-philosophical and shallow jargon, Marcuse strives in vain to convince people that there is no such thing as U.S. imperialism and that man's real problem is the repression of instincts imposed upon him by civilization itself. He relies heavily upon Freud's theories for his "revolutionary" insights.

Marcuse states his thesis in the opening paragraph of his introduction to *Eros and Civilization*:

"Sigmund Freud's proposition that civilization is based on the permanent subjugation of the human instincts has been taken for granted. His question whether the suffering thereby inflicted upon individuals has been worth the benefits of culture has not been taken too seriously — the less so since Freud himself considered the process to be inevitable and irreversible. Free gratification of man's instinctual needs is incompatible with civilized society: renunciation and delay in satisfaction are the prerequisites of progress. 'Happiness,' said Freud, 'is no cultural value.' Happiness must be subordinated to the discipline of work as full-time occupation, to the discipline of monogamic reproduction, to the established system of law and order. The methodical sacrifice of libido, its rigidly enforced deflection to socially useful activities and expressions, *is* culture."

It follows from this critique that repres-

sion is an historical phenomenon and that man's struggle against repression is endless and futile:

“The effective subjugation of the instincts to repressive controls is imposed not by nature but by man. The primal father, as the archetype of domination, initiates the chain reaction of enslavement, rebellion and reinforced domination which marks the history of civilization. But ever since the first, prehistoric restoration of domination following the first rebellion, repression from without has been supported by repression from within: the unfree individual introjects his masters and their commands into his own mental apparatus. The struggle against freedom reproduces itself in the psyche of man, as the self-repression of the repressed individual, and his self-repression in turn sustains his masters and their institutions. It is this mental dynamic which Freud unfolds as the dynamic of civilization.”

Marcuse goes on to quote Freud's remark that society's motive in enforcing the decisive modification of the instinctual structure is thus “economic; since it has not means enough to support life for its members without work on their part, it must see to it that the number of these members is restricted and their energies directed away from sexual activities on to their work.”

These long passages from *Eros and Civilization* should make it clear why a paid agent

of U.S. imperialism would find it worth his time and money to defend Freud and to offer an “instinctual” theory of man’s repression. What is the basis of change, development and motion in history? It is the struggle between eros and civilization, according to Marcuse. It is class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experimentation, according to the revolutionary ideology of the working and oppressed people. “If absence from repression is the archetype of freedom, then civilization is the struggle against freedom,” says Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*. Man does not produce his consciousness in the course of producing his means of subsistence; the Freudian man resents having to engage in productive activities because they interfere with his instinctual desire for self-gratification. Freud had written in *Civilization and Its Discontents*:

“It is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposed precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts. This cultural ‘frustration’ dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings. As we already know, it is the cause of the hostility against which all civilizations have to struggle.”

The political ambition which emerges out of this analysis is that man should employ automation to bring into being a non-repressive society. In his “Preface to the Vintage

Edition" of *Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse explicitly states the reactionary outlook of a Freudian like himself:

"I emphasized from the beginning of my book that, in the contemporary period, psychological categories become political categories to the degree to which the private, individual psyche becomes the more or less willing receptacle of socially desirable and socially necessary aspirations, feelings, drives and satisfactions. The individual, and with him the rights and liberties of the individual, is something that has still to be created, and that can be created only through the development of qualitatively different social relations and institutions."

What is the political significance of this Freudian analysis of history put forward by a paid agent of U.S. imperialism? First of all, it denies the very existence of U.S. imperialism. If there is no U.S. imperialism, what can the working and oppressed people be fighting against? *Ergo*, all revolutionaries all over the world must be agents of some communist conspiracy. If there is anything wrong with American society, it is this: "The conflict between this society's great technical instruments and scientific resources on the one hand and the waste and destructiveness on the other just cannot go on." Marcuse here is one of the early "prophets" of ecology. Another outstanding characteristic of Marcuse's Freudian interpretation is that it postulates a metaphysical

or mystical “primal father” as “the archetype of domination,” and this is supposed to be the historical beginning of oppression in the world. All reactionary idealists assume that man did not develop through a revolutionary process of a single whole splitting into two or more parts, and that man appeared on this planet complete with instincts, the pleasure principle and the misfortune of having to produce his own means of subsistence. The conflict between the instinctual struggle for freedom and the restraints of civilization takes the political form of a withdrawal from public life and a hope that machines will bring about the day when man will not have to work at all and will have the opportunity to exercise his desire for self-gratification. Marcuse appeals to those petty-bourgeois youth who do not want to change the world and who want to believe that there are no possibilities of changing the situation at present or in the future.

In his *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse announces that the U.S. is a society without opposition or internal contradiction. This discovery of Marcuse’s that there is no internal contradiction in American society is supposed to be a “revolutionary” and earth-shaking one. Marcuse notes the disappearance of contradiction between classes in this passage:

“At its origins in the first half of the 19th century, when it elaborated the first concepts of the alternatives, the critique of industrial society attained concreteness in a historical mediation between theory

and practice, values and facts, needs and goals. This historical mediation occurred in the consciousness and in the political action of the two great classes which faced each other in the society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the capitalist world, they are still the basic classes. However, the capitalist development has altered the structure and function of these two classes in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of historical transformation. An overriding interest in the preservation and improvement of the institutional status quo unites the former antagonists in the most advanced areas of contemporary society. And to the degree to which technical progress assures the growth and cohesion of communist society, the very idea of qualitative change recedes before the realistic notions of a non-explosive evolution.”

The simplest way to defend a repressive and decadent system is to argue that it does not exist. “A non-explosive evolution” is being wished for and insisted upon by every kind of reactionary. If there is no antagonistic contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, there can be no possibility of change and development.

Marcuse’s method of analysis belongs to the ancient and well-tested tradition of obscurantist and fascist logic. He fabricates facts to “validate” a pro-U.S. imperialist theory. The immediate needs of class struggle demand that the U.S. imperialists parade

a variety of "experts" in magazines and books who wear a mask of concern for the disintegration taking place in imperialist society and also predict on the basis of their professorial authority that no disintegration is in fact taking place. Marcuse remarks about the possibilities of change:

"Perhaps an accident may alter the situation, but unless the recognition of what is being done and what is being prevented subverts the consciousness and the behavior of man, not even a catastrophe will bring about change."

Close attention should be paid here to "what is being done" and "what is being prevented." The possibility of this consciousness bringing about the downfall of imperialism is nil, as Marcuse points out:

"In the medium of technology, culture, politics and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives. The productivity and growth potential of this system stabilize the society and contain technical progress within the framework of domination. Technological rationality has become political rationality."

This means that U.S. imperialism is indestructible and invincible.

Marcuse's principal thesis in *One-Dimensional Man* is that the real source of anguish, misery and suffering in imperialist society is

man's insatiable desire for self-gratification as well as the disappearance of what he calls a "two-dimensional" culture:

"Today's novel feature is the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted *another dimension* of reality. This liquidation of *two-dimensional* culture takes place not through the denial and rejection of the 'cultural values,' but through their wholesale incorporation into the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale."

This passage cannot be understood without some grasp of Marcuse's reactionary and idealist theory of culture.

First of all, it should not be forgotten that Marcuse is an idealist of the eclectic type who is anxious to catch at any philosophical straw which would prolong the life of U.S. imperialism. In fact, nobody can be both an agent of U.S. imperialists as well as a follower of materialist philosophy; in *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941), Marcuse accuses the fascist Gentile of not being an idealist:

"Gentile discards the fundamental principle of all idealism, namely, that there is an antagonism and strain between truth and fact, between thought or mind and reality. His whole theory is based

upon the immediate identity of these polar elements, whereas Hegel's point had been that there is no such immediate identity but only the dialectical process of achieving it."

This shows that Marcuse's reactionary theories have their origin in reactionary idealism which postulates that man's social being is determined by his thinking and that mind is primary and matter secondary.

According to Marcuse, culture does not belong to the superstructure of an economic base and does not serve and protect that base. Culture is rather a repository of ideal and transcendent values and acts as an agent of social change and development. Culture in this sense forms a second and higher dimension of social reality and is therefore something superior to that reality. A society in which culture is allowed to stand in an antagonistic or idealistic relationship to social reality is a two-dimensional society, and a society in which culture gets incorporated into the established order is a one-dimensional society. Marcuse criticizes U.S. imperialist society for being a one-dimensional society without any possibilities of change.

The political usefulness of this theory for U.S. imperialism is immense. It does away with the materiality of the phenomena of social change and development (Marcuse's transcendent culture is in some mysterious sense innate as well as a gift of God). This theory recognizes the basis of change and development

not in the contradiction inherent in a society but in an external cause. Culture as an external cause of social change and development is innate and God-given. This means that no revolution can be possible in the United States because there is no transcendent culture, and anyone who calls for a revolution must be an agent of a foreign power. Marcuse's argument is a mystical and obscurantist one in that he finds it favourable to U.S. imperialism not to specify what his "transcendent culture" is. The political function of books like *One-Dimensional Man* is to assure the U.S. monopoly capitalist class that their system is the best one in the world, even if it does not and cannot ensure self-gratification. "If somebody really believes that my opinions can seriously endanger society," Marcuse has said, "then he and society must be very badly off."

Even as Marcuse talks about the critical role of culture in social change and development, he denies that universities have or should have any political role. "Education does not have the right to advocate," he has said. Marcuse's method of teaching is supposedly "open and not pedagogic," which means that he does not take seriously his own theory about the social role of culture. If education as part of a transcendent culture does not have the "right to advocate," it means that social changes take place independent of educational institutions. By insisting upon the fact that "education does not have the right to advocate," Marcuse carries on in the decadent, liberal, bourgeois tradition which uses this

argument to confuse people about the class character of education in imperialist countries. In immediate, practical terms, Marcuse is saying that students should not participate in political activities because politics and education are not the same things.

Marcuse's theory of one-dimensional society is his great contribution to the security of U.S. imperialist oppression of people all over the world. His theory calls for a fascist oppression of any party which does not subscribe to his thesis that advanced industrial societies satisfy people's needs and oppress them only in the metaphysical sense that man's desire for self-gratification cannot be satisfied:

“To the degree to which freedom from want, the concrete substance of all freedom, is becoming a real possibility, the liberties which pertain to a state of lower productivity are losing their former content. Independence of thought, autonomy and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their basic critical function in a society which seems increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the individuals through the way in which it is organized. Such a society may justly demand acceptance of its principles and institutions, and reduce the opposition to the discussion and promotion of alternative policies *within* the status quo. In this respect, it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian

or a non-authoritarian system. Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system itself appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole. Indeed, at least in so far as the necessities of life are involved, there seems to be no reason why the production and distribution of goods and services should proceed through the competitive concurrence of individual liberties.”

This passage is a U.S. monopoly capitalist’s dream of the future and prepares the material conditions for the widespread oppression of any opposition to U.S. imperialism internally or externally. Marcuse’s society without opposition is an ideological argument for a society without a revolutionary communist movement in the United States under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism. The U.S. imperialist ideologues theorize that “a state of lower productivity” which was the basis for revolutionary movements has been brought to an end by the “technological revolution”; therefore U.S. monopoly capitalists cannot allow anybody to talk about the seizure of state power by the proletariat. Marcuse’s theory calls for total repression of individual liberties, for he thinks that “independence of thought, autonomy and the right to political opposition” are redundant in an advanced industrial society; this argument exonerates fascist atrocities in U.S.

Marcuse holds that the loss of rights and liberties in advanced industrial nations points to "a higher stage of this society," a stage during which nobody needs any liberties or rights.

To make sure that nobody misunderstands Marcuse's counter-revolutionary analysis of social, cultural and political problems, he stresses that no good can come from any opposition to U.S. imperialism by what he calls the "substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable." He continues:

"Nothing indicates that it will be a good end. The economic and technical capabilities of the established societies are sufficiently vast to allow for adjustments and concessions to the underdog, and their armed forces sufficiently trained and equipped to take care of emergency situations. However, the spectre is there again, inside and outside the frontiers of the advanced societies. The facile historical parallel with the barbarians threatening the empire of civilization prejudices the issue; the second period of barbarism may well be the continued empire of civilization itself."

The reactionary role of Freudian theories of this type is to create the irrational and non-historical fear among people that their greatest enemy is civilization and that it would be beneficial to mankind if they were to return to some kind of "global" tribalism

which would permit the U.S. imperialists to rule the world. Once one conceives of civilization itself as "barbarism," one may tend to lose any fear of the fascist hordes in the U.S. imperialist-controlled states.

A fascist repression of any kind of political opposition to U.S. imperialism is the primary result of Marcuse's ideological argument. Another consequence of his analysis is that people should avail themselves of the benefits of a corporate-sensate culture which caters to the individual's desire for self-gratification, instead of opposing it. Then he warns his readers that what is wrong with industrial society is something that cannot be corrected at all:

"Institutionalized desublimation thus appears to be an aspect of the 'conquest of transcendence' achieved by the one-dimensional society. Just as this society tends to reduce, and even absorb opposition (the qualitative difference!) in the realm of politics and higher culture, so it does in the instinctual sphere. The result is the atrophy of the mental organs for grasping the contradictions and the alternatives and, in the one remaining dimension of technological rationality, the *Happy Consciousness* comes to prevail."

Marcuse provides the ideological premise for this type of life in *Eros and Civilization*:

"Men do not live their own lives, but perform pre-established functions. While

they work, they do not fulfil their own needs and faculties but work in alienation. Work has now become general; and so have the restrictions placed upon the libido: labour time, which is the largest part of the individual's life time, is painful time, for alienated labour is absence of [erotic] gratification, negation of the pleasure principle. Libido is diverted for socially useful performances in which the individual works for himself only insofar as he works for the apparatus engaged in activities that mostly do not coincide with his own faculties and desires."

This passage appeals to some reactionary petty-bourgeois individuals who do not want to betray their class background and who do not wish to see that the internal contradictions of their own lives cannot be resolved without the destruction of U.S. imperialism.

In order to attract these petty-bourgeois individuals to the cause of counter-revolution, Marcuse has developed a theory of the "liberation of man," a theory which directly serves the interests of U.S. imperialism. He labels it "the Great Refusal" in *An Essay on Liberation*:

"This alternative is not so much a different road to socialism as an emergence of different goals and values, different aspirations in the men and women who resist and deny the massive exploitative power of corporate capitalism even in its most comfortable and liberal realizations."

“An emergence of different goals and values”: where do these goals and values emerge from? Marcuse locates the origin of these goals and values in “the demands of the life instincts” in the same essay:

“For freedom indeed depends largely on technical progress, on the advancement of science. But this fact easily obscures the essential precondition: in order to become vehicles of freedom, science and technology would have to change their present direction and goals; they would have to be reconstructed in accord with a new sensibility — the demands of the life instincts. Then one could speak of a technology of liberation, product of a scientific imagination free to project and design the forms of a human universe without exploitation and toil.”

Marcuse’s new man is considered by him to be equipped with “a different sensitivity as well as consciousness; men who would speak a different language, have different gestures, follow different impulses...”

What view of change, development and motion in history does one get from “the demands of the life instincts”? After acknowledging that instincts give “the life processes a definite ‘direction’ (*Richtung*). In terms of ‘life-principles,’” Marcuse notes in *Eros and Civilization* the following characteristic features of change and development in advanced industrial societies:

“(1) The very progress of civilization under the performance principle has attained a level of productivity at which the social demands upon instinctual energy to be spent in alienated labour could be consistently reduced. Consequently, the continued repressive organization of the instincts seems to be necessitated less by the ‘struggle for existence’ than by the interest in prolonging this struggle — by the interest in domination.

“(2) The representative philosophy of Western civilization has developed a concept of reason which contains the dominating features of the performance principle. However, the same philosophy ends in the vision of a higher form of reason which is the very negation of these features — namely, receptivity, contemplation, enjoyment. Behind the definition of the subject in terms of the ever transcending and productive activity of the ego lies the image of the redemption of the ego: the coming to rest of all transcendence in a mode of being that has absorbed all becoming, that is for and with itself in all otherness.”

It is true that both of these points are wrong but they have been concocted for a political purpose. Hence the important thing is not to expose Marcuse for his “intellectual errors” but to condemn and repudiate the political role of these reactionary formulations of his.

What can a bourgeois intellectual do to

serve U.S. imperialism? He employs his “academic expertism” to manufacture theories which try to explain political and social features of class struggle between U.S. imperialism and the working and oppressed people in such a way as to argue that the basis of change and development in society is not class struggle, that man’s life is guided by the “demands of the life instincts,” that the productive machinery of U.S. imperialism promises to deliver everybody from the curse of work, and that “the higher historical truth would pertain to the system which offers the greater chance of pacification” (*One-Dimensional Man*). Marcuse touches upon every aspect of class struggle in order to “prove” that the problems of the decadent and parasitic U.S. imperialism do not originate from the contradictions inherent within the system. It is for this reason that periodicals like the *Guardian*, which serve U.S. imperialism, also praise and idolize paid agents of U.S. imperialism (in an article published on June 5, 1968):

“[Marcuse’s] penetrating analysis of the relationship between erotic repression and the nature of all dominating repressive civilization is key to understanding the broad range and profound depth of the new revolt. His ‘One-Dimensional Man’ is the most sophisticated analysis of oppression in advanced capitalism thus far produced.”

(*Literature & Ideology*, No. 6)

# THE BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY OF “SOCIALIST HUMANISM”

— *Sol Zollman* —

Revolution is the main trend in the world today, but the danger of a world war still exists. How can people prepare themselves against it? There are two responses to this question. One is the response of the working and oppressed people all over the world who have organized revolutionary struggles against U.S. imperialism. They have grasped the fact, which Lenin pointed out long ago, that “contemporary militarism is the result of capitalism,” that contemporary war “arises out of the very nature of imperialism,” and that there will be no end to wars as long as there is imperialism. Socialist humanists make the opposite response. From their “awe-inspiring” offices in Western capitals and from their chairs in imperialist and revisionist universities, these counter-revolutionary scholar despots argue that people can prepare themselves against war by “searching for a new spiritual frame of reference” while taking a pacifist and collaborationist posture toward U.S. imperialism.

Socialist humanists belong to that small contingent of anti-people and anti-working class intellectuals whose line got approval from renegades and traitors like Khrushchev; this revisionist thought that not revolution but warmongering was “the main content of world politics today” and that people should not “provoke” the U.S. imperialists

into launching a war. This pro-imperialist line echoes the earlier opponents of proletarian revolution, men like Bernstein and others who upheld "ethics" as the basis of change in society against Marx's class struggle and who opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the ground that it did not agree with their notion of a "just society."

Socialist humanists raise the spectre of war to use it against the upsurge of mass democratic anti-imperialist struggles. A running dog of U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism, Andrei D. Sakharov, writes in *Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom* (1968):

"The division of mankind threatens it with destruction. Civilization is imperilled by: a universal thermonuclear war, catastrophic hunger for most of mankind, stupefaction from the narcotic of 'mass culture' and bureaucratized dogmatism, a spreading of mass myths that put entire people and continents under the power of cruel and treacherous demagogues, and destruction and degeneration from the unforeseeable consequences of swift changes in the conditions of life on our planet."

Instead of launching national liberation struggles against U.S. imperialism, the working and oppressed people, according to Sakharov, should seek "cooperation under conditions of intellectual freedom and the lofty moral ideals of socialism and labour, accompanied by the elimination of dogmatism and

pressures of the concealed interests of ruling classes.”

Socialist humanists deny that class contradiction is the basis of social change and revolutionary development. They profess that contradictions between classes do not exist, that there are only differences of opinion among people, spiritual inadequacies and “impoverished alienation.” Proclaiming a “belief in the unity of the human race and man’s potential to perfect himself by his own efforts” (Erich Fromm in *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium*, 1965) and opposing the scientific analysis of the class character of the bourgeois state and instruments of oppression and the theory of class struggle, socialist humanists like Fromm call for a “psychospiritual renewal.” Their “classless” and abstract ideals of human perfection uphold the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and oppose the working and oppressed people’s struggle for socialism. As the class struggle between the working and oppressed people and a small number of imperialists intensifies, anti-communism becomes the principal task of socialist humanists.

In its anti-communist form, socialist humanism resembles fascism. Both fascists and socialist humanists uphold ideals in the abstract and try to argue that perfection in social and intellectual life can be realized under the bourgeois state. Abstract words like “freedom” occur prominently in the writings of socialist humanists as well as fascists. Gajo Petrović of the University of Zagreb, Yugo-

slavia, writes in Fromm's *Symposium*:

“The problem of freedom is ‘eternal,’ but in every epoch it assumes a different form. In our time it has been shown, for example, that a free society is not created merely by the ‘expropriation of the expropriators,’ or merely by the raising of living standards, or by a combination of the two. In a society from which exploiters have been eliminated, man’s freedom is threatened by the means by which he communicates with others (technology) and by the social forms in which that communication takes place (social organizations and institutions). The question of freedom faces us today primarily as a question of freedom with socialism, and as a question of freedom with technology.”

Technology and social organizations and institutions detached from the internal contradictions of imperialist society and communism are, for the socialist humanist, the enemies of freedom. A program of action follows from this. Fight communism and form an alliance with U.S. imperialism to “humanize” industrial societies.

Pretending to be idealistic, socialist humanists appear to be engaged in the impossible task of acquiring individual freedom within the context of affluence and modern technology. They insist that the imperialists are sensible and wish to improve things. They also insist that they can logically “convince” the bourgeoisie of the superiority of the social-

ist economy and can convert the whole world to communism by force of moral exhortation. The U.S. imperialists propagate this ideology to continue their exploitation and oppression of the world's people. The Soviet social-imperialists employed this ideology to restore capitalism in the first socialist state under the hoax that the dictatorship of the proletariat has been converted into a dictatorship of the whole of the Soviet people. The socialist humanists and modern Soviet revisionists say political and state power do not come out of taking up arms to overthrow the existing order. They say U.S. imperialism cannot be defeated because they have atomic weapons. Even if the people destroy imperialism, they cannot gain freedom because, says Mathilde Niel, "machinery and technology have a natural tendency to enslave man, and they are likely to become just as dangerous enemies as the most inhuman type of capitalism" (Fromm's *Symposium*). T.B. Bottomore, a reactionary academic, gives a similar argument: "Socialist humanism is in part a response to the new and pressing problems which have arisen from the tremendous advance of science and technology in the developed industrial countries, and from the experience of difficulties and dangers in the socialist forms of society."

The counter-revolutionary ideology of socialist humanism has received a grand status from social-imperialist scholars like Andrei D. Sakharov and Adam Schaff. They call this espousal of bourgeois ideology a higher stage in the history of proletarian outlook. Adam

Schaff, a member of the Central Committee of the revisionist Polish Workers' Party, believes that the "philosophy of man" has become an instrument of social change and that socialist humanism is a philosophy of this type:

"Political coexistence, enforced as it is by modern warfare techniques, is the only reasonable alternative to global destruction. But while technical development may in international relations make men renounce the use of force, it cannot — and does not — make them abandon their systems of values and the concepts and ideas of social life based on these systems. So long as these differences remain, conflicts and attempts to gain victory for one's own ideals are inevitable. If it is no longer possible to solve conflicts by the use of armed forces, only the possibility of *convincing* the opponents and the undecided by means of proper arguments remains open. When we say 'ideological struggle,' we mean argumentation against the system of values opposed to ours; in doing this we must set forth our own system of values and our own ideas. This method of struggle must inevitably gain in importance in conditions of peaceful coexistence."

Employing this anti-dialectical theory of two blending into one, Sakharov suggests that imperialism and socialism not only coexist but will soon "converge" during the second stage of his "Four-Stage Plan for Cooperation":

In the second stage, persistent demands

for social progress and peaceful coexistence in the United States and other capitalist countries, and pressure exerted by the example of the socialist countries and by internal progressive forces (the working class and intelligentsia), will lead to the victory of the leftist reformist wing of the bourgeoisie, which will begin to implement a program of *rapprochement* (convergence) with socialism, i.e. social progress, peaceful coexistence and collaboration with socialism on a world scale and changes in the structure of ownership. This phase includes an expanded role for the intelligentsia and an attack on the forces of racism and militarism.

This theory of “peaceful evolution” goes back to the revisionist socialism of Eduard Bernstein. The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union was “the result of the policy of ‘peaceful evolution’ which world imperialism, in trying to save itself from its doom, has pushed in the Soviet Union through the medium of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique” (*Leninism or Social Imperialism?*, Peeking 1970).

These advocates of “peaceful evolution” assign a decisive role to the individual in social change. They glorify the individual in the abstract but support the exploitation of the oppressed people under fascist rules and regulations; they also advocate armed aggression abroad and armed suppression of national liberation struggles the world over. Problems of individual happiness and joy get maximum attention in revisionist, humanist and imper-

ialist literature. Bourgeois economy caters to the pleasures of the individual, but it cannot satisfy anybody; bourgeois and humanist philosophy caters to the subjective and ego-centric tendencies of an individual in order to serve that economy. For humanists like Adam Schaff, the quickest way to restore capitalism is to popularize bourgeois ideology in the form of "the freedom of the human individual, the idea and guarantees of his happiness, his relationship to society and the consequent problem of moral responsibility." The class basis of socialist humanism is in the decadent and parasitic imperialism which is trying to save itself from extinction.

According to socialist humanists of the Soviet Union and other countries, the most significant event of the 20th century is not the Great October Revolution. Socialist humanists look upon this event as the object of libel and portray the victories of the proletariat as a work of slaves, scoundrels and demagogues. An American document, which concludes the Fromm *Symposium*, singles out the following as major events of the century: the Cybernation Revolution, the Weaponry Revolution and the Human Rights Revolution. A group of reactionary intellectuals submitted "The Triple Revolution" to Lyndon Johnson in March 1964. An Assistant Special Counsel to the President assured "The Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution" on April 6, 1964, that "the Committee's analysis and recommendations will be given thoughtful consideration by all of those in the Executive branch

who are concerned with these problems.” As agents of imperialism, socialist humanists inspire faith in similar petitions and in the ability of experts to exorcise the “Triple Revolution.”

These agents consider the subordination of spiritual activity to ideological propaganda in industrial societies as one of the threats to man’s individuality. Veljko Korać of Yugoslavia remarks:

“Spiritual creativity is converted into an instrument of ideology and politics to become submerged by those elements of contemporary behaviour that have come to be one of the essential marks of present-day bureaucratism, institutionalism and totalitarianism.”

By treating consciousness as the product of machinery itself, and not the relations of production under imperialism or socialism, and by placing creativity beyond class struggle, socialist humanists set up as their goal an abstract and sentimental opposition to industrial bureaucracy and hope to overcome totalitarian bureaucracy by an act of will. Ivan Svitak of Czechoslovakia says:

“If [the people] go about it with full consciousness, they will not go against their own interests, will not transform themselves into a society of mechanized robots and prefabricated automatons, but will strive for the human content of future society.”

Svitak slanders people by attributing bureaucracy to their lack of “full consciousness” and distorts history by holding the loss of the humanist traditions of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment responsible for the lack of freedom in the 20th century.

This ideological propaganda about a conflict between human creativity and mechanical bureaucracy serves imperialism by diverting attention from the class struggle. The fundamental argument says: Man’s consciousness is determined by machines and not by his material conditions. This produces a contradiction between men and machines and causes anguish and suffering to people. Therefore, the real enemy of the world’s people is the “megamachine,” not U.S. imperialism. Man cannot be creative and happy in an advanced industrial society. Under the proletarian world outlook, the difficulty of being creative in a decadent and parasitic imperialist culture is inherent in the contradictions of imperialism. In his address to the First Writers’ Congress in August 1934, A.A. Zhdanov stated:

“Characteristic of the decadence and decay of bourgeois culture are the orgies of mysticism and superstition, the passion for pornography. The ‘illustrious persons’ of bourgeois literature — of that bourgeois literature which has sold its pen to capital — are now thieves, police sleuths, prostitutes, hooligans. All this is characteristic of that section of literature which is trying to conceal the decay of the bourgeois sys-

tem, which is vainly trying to prove that nothing has happened, that all is well in the 'state of Denmark,' that there is nothing rotten as yet in the system of capitalism."

The disintegration of people's lives, resulting from the collapse and decay of imperialism, is inevitable at the present time.

Socialist humanists talk about the goals and benefits of communism in the bourgeois language of satisfying man's inner needs and ideals instead of destroying the old to create the new. It is not the contradictions of class society and their resolution through armed revolutionary struggle for the seizure of state power which will bring about a qualitative change in people's life, but rather a brooding over "the shattering of hope," man's "trans-survival needs," "humanized consumption" and "heightened sensibility." Socialist humanists and revisionists have a tradition of not offending bourgeois sensibility by words like "class struggle" and "the dictatorship of the proletariat." In *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, ed. John Lewis and others (London 1935), Lewis hails communism as "the Heir to the Christian tradition" and concludes his bankrupt argument with this remark: "It may well be that the time has come for religion to dissolve like an insubstantial dream and leave not a wrack behind, dying to be born again as the Holy Spirit of a righteous social order." In similar language, Erich Fromm speaks of the need for a psychospiritual revival of the reli-

gious element in life in *The Revolution of Hope* (1968):

“...those who believe in the reality of the yet unborn will have more trust that man will find new forms of expressing vital needs even though at this moment there is only a dove with an olive branch indicating the end of the flood.”

The medieval, obscurantist ideology of religion has emerged again as the Holy Spirit of socialist humanism. Maximilian Rubel of the French National Centre of Scientific Research, inspired by the Holy Spirit, exclaims that “one must will and desire Revolution *and* Utopia, will the abolition of our society and desire the creation of the New City.” He adds that “socialism is either consciousness of utopia, or it is nothing.”

Observing the obscurantist logic of religion, socialist humanists locate the roots of socialism in the spirit of man conceived as an abstract entity. Stivak speculates:

“Socialist humanism did not develop by the blind mechanism of economic history, but by solving the ‘eternal’ questions of man and his significance in the universe. In spite of the fact that man’s development may seem preordained by the solution of the social problems of industrial society, this is in fact an illusion. Reducing the socialist movement and its concept of man to the realization of social reform and revolution means passing over an important

dimension of socialism — its humanistic aim. The birth of socialist thought was the result of the development of European humanism, a tradition that has its deepest roots in ancient Greece, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.”

Imperialists and other reactionaries are resurrecting in vain every variety of obscurantist religious outlook, especially through syllabi and courses of instruction in imperialist universities. But the revolutionary activity among intellectuals in Western Europe and North America attests their militant opposition to the bourgeois outlook in the professional fields and their support for the struggle against U.S. imperialism. Whether an intellectual follows the bourgeois world outlook or the proletarian world outlook is a class question.

Because of their high revolutionary sentiment, many intellectuals have recognized the bourgeois ideology of socialist humanism as counter-revolutionary and rejected it. Even as socialist humanists and pacifists blame “the machinery of modern life” for man’s anguish, progressive intellectuals have seen through these prophets of gloom and taken up struggle against U.S. imperialism. Socialist humanists support reaction and say that the “cybernation revolution proffers an existence qualitatively richer in democratic as well as material values.” There is no imperialism or anti-imperialism for them, only poor and rich or developed and underdeveloped nations. So-

cialist humanists do not see hope in this life except through imperialist technology. Their political message is: Let imperialism and social-imperialism live; let people keep what they have. And what do people have? Exploitation, fascist repression and miserable living conditions. Socialist humanists pray that imperialism reforms itself and solves these problems.

*(Literature & Ideology, No. 7)*

# MODERN MASTERS OF REACTION

— *Sol Zollman* —

Over a year ago, the announcement of “Fontana Modern Masters” edited by a distinguished professor of English literature and a former editor of *Encounter* aroused my interest in the notion of “modern masters” from the point of view of a dying class like monopoly capitalism. In the context of class struggle between imperialism and the working and oppressed people, there are two kinds of modern masters: those who organize to change the world and put knowledge in the service of proletarian revolution, and those who organize to stop change and put knowledge in the service of imperialist reaction. Each class identifies modern masters according to its own interest. In his brief prefatory comment, Professor Frank Kermode, the editor, remarks:

“By Modern Masters we mean the men who have changed and are changing the life and thought of our age. Everybody wants to know who they are and what they say, but hitherto it has often been very difficult to find out.”

I would readily agree that a modern master is one engaged in changing the life and thought of our age.

But this agreement of mine with Professor Kermode is there only at the superficial level. I hold that to change the thought and life of

our time means to work for the elimination of U.S. imperialism and every other variety of reaction. Those who lead the struggle for revolutionary change are the modern masters, and they are: Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Professor Kermode's masters are of a different breed, and they are: Camus, Fanon, Guevara, Levi-Strauss, Chomsky, Freud, Lukacs, McLuhan, Wittgenstein, Marcuse, Joyce, Mailer, Orwell, Reich and Trotsky. How have these men changed "the life and thought of our age"? All of them, with the exception of Guevara, are well-known for their support for the preservation of the status quo and for their opposition to proletarian revolution; all of them are reactionary idealists and some of them are outstanding propagandists for clerical obscurantism. If challenged about his choice, Professor Kermode would probably suggest that change is a matter of definition and that he has a right to his choice. How can anyone deprive a professor of his definition and not allow him his choice of modern masters? Of course, the problem is not at all a subjective one, nor is the matter of choosing modern masters an arbitrary one. Professor Kermode has written longish articles on the modern tradition, short studies of Donne, Stevens, books like *The Romantic Image* and *The Sense of An Ending*, and has probably directed some doctoral theses on modern literature. He has also written extensively on the Renaissance. His publications would give the impression that Professor Kermode is an "authority" on the Renaissance and the modern tradition and that he should

know who has changed the thought and life of the 20th century.

The question of change is a class question. What is "change" for the working and oppressed people is death for U.S. imperialism and other reaction. Instead of considering change as a result of the resolution of the internal contradictions of imperialist society, imperialists look upon change as a matter of alteration and variation in intellectual trends and social attitudes. Imperialists would cite changes in automobile designs as examples of change. Following similar logic, Professor Kermode seems to believe that any intellectual who plays with ideas but does not change anything is a modern master. Another of his criteria appears to be that anybody who opposes communism, proletarian revolution and Marxism-Leninism must be a modern master. His modern masters also come from the West; if they are black, as Fanon was, they have trained themselves in Western and white intellectual skills. Since we know that Asia, Africa and Latin America are not areas of intellectual darkness in the 20th century or before, we find in Professor Kermode's intellectual insularity a persistence of a racial, colonial prejudice. (Racial comments about the inferiority of non-Western nations appear frequently in English academics' work. A few years ago, F.R. Leavis noted in the columns of the *Times Literary Supplement* that British universities have to lower standards in order to accommodate students from the colonies.) Nobody from Asia has affected "the life and

thought of our age," Professor Kermode would insinuate; I urge everyone to ponder over the roots of the insularity of an English professor's "our." This "our" is the voice of imperialist interest, and Professor Kermode's modern masters are the watchdogs of that interest.

In order to promote reactionary ideas, the imperialist ruling class constantly makes intellectual heroes out of anti-people, anti-scientific, idealist and clerical obscurantist intellectuals. These intellectuals contribute nothing to the welfare and progress of mankind and do everything to stop change. Bourgeois periodicals, especially the learned ones, publicize these backward-looking intellectuals and talk about them in an excited manner, as if they were utterly original and in some cases also rebellious. Kermode's masters belong to this class of heroes. They are non-original in ideas, reactionary in political outlook, exciting and "radical" in rhetoric, and opposed to change. Marcuse, Lukacs and Chomsky come to my mind as the most typical of Kermode's concept of a modern master. (*Literature & Ideology* has published detailed studies of Chomsky in issue no. 4, Freud in no. 5, Marcuse and Mailer in no. 6, and Lukacs in 7.) It would be wrong to suppose that intellectuals like Kermode are either innocents or villains in a subjective manner, for their activities are not isolated from or beyond class struggle. Their intellectual activity grows out of and reflects their social practice in the real world. Most professors like to believe that they are

detached, objective, rational, apolitical and unprejudiced; I am sure that Professor Kermode would appropriate these adjectives for his publications and teaching. Subjective aspirations cannot be understood without reference to objective consequences of those aspirations. Take the case of Marcuse. I am sure that Professor Kermode knows about him what everybody else knows: Marcuse is one of the famous anti-communists, one of the architects of the CIA (which subsidized an anti-communist monthly *Encounter*, of which Kermode was an editor and resigned after the scandal), and one of the subverters of revolutionary student movements. The "original" ideas Marcuse is credited with he has borrowed from the notorious anti-communist Frankfurt School of Social Research. Even A. MacIntyre, the author of the volume on Marcuse, puts him down in the last sentence: "The philosophy of the Young Hegelians, fragments of Marxism and revised chunks of Freud's metapsychology: out of these materials Marcuse has produced a theory that, like so many of its predecessors, invokes the great names of freedom and reason while betraying their substance at every important point." With this work during his life, whose life and thought has Marcuse changed? I find no trace of Marcuse's influence on Kermode himself. Why did Kermode select Marcuse as one of the modern masters?

The answer to this question can be found in some of the qualities all of Professor Kermode's modern masters share. They have

contributed little to human knowledge and changed nothing in the real world; hence they are dearly beloved by the dying monopoly capitalist class. By choosing these apostles of the imperialist status quo as modern masters of change, Professor Kermode has displayed his own class loyalty to the cause of imperialism. In order to stop people from participation in the struggle for change, bourgeois authorities like Kermode try to confuse everybody about contradictions in the world underlying the process of change in the 20th century. If people, the petty-bourgeoisie in particular, are subjectively confused about what is happening in the world, they would withdraw from the struggle to change the world; bourgeois ideologues try to accomplish this in their propaganda. Reading the "Fontana Modern Masters," nobody can learn what the struggle for change is about. But, unfortunately for the imperialists, the basis of change and development in imperialist society, as well as any other society, is the universal law of internal contradiction; this means that their concrete experience of contradictions in imperialist culture, their experience of cultural oppression, propels them to join the struggle for change. Subjective intellectual confusion is a temporary phase in people's lives. We know that the main content of people's experience in imperialist society is oppression by a parasitic and decadent culture; therefore they try to change their material conditions. This struggle to destroy their imperialist material conditions is

the main trend in the whole world, including Western Europe and North America. For any serious revolutionary intellectual, Professor Kermode's modern masters are straws being swept away by the storms of revolution. The sinking imperialists catch at these straws, but this is not going to save them from extinction.

*(Literature & Ideology, No. 8)*

## REVISIONIST CRITICISM IN OUR TIME

Georg Lukacs:

*Studies in European Realism* (English tr. 1950), Universal Library paperback.

*The Historical Novel* (tr. 1962), Beacon paperback

*Realism in Our Time* (tr. 1963), Harper and Row.

*Essays on Thomas Mann* (tr. 1964), Universal Library paperback.

"The Sociology of Modern Drama" (tr. 1965), *Tulane Drama Review*, (Summer 1965), pp. 146-170.

Among bourgeois academics in North America there is an intensifying search for means of "de-trivializing" their intellectual life. One indication of this is the increasing interest shown in European "Marxist" literary criticism. Attention is being paid to Brecht's criticism; Walter Benjamin is appearing in English; Adorno is quoted and he, Lucien Goldmann, and Roland Barthes appears in English, soon in paperback. English-speaking academics need an alternative to the degeneration of bourgeois culture, but since their bourgeois world outlook makes an alternative impossible, for it would endanger their positions in bourgeois society, they make use of the approximate-Marxism of European revisionists, "social humanists" and others.

The usual line followed with respect to these Marx-influenced critics in introductions

to their work and in lectures to students is the anti-communist line worked out by Cold War emigre anti-communists such as Hannah Arendt. We are told that Marxism may have inspired and vitalized, but ultimately undermined their critical "independence," "crippled their natural development" or some such thing.

In those academic circles where the treatment of Marx-influenced literary criticism is not openly appropriated into the Cold War, a characteristic distortion of Marxism is promulgated. It can be effectively illustrated in works available in English of the Hungarian critic Georg Lukacs.

In brief, what is usually passed off as Lukacs' early Hegelianism is, in fact, the binding thread of his work: idealism. Idealist criticism will not accept the fact that literature has no existence apart from the modes of production and the class relationships of a given society which it reflects. The only de-trivializing of literary study will depend on recognizing this. Lukacs presents literature as an ideological reflection which "embodies," "contains" or in some vague manner is "in dialectic relationship" with the economic base of society. Although "Marxist" emphasis appears in his criticism, particularly emphasis upon the dialectic relationship between base and superstructure, the fundamental and decisive role of the base, of practice and, consequently, of the masses of the people is denied. There are repeated indications that, for Lukacs, idea (as culture, superstructure or individual subject-

ive comprehension) is first and fundamental.

Examples of his idealism can be found throughout the works reviewed here. For instance, in phrases such as “the *arbitrary* bourgeois thought of the imperialist period” (*Mann*, p. 82) and “For to understand relationships of the past correctly, a correct creative *attitude* to the present is a necessary preliminary” (*Mann*, p. 159). Unless we take “arbitrary” as a mistranslation and “creative” as a sufficiently materialist adjective, both these statements suggest the priority and independence of thought. Another kind of example is the following:

“We know the potent social forces which have held back the development of both writers and literature: a quarter-century of reactionary obscurantism which finally twisted itself into the diabolical grimace of the fascist abomination.” (*European Realism*, p. 19)

The language — “abomination” (i.e. hatred because a thing is ominous) and “diabolical” — is used in 1948 about fascism. Fascism, as Lukacs knows almost as well as anyone alive, was no devil’s mask. It was the terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary segments of imperialist monopoly capitalism, the society of an imperialist ruling class which had given up all pretence of democratic methods of rule. Its origin is in “reactionary obscurantism” only for Lukacs and for other idealist academics such as Fritz Stern (Stern’s *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, 1964, is now in paperback).

Lukacs presents Marxism as if it were a theoretical concoction, a "method," rather than as an analysis of history and a guide to action. You will not learn from him that the outstanding characteristics of Marxism are its class nature and its practicality; it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice. Lukacs would give you the impression that Marxists can accept the position he ascribed to Zola: "The writer [who] no longer participates in the great struggles of his time but is reduced to a mere spectator and chronicler of public life" (*European Realism*, p. 89).

An early Lukacs essay, "The Sociology of Modern Drama" (1909), makes his idealism more clear. Private being is "the vital centre" and "streams out" to social being; an "equilibrium between man and the external world" is sought. He describes a new individualism: "previously, life itself was individualistic, now men, or rather their convictions and their outlooks on life, are." This may be muddled, but later we learn that ideologies motivate men and, in the modern era, are "relativized," and that the basis of literature is ethics.

The decisive example of idealism is his important essay, "The Ideology of Modernism" (1956), in *Realism in Our Time* (pp. 17-46). Primarily, the article is a thorough attack on subjectivism, anti-realism and morbidity in modern literature. Lukacs shows how these qualities lead not only to the destruction of traditional literary forms but to the destruc-

tion of literature itself. By exalting man's subjectivity at the expense of the objective reality of his environment, modernism has impoverished and warped that very subjectivity, man's inner self. He draws significantly upon Walter Benjamin's work and, like Benjamin, is concerned with the forms of literary consciousness rather than with the material conditions underlying them. The essay is in some ways instructive; but in order not to be misled the progressive critic must undertake his own materialist critique of modernism.

To subjectivism, Lukacs opposes the necessary and correct recognition of the dialectic inter-relationship — the unity and conflict — between the subjective and objective, between man's inner and outer life. However, he does not go on to employ Marx's materialist rectification of the Hegelian dialectic. Marx turned Hegel over. As Engels put it, he turned the Hegelian dialectic "off its head, on which it was standing before, and placed it on its feet again" by asserting the fundamental and decisive role of the material base. At any time in any dialectic inter-relationship, some one aspect must be dominant. The contradiction must have a dominant aspect: balance and equilibrium — which Lukacs exalts — are, like heaven, idealist abstractions never found in nature or art. But Lukacs will not raise the fundamental question of philosophy and criticism; the question of the relationship between consciousness and material being. Rather than asserting that material being is prior and decisive, he lets the question go, while his

idioms and features of his analysis imply the opposite, that is, that idea or consciousness is prior. Consider this passage:

“For it is just the opposition between a man and his environment that determines the development of his personality. There is no great hero of fiction... whose personality is not the product of such an opposition. I have shown how disastrous the denial of the distinction between abstract and concrete potentiality must be for the presentation of character. The destruction of the complex tissue of man’s interaction with his environment likewise saps the vitality of this opposition.”

The “opposition,” the “distinction,” the “complex tissue,” the “interaction” is held before us throughout the essay as a correction to one-sidedly subjective modernism. And we are left with this complex tissue; with what any idealist speaking of the relationship between inner and outer world would have written. Development *is* the struggle of opposites. To deny this does impoverish our understanding, as Lukacs says. But his bourgeois denial of the objective material base of our understanding is an objective service to the interests of the old against the new. It has always been this way; the new insists on recognition of the objective struggle; the old says “it’s all in your mind,” “there is no struggle, just mistakes, or troublemakers, or flaws, or ‘impoverished understanding,’” and so on.

Lukacs is just fine for attacking writers

such as Gottfried Benn who says "there is no outer reality, there is only human consciousness, constantly building, modifying, rebuilding new worlds out of its own creativity." But not all bourgeois idealists are as open as this, and Lukacs will seriously mislead those of us who must face modern academic idealists, men who make constant noises about their respect for history, nature, science and the dialectic unity ("process," "evolution," "interaction," etc.) while repeatedly enforcing the ideal or spiritual side of things as the fundamental and decisive one.

"Life under capitalism," Lukacs writes, "is, often rightly, presented as a distortion (a petrification or paralysis) of the human substance. But to present psychopathology [as modernist literature does] as a way of escape from this distortion is itself a distortion." This analysis is not just weak; it is misleading. The distortion is no more a result of mental confusion than is Lukacs' denial of the materialist basis of life (the production and reproduction of human life through the labour of men, real living men). His denial exists to serve the perpetuation of capitalism. At the very least, it expresses the petty-bourgeois desire to retain a special prominence for that position in life (intellectual work protected against the encroachments of history, party and politics) which Lukacs wants to be the province of writers in socialist society.

From this follows all Lukacs' troubled concern with censorship, "sectarian dogmatism," "artistic freedom," etc. The correct line

on these important matters is not to be found in Lukacs' work or in any other revisionist critic's. Lukacs argues in his essay "Critical Realism and Socialist Realism" (1956), also in *Realism in Our Time* (pp. 93-135), that the requirements of agitation and propaganda must not take precedence over those of "research." But Lukacs is not living on the moon. For the bourgeoisie, material and political requirements always take precedence over "pure," "disinterested," "detached" research; and the bourgeoisie does not care what it costs — in harm to knowledge — to pretend that the opposite is true. Marxism says openly what is what. Lukacs would have to affirm the material base of man's life — his struggle for production, class struggle and scientific experiment — and the essential social character of all man's activity before he were to say anything true about research. The interests of a "detached" literary research did not control Lukacs' work in the anti-Stalinist writers' congresses of the 1950s or in the Hungarian uprising. And this work was as real as his earlier progressive struggles against German fascism.

The "Critical Realism" essay is a crucial text in the investigation of the influence of revisionism upon literature and criticism. Lukacs reveals the central issue for this field which is the CPSU's repudiation of Stalin's analysis that class struggle will intensify *on the ideological front* after the socialist revolution at the economic base and that the Party must not attempt to conceal this but should

provide leadership in the struggle. Lukacs' revisionist, anti-Stalin essay treats the problems of the typical in literature and art, of the relations between literature and agitation, and of partisanship in art all from the point of view of Nikita Khrushchev. If all that were involved were some detached intellectual and literary concerns — and not the Soviet Union's collaboration with U.S. imperialism in dividing up the world for wealth — Lukacs would hardly have made this choice of ideological guides. But he chooses Khrushchev, and writes:

“In the field of the arts, true coexistence, the exchange of ideas between representatives of different cultures, depends on mutual goodwill. Discussion must concentrate on what is in common, however opposed the parties may otherwise be.”

The danger is not only in Lukacs' idealist tendencies. Another is the expertism, an expertism which Brecht caught when he said Lukacs wanted to play at being *apparatchik*, to have control over others. Another is his petty-bourgeois refusal to constantly look to people. The progress of people as reflected in great literature becomes, in Lukacs, the progress of liberated segments of the bourgeois intelligentsia. “A very small minority, of course,” as Lukacs says. Another is his anti-Marxist detachment:

“Where the philosophy of despair weeps for the collapse of a world and the destruction of culture, there Marxists

*watch* the birth-pangs of a new world... and assist in mitigating the pains of labour.”  
(*Realism*, p. 2)

As the struggle in North America sharpens, thousands of petty-bourgeois intellectuals will become “Marxists” of just this sort. They continue their service to imperialism by distorting Marx and Lenin, telling others that Marxism is a “method” and promoting an idealist world outlook. But these efforts will not de-trivialize their intellectual life or save imperialism. Their triviality is firmly joined to their decaying bourgeois material base. They must indeed watch the birth of a new world, in spite of all their efforts to prevent it.

— J.D.S.

(*Literature & Ideology*, No. 1)





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