

WHY I OPPOSE COMMUNISM

Bertrand Russell

Lieut.-Gen. Sir Brian Horrocks

Dr. C. D. Darlington

Sam Watson

Stephen Spender

Mino Masi

Douglas Woodruff

Hugh Lonsdale

Sir John Sargent

Introduction by

H. R. Trevor-Roper

1628

A BACKGROUND BOOK

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*A Symposium with
an Introduction by
H. R. Trevor-Roper*



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INTRODUCTION

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

IN the last forty years Communism has swept over the world. It has triumphed first in a Great Power, Russia, which then seemed on the point of declining into a second-rate position but which has since risen to be one of the two greatest powers in the world; then in half-a-dozen small powers in Eastern Europe, bringing its Western frontier up to the Bohemian mountains and the River Elbe; most recently in another Great Power, China, which, though then sunk in secular decrepitude, has since asserted itself as a rejuvenated giant and imitated Russia in the West by conquering with arms and doctrine its weak, immediate neighbours. The great land-mass of Eurasia, the 'Heartland', as Sir Halford Mackinder called it, whose master is master of the world, is now a Communist citadel.

Nor is this all. In Communist Eurasia there is no opposition. It has been crushed, violently and utterly. But in the remainder of the world free governments, or governments in free societies, are everywhere faced by Communist parties which, though minorities, are everywhere preparing for power. The fact that they are minorities does not mean that they cannot achieve power.

Even in Russia the Communists, when they seized power, were a tiny minority. In the other countries which they have since come to dominate they have also been minorities, but minorities with an important asset in their rear: the Red Army. As Stalin once indiscreetly said, when his tyrant's petulance against Marshal Tito caused him to forget his usual diplomatic reserve, it was the Red Army, not the will of the

people, which set up Communist dictatorships throughout Eastern Europe, and if the Communist minorities in France and Italy did not succeed in securing power over the state, that was because 'unfortunately the Soviet Army did not and could not render assistance to the French and Italian Communist parties'.

Therefore the smallness of the Communist parties in the West does not entitle us to dismiss them lightly. And anyway, in France and Italy, they are not so small as all that. As for America, where the Communist minority is infinitesimal and outside the help of the Red Army, there an absurd panic has led to the emergence of an ideology which many inside and outside America find detestable.

What is the appeal by which the Communists have made these astonishing conquests in the world? Why do workers, peasants, colonial peoples, intellectuals throughout the world find themselves attracted to this doctrine and become willingly sometimes its martyrs, more often—once their ideals have been achieved—its victims? And not only members of these classes whom it openly professes to champion. In many countries members of the 'managerial' class turn to Communism. In some—as in Italy—men have ceased to be surprised at such apparently paradoxical phenomena as a Communist millionaire.

Clearly, to appeal to such varied social types, Communism must have a powerful argument, quite apart from the argument, which the Red Army gives it, of force. What is that argument?

On Communist lips it is comprehensive, final and clear. Communism, it is said, is, as a doctrine, systematic, scientific and true; being scientifically true, it will triumph whether we like it or not, and therefore we might as well like it, or at least give up the vain hope of being able to resist its inevitable victory.

Further, there are positive reasons why the majority of

men in the world should positively like it: for it will bring to them relief from oppression (if they are oppressed) and, in a materialistic age, earthly salvation.

Two thousand years ago, in a different mental climate, Christianity offered the same things: a systematic theology; the dogmatic assurance of scientific truth, which is irresistible and will prevail; the offer of relief to the oppressed; the promise, in a less materialistic age, of less earthly salvation. When the Roman Empire and the Roman Army were placed behind Christianity, it prevailed: when the Russian Empire and the Red Army are placed behind Communism why should it not prevail too? Such, in brief, is the Communist argument.

A vast, systematic theory can never effectively be criticised on the same scale upon which it is projected. It can only be criticised in detail—the detail upon which, ultimately, it must rest. I believe that no single premise in the Communist system is correct. As a historian I cannot find a single instance in which the much-vaunted Marxist interpretation of history can survive the test of research which it has sometimes itself inspired. I do not believe that Marxism is true, nor even that it is logically systematic. And in the practical world I do not think that it relieves the oppressed. And if it is added that the same objections can be made to early Christianity, which nevertheless prevailed, I would add, first, that Christianity at least offered some metaphysical salvation, which man needs but Communism does not offer, and, secondly, that Christianity (whatever its practice) proclaimed the doctrine that every human soul was *worth* saving. Communism, like Nazism, with its blatant materialism, has no such human message; and therefore, in a human world, I do not think that it can provide any ultimate satisfaction.

In this book a number of writers examine, and reject, some of the claims of Communism: intellectual, metaphysical and human. They provide the criticism of detail which such large

claims inspire and deserve. Together, they supply the beginning of a practical critique of Communism. I emphasise that it can only be a beginning, because negative criticism can never be final except in purely intellectual matters, and this matter of Communism is not purely intellectual: it is also practical, political, and emotional. To the practical and emotional hunger of our age the answer of Communism is not enough. It is not enough because, as these writers show, it is intellectually false and humanly brutal. Nevertheless, it has succeeded alarmingly. To destroy it, it is not enough to expose its falsity and its brutality: we must also seek to provide a better answer which will render its false appeal less tempting. After seeing the falsity of that appeal, the task will be easier.

I

THE PHILOSOPHER

BERTRAND RUSSELL

IN relation to any political doctrine there are two questions to be asked: (1) Are its theoretical tenets true? (2) Is its practical policy likely to increase human happiness? For my part, I think the theoretical tenets of Communism are false, and I think its practical maxims are such as to produce an immeasurable increase of human misery.

The theoretical doctrines of Communism are for the most part derived from Marx. My objections to Marx are of two sorts: One, that he was muddle-headed; and the other, that his thinking was almost entirely inspired by hatred.

The doctrine of surplus value, which is supposed to demonstrate the exploitation of wage-earners under Capitalism, is arrived at: (a) by surreptitiously accepting Malthus's doctrine of population, which Marx and all his disciples explicitly repudiate; (b) by applying Ricardo's theory of value to wages, but not to the prices of manufactured articles. He is entirely satisfied with the result, not because it is in accordance with the facts or because it is logically coherent, but because it is calculated to rouse fury in wage-earners.

Marx's doctrine that all historical events have been motivated by class conflicts is a rash and untrue extension to world history of certain features prominent in England and France a hundred years ago. His belief that there is a cosmic force called Dialectical Materialism which governs human history independently of human volitions, is mere mythology. His theoretical errors, however, would not have mattered so

much but for the fact that, like Tertullian and Carlyle, his chief desire was to see his enemies punished, and he cared little what happened to his friends in the process.

Marx's doctrine was bad enough, but the developments which it underwent under Lenin and Stalin made it much worse. Marx had taught that there would be a revolutionary *transitional period following the victory of the Proletariat in a civil war* and that during this period the Proletariat, in accordance with the usual practice after a civil war, would deprive its vanquished enemies of political power. This period was to be that of the dictatorship of the Proletariat.

It should not be forgotten that in Marx's prophetic vision the victory of the Proletariat was to come after it had grown to be the vast majority of the population. The dictatorship of the Proletariat therefore as conceived by Marx was not essentially anti-democratic. In the Russia of 1917, however, the Proletariat was a small percentage of the population, the great majority being peasants. It was decreed that the Bolshevik party was the class-conscious part of the Proletariat, and that a small committee of its leaders was the class-conscious part of the Bolshevik party.

The dictatorship of the Proletariat thus came to be the dictatorship of a small committee, and ultimately of one man—Stalin. As the sole class-conscious Proletarian, Stalin condemned millions of peasants to death by starvation and millions of others to forced labour in concentration camps. He even went so far as to decree that the laws of heredity are henceforth to be different from what they used to be, and that the germ-plasm is to obey Soviet decrees but not that reactionary priest Mendel.

I am completely at a loss to understand how it comes about that some people who are both humane and intelligent can find something to admire in the vast slave camp produced by Stalin.

I have always disagreed with Marx. My first hostile critic-

ism of him was published in 1896. But my objections to modern Communism go deeper than my objections to Marx. It is the abandonment of democracy that I find particularly disastrous. A minority resting its power upon the activities of a secret police is bound to be cruel, oppressive and obscurantist. The dangers of irresponsible power came to be generally recognised during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but those who have been dazzled by the outward success of the Soviet Union have forgotten all that was painfully learnt during the days of absolute monarchy, and have gone back to what was worst in the Middle Ages under the curious delusion that they were in the vanguard of progress.

It is possible that in course of time the Russian régime may become more liberal. But, although this is possible, it is very far from certain. In the meantime, all those who value not only art and science but a sufficiency of daily bread and freedom from the fear that a careless word by their children to a schoolteacher may condemn them to forced labour in a Siberian wilderness, must do what lies in their power to preserve in their own countries a less servile and more prosperous manner of life.

There are those who, oppressed by the evils of Communism, are led to the conclusion that the only effective way to combat these evils is by means of a world war. I think *this is a mistake*. At one time such a policy might have been possible, but now war has become so terrible and Communism has become so powerful that no one can tell what would be left after a world war, and whatever might be left would probably be at least as bad as present-day Communism. This forecast does not depend upon which side, if either, is nominally victorious. It depends only upon the inevitable effects of mass destruction by means of hydrogen and cobalt bombs and perhaps of ingeniously propagated plagues.

The way to combat Communism is not war. What is needed in addition to such armaments as will deter Com-

munists from attacking the West, is a diminution of the grounds for discontent in the less prosperous parts of the non-Communist world. In most of the countries of Asia there is abject poverty which the West ought to alleviate as far as it lies in its power to do so. There is also a great bitterness which was caused by the centuries of European insolent domination in Asia. This ought to be dealt with by a combination of patient tact with dramatic announcements renouncing such relics of White domination as survive in Asia.

Communism is a doctrine bred of poverty, hatred and strife. Its spread can only be arrested by diminishing the area of poverty and hatred.

II

THE SOLDIER

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR BRIAN HORROCKS

THE main reason why I, a soldier, am bitterly opposed to Communism is because I have a horror of war, and the greatest menace to world peace to-day comes from the military forces of Soviet Russia and China. There is a popular misconception that all generals love war, but nothing could be further from the truth, for we generals have seen far too much of the waste and wanton destruction which follows in its wake to be left with any illusions about martial glory. It is therefore with profound anxiety that I have watched the steady growth of the Soviet military dictatorship since the end of the last war.

Clausewitz once wrote that 'war is a continuation of policy by other means' and Lenin's approval of that dictum is on record. So it is as well to remember that Soviet policy presumes a permanent conflict (although not necessarily active war) between Communism and Capitalism, until one or the other is destroyed. The fundamental difference in outlook is shown by the fact that whereas we regard our National Service men as civilians in uniform for the time being, the Soviets regard civilian workers as being fighters in overalls.

No democracy can possibly go to war unless it has the backing of the people, and the only justification for the huge sums which the NATO countries have been obliged to spend on rearmament is to provide a defensive shield behind which they can enjoy the freedom of the democratic way of life, so markedly absent on the other side of the Iron Curtain. These

defence budgets are proving a great strain on the economies of all the free countries and the general public is only prepared to make the sacrifices which are involved in such expenditure if it is convinced that our military forces are to be used for defensive purposes only. Gone for ever are the days when professional armies were employed in wars for expansionist purposes, and it is unthinkable that a war of aggression would ever be launched to-day by one of the Democracies.

But this is by no means the case on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Every time M. Molotov utters one of his famous 'niets' we can see looming behind him the military might of Russia, for Soviet intransigence is based ultimately on an all-powerful Red Army. There is no need for the Soviet leaders to worry about whether a war has popular support or not; thanks to years of indoctrination the Russian people will do as they are told.

Therefore East of the Iron Curtain the power to start a third world war with all its atomic horrors rests not on the will of the people, as is the case in the Democracies, but on the whim of a few unprincipled men sitting in the Kremlin. For there can be no doubt at all that if these men decided on war their armies would march against the West to-morrow, and the same applies to the immense forces controlled by Mao Tse Tsung in the Far East.

If these dictators are also backed up by an all-powerful military machine, then the situation becomes even more dangerous, and this is precisely what is happening in Russia now.

There is little resemblance between the Bolshevik Army as I saw it in the early days of the Revolution and the Soviet military forces which exist to-day. The Red Army which fought a victorious campaign against Admiral Kolchak in Siberia in 1919 was a very democratic affair indeed, in which discipline was run on the free and easy 'Tovarish' (comrade) principle. Rank had largely disappeared. In fact the epaulets

denoting rank had been forcibly torn from the officers' shoulders and in some cases even a nail for each star on the epaulet had been hammered into the officers' shoulders.

In the Divisional H.Q. which I used to visit in Krasnoyarsk, no order could be issued until it had been passed by three political commissars who sat together in one room, and the whole military machine was riddled with these gentlemen from top to bottom. This was in fact a real Communist Army on the best Marxist lines; it was however hopelessly inefficient as a fighting machine, and its victories were only achieved because the *White soldiers* were eager to desert to the Red workers' paradise on the other side of the line.

But just as the initial political conception of the Communist State has now turned into the harshest form of dictatorship, so has the structure of their military forces reverted to a far more despotic system of command than ever existed in the days of the Czars. Discipline in the Soviet Army to-day is stricter than in any other army in the world; privates must salute corporals, and the corps of officers has become an exclusive and privileged caste. Whereas officers throughout the rest of the world are now drawn from all classes, the Russian officer must be more cultured and have better manners than the rest of the population, and some indeed have been obliged to divorce their 'too proletarian' wives.

This process has been carried to such extremes that a Captain is not considered to be the social equal of a Major. Pay and special privileges also mount rapidly with rank. While a private soldier only gets £2 2s. a month, the monthly pay of a Soviet Major-General is in the region of £570—more than his American counterpart. He also has a large number of orderlies to look after him.

Under the Suvorov School system young cadets aged eight or nine attend junior military academies for seven to nine years and are then sent for a further three years' training at

Officers' Training Schools before being commissioned.¹ All this shows a very dangerous trend, because the emergence of an all-powerful military caste in any country must constitute a danger to peace; particularly so in a country like Russia, where the young men have been subjected to intense indoctrination from an early age.

I met some of these young Russian officers in the course of numerous staff conferences held in Germany at the end of the last war. By our standards they were not human, and it was quite impossible to hold a normal conversation with them for they spoke mainly in clichés, and their brains worked in some remote, totalitarian groove. On the rare occasions when I was able to get one of the older Russians by himself I found him a reasonable human being with whom it was possible to hold an ordinary discussion, but not with the young, fully indoctrinated zealots.

It is a sombre thought that one day the colossal military power of Soviet Russia and her satellites may well rest in the hands of these ignorant, bitter young men who have no conception of the meaning of the word 'freedom' and who are soldiers first and citizens very much second.

Although the present Soviet régime bears no relation whatever to a true Communist State as envisaged by Marx, the military dictatorship which exists there to-day is the direct product of Communism, and it is the way all Communist countries are bound to go.

When I was in Russia a wise man once said to me, 'True Communism is impossible unless the whole world is perfect; and when it is perfect we shall not require Communism.'

¹ For many of the facts in the preceding two paragraphs the author is indebted to a recent and remarkable book '*How Russia Makes War*,' by Raymond L. Garthoff (Allen and Unwin).

III

THE SCIENTIST

Dr. C. D. DARLINGTON

I AM concerned with Communism from my own experience of it. I have seen myself how it works in Soviet Russia; I have known the men in that country who do my kind of work—which is scientific research; and I have observed what happened to them. My experience began 27 years ago and it quickly led me to enquire into the theory and practice of Communism. Later it led me also to look closely at its scientific basis and above all at its consequences for scientific discovery and understanding. Let me explain what I found out.

Communism is based on a doctrine developed by Karl Marx a hundred years ago. This doctrine remains to-day of profound interest as a basis of discussion and of scientific enquiry. Since the Communist Revolution in Russia, however, the Communist Party has made it into something quite different. It has made it into the official doctrine, first of the party, and then of the state. This development took place in easy stages and only gradually did it become clear what this meant, namely that all activities must conform with the official doctrine, and that all individuals and groups of individuals must accept it.

The policy of having an official doctrine in itself meant a change in the lives of all thinking men. It meant a surrender of individual judgment on all public questions, a surrender demanded hitherto only by primitive forms of religion. To whom was the surrender made? Not to Karl Marx, that is clear, but to those who interpret Karl Marx. It gradually be-

came clear (and no Communist inside or outside Russia doubts it) that the only competent body to interpret Karl Marx is the Communist Party itself: the official doctrine was to be decided by the party, decided as circumstances from time to time demanded.

The test of conformity with party doctrine has been applied by the party in power in Russia as the basis of reward or punishment. It has been applied by the party in opposition outside Russia as the basis of admission to it or exclusion from it. Thus discussion and enquiry were abolished so far as the foundations of social and political action were concerned.

Now the policy of Communism was founded on the social and political ideas of Karl Marx, ideas which were directed to righting the social wrongs of the 19th century. These wrongs still exist to-day. Unprivileged classes and backward races are still exploited. But nowhere are they more ruthlessly exploited than by the Communist government of Soviet Russia. In the interpretation of doctrine therefore the Communist Party finds it necessary to apply one rule where it is in power and a different rule where it is in opposition. And all its rules it applies or withdraws as its government extends over new countries and new peoples.

There has been no consistency therefore between what was done at one time and what was done at another, or between what was done inside Soviet Russia and what was expounded outside Soviet Russia. In these matters to contradict oneself was to be 'dialectical,' which meant to confirm an essential part of the official doctrine. There has however been a great attempt to establish an appearance of consistency between the findings of science and the teachings and doings of Communism. This could succeed only by smothering developments of science affecting Communism, all developments, that is, affecting the understanding of society in general.

Political expediency thus led the Communist state, first to

exclude Western science, then to denounce it, and finally in its own countries, Soviet and satellite alike, to prohibit research and instruction in certain branches of science which were rapidly developing in western countries.. The subjects that suffered were especially genetics, psychology, and linguistics. These were subjects whose students, teachers, and investigators, having learnt what science meant, did not accept, or had failed to understand, the meaning of political direction.

These political actions entirely altered the cultural and intellectual lives of the people living under Communist governments. International communication was brought to a standstill. Individual initiative was snuffed out by systematic purges. And with superb impudence these things were carried out by a political party which claimed to be fighting for the unity of all nations and the emancipation of their oppressed peoples.

I speak as one whose friends in Soviet Russia were scientists, interested as in any western country in discovery. They were men keenly pursuing their work of finding out the processes of evolution or the means of improving the crops and stock of the farmer and of thereby increasing the food production of their country and indeed of all countries. These men were imprisoned, consigned to labour camps, degraded as criminals, allowed to die and sometimes officially shot. Such things bring to mind the work of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages. But in addition they were done without public trial or public announcement and on a scale beyond all precedent in history.

Published scientific discovery in Soviet Russia and in all Communist states has thus been gradually puffed up during the last twenty-five years with a mixture of meaningless quotations, childish mistakes, and positive frauds. One generation of political scientists may follow another and each may expose the errors of its predecessor. But the life of the

scientist and thinker under Communism we now know can only be one of fear towards the government and of corruption amongst the workers themselves.

Summing up, Communism arose as a philosophical theory designed to liberate the mind and it has become the most efficient means of enslaving it that has ever been known. This is the achievement of the Communist parties of the world. It is what they have done so far since the Communist Revolution of 1917. It began when the Communist government first fired machine guns on unarmed demonstrators in the streets of Moscow. It was continued by the deportation of peasants and intellectuals who differed in their opinions from those of the Communist Party. It is maintained to-day by the armed forces of great military powers in alliance with the Communist parties and their innocent or foolish friends in every country in the world. It is in the light of this experience that I am opposed to Communism.

IV

THE TRADE UNIONIST

SAM WATSON

I AM opposed to Communism, as a Trade Unionist, because under Communism there is no freedom of choice, and of all the freedoms this is one of the most vital to the working class and to the Trade Unions.

If the hierarchy of the Russian Communist Party were less pompous and self-righteous, if only they would sit back and relax, it might dawn upon them that there are millions of ordinary working men and women in other countries who enjoy a higher standard of living, greater social security and personal freedom than do the people of the Soviet Union.

Nor have these millions of working people any desire to initiate or embrace the policy of the Russian Communist Party, or to be imprisoned in the economic, social or state institutions controlled by this military-cum-totalitarian party.

Where people have a choice they by and large choose the best, and while there are exceptions to this on the political plane it is axiomatic that people do not accept second-hand goods if the best is available.

We have certain rights that we take for granted and we exercise them as occasion arises; rights not only embodied in legislation and agreement, but part of our very make-up and democratic way of life. We have not to look up the laws or the constitution to voice our protest or demonstrate against matters upon which we feel deeply. We do not ask the Government, or the police, or the political party of our

choice, what we have to say, when and how we should say it, and having made our protest we do not expect the Secret Police to knock us out of bed at 1 o'clock in the morning, or the Party intimidators to threaten us with economic reprisals or the concentration camp.

We can and do light our pipes, sit round our firesides, and in the harmony of the home feel satisfied that we have said our piece and made our protest and are ready to make the wheels go round a bit better at work next day.

Rights on paper matter very little in the countries where the Communist Parties are in control. Rights are not words printed in laws or constitutions but deeds exercised by free men and women as their heritage in the struggle for individual liberty.

The workers in Russia and the Satellite Countries have all kinds of 'rights' embodied in their constitutions, the right to strike, free speech, free press, free assembly, but if any worker or group of workers attempts to exercise them in a manner that conflicts with the policy in operation, for the time being, of the Communist Party (as did the workers in East Berlin and parts of Czechoslovakia) they would soon discover that the only 'right' they actually possess is the right to accept and carry out the instructions of the Party.

We have some knowledge of the desires of the ordinary Russian, Polish, Czech, Rumanian and Hungarian workers, and we will take convincing that their desires are very different from ours. They too want higher wages, shorter hours and better conditions. They too want to use their 'rights' to secure these and to express their dissatisfaction if they are not granted. Yet it is the fact that no question of any importance, no matter in what sphere, can be decided other than by the Communist Party.

It was no platitude that Stalin wrote in reply to Marshal Tito, when the avaricious policy of the Russian Communist Party left the Yugoslavs with no alternative than to break with

the Cominform and thus establish their right as a nation to develop and create their own way of life.

MOSCOW. May 4th, 1948.

'... The Communist Party is the highest form or organisation of the working class people AND *it stands above all other organisations and among them also above the Soviet in the USSR.* ... It has its own separate programme, its own separate policy which is the foundation for leading and managing all other workers organisations.'

This named truth also reveals the seat of the naked and unlimited power and the use of the words democracy, freedom and the rights of the working people are sophistry. This is the language of 'Alice Through the Looking Glass,' though Lewis Carroll could hardly have meant to criticise Communist political techniques of the future when he wrote:

'When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

'The question,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'is which is to be master—that's all.'

Aye, that's all.

The policy of complete adherence to the instructions and policy of the Communist Party has been forced upon the Trade Unions in Russia and her Satellite States. The task wasn't an easy one. We can recall the years before 1929 when Tomski fought to prevent the capture of the Unions by the Communist Party and the measure of his defeat was not the 'rights' of the members but the determination and power of the Party not to create watch-dogs for the interests of the Trade Unionists but police dogs to enforce Communist Policy.

On this subject too Communist Party procedure in Russia is most explicit:

'The Party cell holds meetings and decisions are reached in these meetings as to the positions which the party members are to take on any question which has or is likely to arise in the Trade Union or other factory meetings.

'The Party members vote unanimously for the previously agreed upon decision. Its power therefore is very great. The FABKOM (Trades Union Factory Committee) since it is elected in a meeting in which guidance has been given by the Party, is an organ which the Party cell not only dominates, but which is actually an organ of the cell, in other words the Party cell is greatly superior in importance to the Trade Union Factory Committee.' ¹

To-day the Trade Unions in these countries are simply handy instruments of the State and the principle that Marx enunciated of the 'withering away of the State' has been converted into the 'withering away' of the real purpose of the Trade Union Movement, while at the same time the State and the Party increase their vested interests, power and dictatorship.

For 17 years—1932-49—the Russian Trade Union Congress never met; and when it did not a single protest was voiced against the delay.

Time was when such Congress published reports on Union activities. None has been published since 1928. The right of assembly, the right of free speech forsooth!

All the available information of the Congress in 1949 shows that the Unions had no independence at all, other than that permitted by the Communist Party.

'All our successes we owe to the Central Committee of the Communist Party.' (Kuznetsov—Chairman).

'The source of Trade Union strength, their authority over the broad masses of workers and employees, lies in the daily leader-

¹ From 'The Economic Life of Soviet Russia,' by Calvin B. Hoover (p. 36).

ship of the Trade Unions by our glorious Communist Party.' (Osipov—Secretary).

'The tenth Trade Union Congress vows to the Communist Party that Soviet Trade Unions were, are and will be loyal and active conductors of the policy of the Communist Party.' (Pravda—11th May, 1949).¹

What is true of the Communist parties exercising dictatorship elsewhere, would also be true wherever such parties came to power. The dynamics of dictatorship cannot permit free independent Trade Unions. Once the dictatorship gets entrenched it follows as night follows day that all organisations within the State come to heel.

My recent visit to Russia and China (I had been in Russia twice previously) convinced me that what the leaders fear most are political ideas inconsistent with their own.

The great heresy in both countries is actively to oppose official policy and it is precisely in the sphere of ideas that the greatest punishment is meted out to those who will not conform.

The lack of knowledge about conditions in the West is appalling and they are almost completely insulated from contemporary Western culture.

We use the same words—Freedom—Democracy—Peace, but they mean something entirely different.

Starry-eyed people, living in ivory towers, who think that the process would not happen in the free democracies, should think again. The range of choice before us is not wide—we can be informed, uninformed, or cominformed.

Every Trade Unionist who values the simple dignities of life, who cherishes the right to worship God in the Church of his own choice, to organise and work within his Union for policies not dominated by outside political forces, to voice his opinions without fear, threats or intimidation, to enjoy the

¹ From 'Trade Unions in the USSR,' by Solomon M. Schwarz, referring to the report of the chairman of AUCTUS (V. Kuznetsov) and editorials in *Trud* and *Pravda*.

sanctity of family life without interference, has the privilege of preventing totalitarian-military-cliquism from coming to power. They do not represent the working people, no more than a weathercock on a church steeple represents the teachings of the Church.

Each generation has its own appointment with destiny, its own problems to resolve and its own choice to make. It is our duty to struggle against totalitarianism and to assist each other in his or her own way in the fight for the right to uphold the essential freedom of man and to accept that choice no matter what the consequences be.



THE AUTHOR

STEPHEN SPENDER

IN countries where Communists are not in power, very few people become Communists for cynical or self-interested reasons. This is a point almost always overlooked by the opponents of Communism. To anyone who feels that Communist criticism of our Western forms of society is largely true, then the kind of official anti-Communist propaganda which streams out of governmental offices of information will seem suspect, and accusations that Communists are spies and crooks will seem almost irrelevant.

The truth is that outside the Communist empire of Russia and China, most Communists are anti-capitalists, for thought-out or for deeply-lived reasons. When Jean-Paul Sartre polemicalises against anti-Communists because they have the wrong allies in the wrong camp, and are thus putting themselves 'against the proletariat,' he shows a grasp of the controversy as it exists in capitalist countries. Indeed, if there were no Russia, it would be difficult to say that Sartre was wrong. Yet as there is Russia, it seems astonishing that Sartre has failed to grasp the far more important third partner in the Communist-anti-Communist dog-fight. For it is this third partner which, wherever the Communists win, transforms the very nature of the controversy by reducing local national Communists, equally with the anti-Communists, to subservience to Moscow.

Thus it is important to know not only what are the just reasons which make the class-conscious 'proletariat' and cer-

tain 'intellectuals' Communists, but what happens to justice after you get Communism. It is here that M. Sartre's position becomes difficult to understand. When, in France in 1953 and 1954, M. Sartre opposes those who oppose Communism, he is perhaps right in claiming that he speaks on the side of the proletariat (though one might dispute this). But one thing which is certain is that if there were Communism in France, M. Sartre would be silenced.

As a writer, I have two reasons for being anti-Communist: perhaps they are really the same reason, or, at any rate, without one there would not be the other. One is that in all Communist states the writer has to merge his individual conscience into that of the dictatorship. The other is that he has to do this in conditions where arrests, mass deportations, labour camps, etc., are an aspect of the Necessity recognised by the Party when it has taken over power.

The way in which the minds of the writers are enslaved, and the results of enslavement on their psychology, are wonderfully analysed by Czeslav Milosz in his book *The Mind Enslaved*, where he discussed the 'case' of the Polish intellectuals.

Presumably people like M. Sartre accept—with a good many reservations—the idea of enslavement, because they believe that to oppose it is to be 'against the workers.' If the workers were indeed happy one might—considering the present state of the world—be ready to sacrifice everything that is meant by 'individualism' to their interest. However, unless one is certain that they benefit from the transformation of individual expression in the arts into a monolithic machinery of propaganda, the sacrifice might well be not just of one's *bourgeois* 'freedom,' but also of the freedom and welfare and happiness of a great many workers which this '*bourgeois*' freedom can represent.

Whether the people are really better off under Communism than under capitalism is something which one has to make up

one's mind about on the basis of the available evidence. Myself, I believe that the abandonment of the responsibility of the writer to think and feel and work as an individual—if it were general—would amount to the abandonment of those words and voices which not only express but are the freedom of the whole of civilisation.

Nothing is easier than for nations to move into a totally political era of modern history—where everything in life is decided by directives and decrees—in which the freedom of all classes ceases to exist. All one gets are orders, and all art amounts to is advertisements for these orders. Literature becomes copy-writing.

I think, though, that anti-Communism is not enough. Awareness of the danger of Communism should be positive, and lead to positive attitudes, not just a negative defence of our '*bourgeois* individualism' which depends so much on our position as 'intellectuals' in an unjust society. The argument of Sartre that to be anti-Communist is to be against the proletariat, can only be answered by taking into account the *just reasons* which have made the workers—and many intellectuals—accept the criticism of our society which, if put into practice, leads to the dictatorship and concentration camps of the Police State.

My political views, considered just as politics, are the result of living in modern conditions. They do not have much to do with my being a writer, and, if I were not a writer, I think I would still hold them.

There is, though, a *poetic* reason for being anti-Communist, and against every totalitarian form of government. This is that literature (and also the other arts with which I am not concerned here) measure and witness to the human condition, with instruments of living experience which are outside the measurements of politics and sociology. Without the 'evidence' of art, the condition of society can be known only as 'vital statistics' and not as real life. 'Vital statistics' tell us

only about living conditions and not what life is like within these conditions. If the conditions regarded as beneficial by dictators are the whole end and aim of life, then sooner or later the picture of life allowed to be expressed in that society is a picture of life as the leaders think it should be, in these conditions, which they have themselves imposed.

Soon after the war we read that certain Russian poets fell into disgrace because they had written poems which were depressing. At a time when Russia, under the almighty sun of Stalin, had emerged victoriously from the greatest war in her history, and when moreover it was necessary that everyone should work hard for recovery, no one had the right to express a mood of sadness and discouragement.

The argument goes, by implication, further than this: to be depressed is a 'subjective' state of mind which does not correspond to 'objective' necessity: therefore it is 'unreal,' because 'unrealistic.' It is at best a hangover from a period of past decadence when a few privileged people indulged in their personal feelings; at worst, it is a lie, because it does not correspond to that condition of outward truth—the social reality created by and known to the political leaders.

As a writer, I am anti-Communist because I believe that when a planning Society arrogates the whole of life to itself, every individual life becomes a lie. I believe that Art is the sixth sense, the sensitive antennæ attuned to areas of experience outside the knowledge of planners, where questions and answers about the human condition are more fundamentally formulated than in the fields of statistics. Without Art the society which provides better houses for the people will be able to know whether the houses, as houses, are better, and even whether the people who live in them are cleaner; but it will not be able to know in any deeper sense whether the people themselves are better, happier, more alive. To submit Art to the processes of materialism is to banish the spirit of man from the conditions in which man lives: and when Art is

absent the only important measurement of these material conditions—whether they improve man's spiritual welfare and happiness and aliveness—will be absent.

For these reasons I am anti-Communist. At the same time I absolutely refuse to accept M. Sartre's formulation, that to be anti-Communist is to be anti-proletarian. What I do recognise in Sartre is that he has stated a challenge. The anti-Communists will stand or fall by their ability to prove that they are not allied with reactionaries in the name of the spirit, hypocritically exploited, against those who are oppressed and starving.

VI

THE ASIAN WRITER

MINOO MASANI

IF I were to be asked which two values I treasure most in life, I guess my answer would be—Freedom and Justice. Liberty for the individual and the nation and fair play for the underdog have been causes which, as far back as I can recall, have moved me beyond all others. Whatever comes in the way of such freedom and denies such justice arouses my opposition.

Soviet Communism has to-day turned its back on every single generous and progressive impulse of the October Revolution and, in place of the 'free and equal society' of which Lenin talked, one finds a new caste system marked by growing inequalities and an industrial feudalism which is based on slave labour.

Behind the Iron Curtain, in China as in Russia, are to be found a new superstition and falsification on a scale without precedent in history. Only in silence and in memories are the values of decency and intellectual integrity preserved. Of all the impediments to human progress, the biggest that I can see at present is that presented by Soviet imperialism and the international Communist movement which is its instrument in the drive to world domination.

My mother complains that as a small boy I had the awkward habit of taking sides against my parents in such situations as those involving the dismissal of a contumacious ser-

vant or the fixing of a price with an itinerant fruit or vegetable vendor. Alongside of this exasperating trait went, I am told, a strong tendency towards non-conformism in thought and behaviour. These traits of standing up for the underdog, rebelling against authority and insisting on the right of self-expression have remained ever since somewhat inconvenient elements in my make-up.

Acquaintance with the works of Wells, Shaw, and Upton Sinclair during school and college days made me a socialist. At the London School of Economics I was Chairman of the Labour Party; and the General Strike of 1926 found me at T.U.C. headquarters offering my services as a volunteer. John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook The World* won for the October Revolution my starry-eyed enthusiasm, and in 1927 and again in 1935 I visited the USSR.

In the belief that tyranny must be fought wherever it is found, I spent the year 1933 in prison serving a sentence for Civil Disobedience activities, and during that term I collaborated with Jayaprakash Narayan in drafting the programme of the Congress Socialist Party which came into existence the following year.

Looking back, I find that my opposition to Communism dates back to the Great Purges of 1936 and the years that followed. By 1938 I was pleading in articles that the sooner the ideals of socialism were disentangled from the practice of Soviet Communism the more likely were those ideals to be preserved.

Close contact with Mahatma Gandhi from 1934 to 1939 resulted in growing appreciation of his social and economic philosophy. Gandhi represents the complete antithesis to the Communist. The Communist swears by dialectical materialism—matter is essence, the mind a by-product; Gandhi preached the supremacy of spirit and mind over matter. To the Communist the end justifies the means; to Gandhi, the

means were everything—means and ends were like the seed and the tree; and so Gandhi pronounced Soviet Communism to be 'repugnant to India.' Communism seeks to centralise and collectivise everything; Gandhi preached the need to decentralise and to distribute power, both political and economic. The Communist glorifies the State; Gandhi, conscious of the distinction drawn by Reinhold Niebuhr between Moral Man and Immoral Society, stressed the individual as an end in himself.

Two fundamentals I accepted from Gandhi's thought—first, that the end does not justify the means and that no decent social order can evolve through the use of force or fraud; the other that, in the second half of the twentieth century, the omnivorous state is in danger of becoming the biggest single threat to human liberty. No school of thought or system of government offends against these two beliefs as violently as does totalitarian Communism.

Since the end of World War II, we in Asia have happily seen India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, the Philippines and Israel secure independent existence. In Asia 2,539,270 square miles of territory and 545,400,000 people have entered the orbit of freedom. During this same period we have watched with apprehension the rise of Soviet imperialism swallowing up no less than ten countries of Eastern Europe and then bringing under its heel the peoples of Manchuria, North Korea, China, Tibet, and North Indo-China. Since 1939, the total area overrun by Red Imperialism is 5,239,660 square miles, while its additional victims number 582,411,000 human beings.

In no other part of the world can these alarming advances of a new tyranny create the same sense of urgency as they do to the more alert among those who belong to the newly freed countries of Asia. No wonder Jayaprakash Narayan, India's socialist leader, has said: 'Colonialism is dying out and soon

it will be a memory. On the other hand, Russian expansionism is a new menace.'

If the journal of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, with which I have the privilege to be associated, bears the title *Freedom First*, it is because consistent democrats in India—struggling against the tide of intellectual neutralism—have through their own experience been driven to appreciate the truth of Lord Acton's axiom that liberty is the supreme good. So we place freedom, even though we hate war, above peace.

For some of us there *is* something worse than World War III and even the hydrogen bomb. Violence is bad and, if possible, to be avoided; the physical destruction of human beings is tragic; but the pulverisation of the human mind and the degradation of the human spirit which are the very essence of the practice of Communism would—if given the opportunity to be perpetrated on a global scale—be the worst of all possible inflictions on humanity.

The basic issue between democracy and Communism is a moral one which none of us may evade. The fundamental difference is as to the true nature of Man. I am for democracy because, with all its inadequacies and imperfections, it is based on the freedom to choose. It enables wrongs, sooner or later, to be righted. The voice of protest is never totally silenced. Even the Third Force can thrive only in the free world.

I am against Communism because it represents, in the way in which it is practised in Soviet Russia and its empire, extreme Right Wing reaction; because for the freedom of the Asian peoples there is no greater menace; because it turns its back on the moral and spiritual values that represent the progress of man.

I believe that Man is not merely raw material for social experiments but an end in himself; and the free inquiry of the human mind is the basis of all progress. I am opposed to

the Communist system because there is no room in it for the intellectual attitude which I was early to learn from H. G. Wells: 'I do not care if I am for a time in a minority of one against all mankind, because in the long run if I have hit off the truth, that will win; and, if I fail to hit it off, I shall have done my best.'

VII

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC

DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

It has been very unfortunate and a source of much intellectual confusion that Communism first appeared on the horizon as a Government. Very few people had read Marx, and still fewer had read Lenin, before the October 1917 Revolution. When the movement seized control of Czarist Russia and became the Russian State it was looked on in purely political terms, and it was a very long time before there was any recognition that it was more than a political movement, though it may be said to make a religion out of politics.

The word totalitarian, popularised if not coined by Mussolini to express the claim of the State to be active over the whole of human life, was a part of what that ex-socialist learnt from the Marxian socialists. It is fundamental to Marx, Lenin and Stalin that there are no parts of human life which are entitled to claim immunity from the Communist Party's control and manipulation.

When some thirty years ago Zinoviev addressed the Party Congress he enumerated religion together with patriotism and the family as the three great obstacles in the path of world revolution. He said religion would be suppressed, patriotism would be won to the socialist idea, while the family would be firmly socialised. In these thirty years we have seen this programme extended and applied beyond the boundaries of Russia.

The Bolsheviks were fortunate in finding in Russia, in the Orthodox Church, a form of religion long since subdued and

controlled by the Czars, and with no tradition of independence, as unable as it was unwilling to give any trouble. But it is proving much more vital and long lived than Marxian theory led Lenin and Stalin to expect. They had followed Marx in adopting the thesis of Feuerbach that religion is what men invent to bridge the gap between what is and what they want and need: that its presence and importance to human beings is a measure of what is wrong with their society, that it is a way of filling a vacuum with something and that as the social conditions mature and improve there ceases to be any room for religious illusion.

On this view, religion in Russia was expected to die out in proportion as conditions improved, and to-day Communists explain its vitality by saying that the first thirty years have been years full of hardship and forced abstinence for the sake of capital development. Necessary discipline to protect the new society in a hostile world. There has been famine, invasion and suffering; but these are not excuses. There also appear admissions that the anti-religious propaganda has not been properly effective and there is a realisation, such as Lenin did not have, that religion has to be taken much more seriously, cannot be merely dismissed as the superstitions of the peasantry or a corrupt and cynical part of class government.

There is too much religion in the world which does not fit into either category. Sometimes the Marxians pretend that they do not very much mind about religion, provided people keep it to themselves and give no trouble to the government. On occasion they find it useful to point to the crowded Orthodox churches in Moscow, without saying that they are crowded because so many other churches have been shut or made into museums. But the whole structure of Soviet education is filled with a bigotted and doctrinaire scientific humanism, and atheism is *de rigeur* for members of the Party, that is, for all positions of importance and responsibility.

The movement is not neutral or indifferent but implacably hostile to all forms of religion which treat this life as a preparation for another form of existence. This hostility must far outweigh for a Christian anything he may find on the other side of the account that commends itself to him as practical philanthropy. If the Soviet Union can now pass to a period when there will be more private consumption and a rise in material standards, many people will be tempted to look on the whole movement with a more indulgent eye; even Christians, since the rise of the social gospel.

For the first time in the story of the Christian religion many people claim to be Christians who are in fact wholly pre-occupied with what Bacon called 'The Relief of Man's Estate.' They value religion as a way of promoting peace and kindness among men, say their religion is that of the Sermon on the Mount, and tacitly drop the first Commandment, and heaven and hell, from their thinking. Then it is only one step to judging everything by material standards and material results, and to making very light of the dogmatic atheism in Soviet Communism by comparison with what are believed to be its social products and achievements.

But clearly all this is a complete reversal of the true Christian order of importance. It is a frank desire to see men gain the whole world regardless of what happens to them after death. But an Orthodox Christian, thinking first and last of the fate of the soul, must resist with all his possibilities of resistance the spread of the doctrines which are going to make it more difficult for his fellow men to see clearly and truly what human existence is about.

For the Christian, the great tragedy of the last ten years is that so many Catholic populations have been brought under the jurisdiction of Communist governments. This involves great suffering of all sorts, separation from the outside world, drastic limitations on personal freedom and so on. But much the worst evil is that the children of Christians are forcibly

indoctrinated in the State Schools to try to make them despise the faith of their fathers and feel advanced when they have acquired a tincture of nineteenth century scientific materialism. The home is divided where the children learn at school to become estranged from the guiding principles which inspire their parents. This is wrong in the natural order, and bad for all parties.

It is a violation of the rights of the family, and a violation committed in order to inflict the gravest injury, the imposition of spiritual blindness, if it can be inflicted on the young.

VIII

THE BUSINESS MAN

HUGH LONSDALE

It is ironic, to say the least, that although the declared aim of Communism is the elimination of Capitalism, it does not scruple to make use of the business man during the period in which the Communist State is being moulded. It uses him, as it were, to help to dig his own grave, and then, by creating a system of State Capitalism, practises without fear of internal criticism or the restraint of active public opinion the same economic system the Communist creed purports most strongly to condemn.

During the first stages of the revolution in all countries under Communism there has been the pretence that the business man can function in the period of the transition to full Communism or, alternatively, can find within the Communist State sufficiently attractive employment in which his ability and knowledge can be used.

It is clear from a study of developments in the Soviet satellite states that the lessons of the first two decades following the October Revolution have been thoroughly learned. The relatively slow rate of the collectivisation of agricultural production is one instance. The existence during the first few years of a private sector in their economies is another. Given the dominance of Soviet Russia it is no surprise to find a similarity of pattern showing: the stages of development ordered so as to avoid the difficulties arising from too rapid a transition to Communism; temporary *ad hoc* modifications contrary to Communist tenets such as are necessary to deal

with emergencies; and, despite these apparent inconsistencies, a general and steady progress towards the creation of the Communist State and the destruction of all that is alien to it.

The first stages of the Communist revolution see the removal of a large part of those hitherto engaged as owners or administrators in industry, commerce and trade, either because the large industrial and commercial concerns are confiscated by the nascent Communist State or because the previous political opinions of owners and executives are thought to identify them as persons who represent a danger to its *existence*.

But society no less than an army marches on its stomach and it is necessary to maintain as efficient a system of production and distribution as is compatible with the changes essential to set the Communist State in motion. This compels the temporary use of the business man either as manager on behalf of the State or in continuing his own business under the control of the economic planners. He will be encouraged to think that Communism allows private trading or offers managerial work reasonably well remunerated. And for a time it will appear to be so; the Communist State does not scruple to say one thing and mean another.

The business man will have the specialised technical and administrative knowledge lacking in those who support the new régime or who because of their social origin will be thought to be more likely to support it. Disruption and chaos might well have resulted had not business men been willing, albeit often under duress, to lend their administrative talents to the régimes whose declared aim was their elimination. Lenin himself said: 'We must not shrink from recognising that there are not enough trained Communists; they do not understand the work and need to learn.'

The incompletely developed Communist State therefore seeks to use the business man, but since those tainted with the stigma of Capitalism are regarded as basically hostile to

Communism and incapable of conversion to it, Communism seeks to create from within its own ranks all the necessary administrators, including those required for industrial and commercial undertakings. These are nurtured in schools and colleges in which the inculcation of Communist doctrine is given equal prominence with the acquirement of administrative and professional skills.

The Communist State is not thought to be free from the danger of the disruption of its economic system while key posts, even those of minor importance, are held by those who are considered to have flourished—i.e., were not of the worker class—under Capitalism, except where they were previously members of the Communist party, a claim few business men are likely to be able to make. Business men and others who have found a temporary niche in the Communist State are therefore discarded as ideologically sound Communists become available to take their places.

The removal from their posts will often mean the loss of house or flat, the better housing being reserved for the new élite. Ostracised and in effect an outcast from the new society, the discarded business man progressively deteriorates in status and living conditions. No less suspect in the later stages than in the first, he will fear to associate with his former friends, since they are tarred with the same brush, and life will become a lonely and dreary struggle to keep body and soul together.

The existence of a private sector of the economy is also regarded as an evil it is necessary to tolerate until the Communist State is ready to undertake the whole of production and distribution. It is remembered that in the Soviet Russia of the early 1920s Lenin's New Economic Policy, which allowed limited private enterprise, did much to correct the dislocation arising from too precipitate an absorption by the State of all industry and trade.

Shut off from any other reasonable means of earning a

living, and seemingly given the opportunity of retaining his property, the business man may not be reluctant to play the part required of him. Disillusionment follows. He is dependent on State organisations for raw materials or for supplies for the distributive trades, and priority is given to the State manufacturing and trading units. Taxes fall more heavily on him, and increase as the need for private enterprise diminishes. Failure to pay them may mean imprisonment and loss of his business.

Driven also to seek supplies at increased cost in the private sector (or 'free' market) he will be forced to put up his prices, thus incurring the risk of being charged with profiteering. Shortages of goods may lead to visits by investigators—generally younger Communists recruited from the quasi-Communist organisations, the Youth Movement and the like. These authorised snoopers act without regard to any principles of law and without fear of legal sanctions. Stocks even a little above those required from day to day may be confiscated and the unfortunate culprit indicted for hoarding—a serious offence, often punished by confinement in a labour camp.

The Communist state is subject to recurring crises in the production and distribution of goods, as in other spheres, and since the Communist system claims to be the perfect creation of an omnipotent body guided by the omniscient teachings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, it follows that if faults occur there must either have been deviation from the policy or deliberate activity contrary to the 'interests of the people.' The theory demands it and its exponents are not slow to find 'enemies of the people' among those engaged in private trade.

The private sector is in any case a constantly dwindling portion of the economy. Parts of it are taken over without compensation as the administrative capability of the State increases. Attention is then directed to the small traders, the retailers, the hotel proprietors, the barbers, bootmakers, dressmakers, watch repairers and the like. The services of

such are essential, but it is necessary to bring them within the Communist pattern.

The method more generally adopted is to form them into co-partnerships (or work) co-operatives, subject to central control. The small man is perhaps the most individual and conservative of all in his outlook, but as supplies become increasingly difficult to obtain the pressure to join with others in a co-partnership co-operative becomes irresistible.

There might seem to be an amalgamation of like interests and there is a pretence of co-operators' control. But in reality control is exercised from the centre through regional and district organs. The Communist Party will have its representative within the co-operative or in the district unit controlling it. It is impossible to withdraw except at a complete loss. Remuneration is according to output. Profits are milched off in taxes and other dues and participation in a co-partnership co-operative becomes indistinguishable from ordinary wage-earning employment. The last of the business men will have gone.

In his place will be the new officials appointed to run the commercial system of the Communist State, part of a vast horde of bureaucrats. Some will be efficient; many will not. Some will be honest; some will be driven to bribery and corruption by the level of their remuneration and the temptation of the better class goods available in the special shops catering for the élite of Communist society.

The goods intended for the State shops will find their way into the black market—for under Communism as elsewhere the black market is an inevitable concomitant of the provision of man's needs solely by State planning.

Nor do the new State trading organisations bring better or cheaper goods to the customer. By some mysterious feat of ill-planning many of the simple necessities of life, even such as, for example, sewing cotton of the right colour, are not to be found in the State shops. The goods which are available

are often shoddy or unreliable, due partly to the inexperience of the technicians and designers who have replaced the eliminated *bourgeoisie* and partly to faulty workmanship caused by the insistent call for more and more production from the worker.

The better grades of clothing and footwear and the semi-luxuries of life are deliberately priced high, this being part of the system of fixing low basic rates of wages, paying the worker according to output, and driving him constantly to ever greater effort to provide himself and his family with the simple comforts of life.

One who has seen the progressive decline and virtual abolition of free enterprise can scarce believe that Communism has more to offer the business man, be he large or small, than cynical exploitation of his talents, and that at some risk to him, during the period in which the Communist State is being created and manned. Lenin's words, quoted earlier, clearly mean that when sufficient Communists have been trained, the business man, whom it has been necessary to use in the interim, will be thrown on to the scrap heap.

Nor will he be able to console himself with the reflection that, though he is in greatly reduced circumstances, and his children discriminated against because of their origin, the conditions of the greater number of the people will be better. No one with knowledge of the results of the monolithic system of Communist Government can believe State Capitalism to be an improvement on free enterprise operated in a modern democracy conducted in the full light of day. The rights both of free association and individual freedom of action will have gone. Employer or other business interests and workers in factory or shop will no longer be allowed to determine together what each is willing to concede to the other in establishing reasonable conditions for themselves and for society as a whole.

In their place will be an all-powerful clique whose best

promise is that conditions will be better at some distant time in the future if all are content to suffer for it now by surrendering body and mind to a plan in the creation of which they have no say and which they may not criticise, however harsh or imperfect they think it to be in design and execution.

IX

THE EDUCATIONIST

SIR JOHN SARGENT

I HAVE been a public servant most of my life and, following what seems to me to be a laudable tradition, I have never taken an active part in politics nor have I revealed my political opinions, except perhaps to a few intimate friends. Now I am asked to say whether in the light of forty years' experience of public administration in this country and elsewhere I regard Communism as a desirable way of life, either in theory or in practice. As I am now on the verge of retirement, I can see no reason why I should not attempt to answer.

Perhaps, however, my main justification for doing so is that my political progress, if it may be so described, unlike that of many of my contemporaries, has been from right to left and not from left to right.

When I was at Oxford I was a strong Conservative; in fact at one time I was the president of a die-hard, high-Tory club. For some time after I left the university my lot fell both as teacher and administrator in places which could hardly be described as progressive, still less as revolutionary. But during the First World War I came for the first time into close contact with people who did not belong to the *bourgeois* circles in which I had grown up. They taught me a lot of things, the most important of them being a deep and enduring respect for the individual and his potentialities, given a fair chance.

The conviction that in any form of social structure the one

thing that mattered was the individual was further strengthened when my work brought me into touch with some of the new housing estates, the population of which had been recently removed from slum areas in the East End of London. The way that they or at any rate their children flourished in a new and better environment was a revelation to me.

At the same time, as I came to deal more closely with people in important positions, I began to realise that the margin which separates those whom the world calls great from the great mass of their fellows is as a rule quite a small one. Their eminence seemed to me to be due in the majority of cases more to some accident of birth, education or economic opportunity than to outstanding qualities of intellect or character.

In short, my widening experience left me in little doubt that the ends of social justice could not be achieved without a drastic change not merely in the distribution of wealth but also in the equalising of educational and economic opportunities.

Now, towards the end of my official career, I see no reason to modify that opinion. I am often told by my friends, sometimes in jest, sometimes in earnest, that I shall end up as a Communist. I am quite willing to admit that there have been times when I have been attracted by the idea of a world remodelled on more drastic lines than our cautious approach towards Socialism seems likely to achieve during my own lifetime. I also appreciate the fact that Communism as a creed, if not in practice, offers to its disciples a new incentive and the modern world stands badly in need of new incentives. I have tried, therefore, to consider objectively what Communism has to offer to a world seeking a sign or a new gospel, and in so doing I have done my best not to be distracted by the fact that so many of its protagonists to-day appear to be inspired by the cruder forms of personal or national aggrandisement.

A cynic once said that Christianity would be a fine thing if it were not for the Christians. The same reservation ought at least to be borne in mind in regard to Communism. As a result, however, of such thought as I have been able to give to the subject, I have been driven to the conclusion that although so-called *Communist States* may have achieved something in the way of improving conditions among backward communities, the principles and practice of Communism are equally repugnant to any conception of a free and progressive society.

As I am writing as an educationist, I will base my objections to Communism primarily on educational grounds. Education, as I see it, is a continuing experiment in individual development. If my belief in the supreme importance of the individual is a valid one, then the individual must matter more than any form of state or society to which he may belong from time to time, and it would seem to follow that any system of education worth the name may guide and direct but should not restrict his approach to the goal of self-realisation.

To my mind the only thing that can preserve the dignity of the human species and make living worth-while is the conviction—or assumption, if you prefer it—that we are striving towards an ideal, infinitely remote, which we can only reach through an age-long process of trial and error. To the free mind its very remoteness is its essential attraction. The idea that somebody, whether his name be Marx or Lenin or Stalin, has already found it and that all that is left to the rest of us is to learn how to say amen, involves a denigration of personality, which only a slave mentality can accept.

But this may perhaps explain why some intellectuals with a profound contempt for their fellows embrace Communism and it may also be why Communist States, in practice, have

soon found it expedient to liquidate their intellectuals. The familiar, if apocryphal, story of the Communist orator who told his audience that when the day of freedom dawned, they would jolly well have to do what they were told, is not altogether an unfair comment on Communism, as one sees it in power to-day.

Let me return to my contention that those who think well of the human soul, whether they study it in the old or the young, in school or out, must preserve its right to self-realisation against any encroachment by the State that is not endorsed by the will of the community freely expressed.

It seems to me to be not illogical to go back to first principles for an argument on which the essential importance of the individual can be based. Members of the human race may be less strong and less beautiful physically than some types of animals but what differentiates them from the rest of creation and what has enabled them to assert their supremacy is the power to reason and to give effect in action to the outcome of their mental processes. If one excepts the definitely subnormal, this power is widely distributed and there is no justification for assuming that it is confined to the chosen few, whose word should be law to the rest.

Whether we humans derive the power to think and reason from some Divine Being or the process of evolution or what you will, the fact remains that it is at one and the same time our hallmark as such and our most valuable possession. I find it hard to believe that anything that puts any obstacle in the way of our exercising it to the fullest extent compatible with membership of a civilised society is not a bad thing. It is for this reason that I share the Communist's dislike of any form of authoritarian religion or dogma. But while their objection is to rivals in the same field, mine is to any ban on the exercise of the greatest gift which I have received from whoever or whatever was responsible for creating me.

Authoritarianism in the spiritual field is to me the worst of all tyrannies but one has to remember that while the Holy Inquisition may be dead, the Concentration Camp is not; and the concentration camp is one of the features of the modern Communist State which freedom abhors.

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