THE NEW LEFT

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INTERDOC CONFERENCE

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INTRODUCTION

by
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The "Communist Manifesto" started in 1848 with the famous sentence: "A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism". In these days a "New Left Manifesto" could start with the sentence: "A new spectre is haunting the Western world, the spectre of the New Left".

This movement is a curious admixture of radicalism, anarchism, syndicalism, and pacifism which aims by revolutionary means at the destruction of the existing order, and its replacement by an entirely different society based on better moral and social values.

Originally the movement began in literary circles. In their magazines radical political standpoints were expressed. Gradually political groups came into being in which discontented and frustrated elements including left wing socialists, communists and pacifists gave expression to their political discontent.

Among the New Left prophets and heroes are Marcuse, Sartre, Camus, Wright Mills, Debray, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, Castro, and Guevara, a mixed bag of spokesmen of the new revolutionary outlook. Their ideological concepts are exeedingly vague, more iconoclasm than programme, and there is a notable lack of positive ideals. The New Left is thus a typical anti-movement; it is against all forms of "establishment", and rejects the values and institutions of the existing order.

While the "New Left" expresses the local discontents in all countries in which it manifests its activities, it is united, to some degree, by common issues such as the Vietnam war, racial discrimination, anti-imperialism, capitalist corruption, police terror, mediaeval university systems etc.

Although the New Left is more than student radicalism, radical student groups often form an essential element in New Left movements. In the United States for instance the New left is unimaginable without the "Students for a Democratic Society" (SDS) and the "Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee" (SNCC). In Germany the "Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund" (SDS) plays a very important role in the German New Left movement, while in France the "Union Nationale des Etudiants Français" (UNEF) and in Britain

the "Radical Student Alliance" express a specific aspect of the New Left in their countries.

Admittedly many of the objections and complaints of the students against the existing order are an expression of their discontent with educational institutions and in particular against university systems which they regard as hopelessly archaic. Many students, perhaps a majority, have grievances only of that nature, and do not want to be involved in political action not concerned with educational reform. For this reason it is difficult to assess the real strength of radical student groups. Another factor that renders it difficult to make reliable estimates is that a few often claim to speak for many. If 500 students out of 10,000 raise their voices and the others are silent, a false impression of the degree of participation may be given. However, more and more students show a disposition to assert themselves politically, this they are unable to do through the normal and established student organisations. They are no longer willing to confine themselves to educational issues, but they take issue with the standards and traditional outlook of the establishment.

It is not only difficult to estimate the real strength of radical student movements, but also to assess the significance and role of violence in their activities. Violence seems likely to play a growing role in student action. Students are increasingly inclined to regard violence as a justified means.

However, reports of student violence are often exaggerated. Student riots are usually joined by hooligans and other anti-social elements who are only interested in violence and not in political issues, and who contribute to the impression that students more and more take to violence.

It is evident that certain political parties endeavour to exploit radical student movements. This was demonstrated in recent student actions in a number of European cities. At times they were successful when the students welcomed outside support for their actions, in other instances they refused to be used for the purposes of political parties.

It is of particular interest to note communist efforts to infiltrate radical student movements, in order to try to influence and – if possible – to direct their actions.

What is still uncertain is the extent of international cooperation between the various groups. It may appear at times that a sort of mastermind is behind all the recent student action. So far, however, the known facts provide no proof of this, although it is clear that contact between the various groups – and in particular their leaders – is increasing, and with it a growing cooperation.

As to the prospects for the future, there are a number of views.

Some profess to regard these student movements as nothing new, but simply a form of reaction of the younger generations against the older generation. They believe that in 10 years time the hotheads will be housefathers who will then be inclined to defend the order which they now reject, and frown at radical student effort to try to disturb the existing order.

Others are more pessimistic and consider that this is the beginning of a radical change, which, with complete disregard for existing values and institutions and through violent action, could eventually lead to disintegration and deterioration of society as a whole.

In such assessments both points of view may be exaggerated. To estimate the trends of the New Left, a thorough investigation of the present situation is necessary.

The following papers which were presented at the international Interdoc conference at Zandvoort, Netherlands, in the autumn of 1968, may contribute to this investigation.

The first one treats the ideological foundations of the New Left.

As students play a dominant part in the New Left, the second paper presents an analysis of the motives and aims of the Student Movement.

Because of the role of violence in the New Left, a third paper deals with the new inspirers of violence.

The fourth paper is concerned with the international aspects of the Radical Student Movement and relations with communism.

A number of other papers were presented at the Zandvoort conference dealing with the relevant situation in Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and the United States. They will be brought up to date and published before long.

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW LEFT

by
Dr. A. von Weiss

The New Left which is the subject of the following observations may be taken for granted as a known phenomenon in political life. I should like to give a survey of its philosophical foundations in the past, present and future.

1. The invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops which took place in the night from August 20 to 21, 1968 represents a break in the course of contemporary history. We shall now have to accustom ourselves to the relationship of many contemporary trends, many political movements, which had to be considered in their continuity, to this break. In describing the events mentioned, we must now consider:

   a) The development before August 21, 1968 and
   b) the development after August 21, 1968.

   Apart from considering the date August 21, 1968 as a break in the course of contemporary history, there is also the possibility of using the invasion of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia as a touchstone by which the reaction of various political forces could be measured. This leads to a clearer demarcation of their essential characteristics.

   The methods of employing such a touchstone to estimate the value of the most varied trends, and this means the content, i. e. the motivations, the arguments and the goals of the political movements, should also be applied to the New Left. We now have the opportunity of testing the true worth of the New Left's various complexities. This means the following: the New Left, also, must take another form following the events in Czechoslovakia – in regard to people, theories and actions. Considering the events of last August, it will be necessary in future to examine which characteristics of this movement will continue to be predominant and decisive. A brief summary of the development up to now is indispensable for a comparison of past and present.

2. The New Left is a challenge to the non-Communist world and society which it criticises ruthlessly. Not only is the New Left a world-wide movement, it is also of world-wide importance. The New Left deserves our attention because

the centres of its activities lie in the North Atlantic industrialised countries. There, the movement sets the political stage. The political home-ground of the New Left is mainly in industrialised states with a non-Communist political system. A comprehensive study would therefore also have to include Japan in its examination. Here, however, the focus is to be on North America and West Europe.

3. The proponents of the New Left as a political movement are young people who rebel against the establishment as embodied by the representatives of the older generation. As far as their social background is concerned, they are mainly young intellectuals. The labelling of the movement's proponents according to superficial, demographic and sociological characteristics often leads to inadmissible generalisations in the attempt to put the socio-critical and political disturbances in the Soviet bloc in the same category with those in non-Communist countries. For reasons which will be explained below, it is common to speak of "restive young people" in general. The identification of student disturbances in Warsaw or Prague with those in Berlin or Berkeley is an inadmissable simplification. It is not possible to classify political movements according to the age of those who participate in them. A political movement receives its significance from the emotions rationalised in it, from its motivations, its arguments and its purposeful actions. These elements were completely different, for example, in Warsaw and Berlin: In the spring of 1968, the Warsaw students protested against the regime's plans for a university reform which were almost identical with what the Berlin students were demanding. Repeated emphasis must therefore be placed on Paragraph 2 with regard to the statement that young people in no way pursue the same – or even similar – goals throughout the world. The New Left is a phenomenon of the North Atlantic industrialized countries and can be understood only as such.

4. The New Left – to a large degree rationalised or ideologised – is the expression of a typical instinctive or emotional state of man in the industrial age. As far as the intellectual and psychological bases are concerned, two levels must be distinguished. First, the largely subconscious, and in any case unreflected, level of emotional experience; secondly, the level of conscious reflection.

   The emotional state of many people in the industrial age in the mid-20th century is characterised by a feeling of frustration. In spite of the everywhere increasing perfection of the technical and administrative apparatus for the express purpose of protecting human existence, man has the sensation of an inner void instead of the anticipated fulfillment. He is dissatiesfied in the

midst of an over-abundance of consumer goods intended for the satisfaction of his needs. Man feels small and insignificant within and towards the apparatuses. He cannot assert his own personality and sees himself only as a cog in the technics of living in the broadest sense.

The Community of Man is out of hinge for him. He regards himself a loner next to other particles in an atomised society.

Protest against this experience takes different forms. One primary reaction is the acceptance of isolation by means of a contrived individualism. This finds its expression in a retreat from, and in a parody of, society, thus documenting the criticism of culture and society by the individual human being. All modern forms of bohemianism, of the individual and nihilistic protest may be noted here: Beat literature, "Provos", "Gammler", Hippies, "Raggare", Rockers, Hell's Angels, etc. It is often difficult to distinguish between these and the increasing juvenile criminality.

However, the articulation of the protest by intentional behaviour already comes under the category of conscious reflection and therefore within the second level of the intellectual and psychological foundations of the New Left.

Aside from these more self-centered or individual feelings of frustration there are also constructive ones. The unsatisfactory, condemnable world of the present, the product of a distasteful past, must be changed. Frustration is coupled with joy in destructive and unmerciful criticism – one form of human aggression.

And just because it is particularly the young person who is often painfully aware of what he lacks, his immaturity, he attempts to compensate by attacking his fellows. A young person does not yet have the experience to know that life means toil and work – one's own toil and work. He lives according to his emotions and in his hopes for the future. He has not yet recognised the "challenge of the day", the hic Rhodus, hic salta, the necessity of fulfilling a daily obligation, as the law of human existence. He projects his real life into the future; the present is a drag and a lack of understanding; the past an encumbrance. The fault is with the older generation which lives in the past; it had constructed the unbearable conditions of the present. All this must be totally rejected.

The dissatisfaction with present conditions covers every area. But the most burning questions arise from the criticism of those institutions which are supposed to facilitate the coexistence of human beings in a community

and the process of socialisation, of the growth of the young generation into society. This circumstance and the events resulting from it make a highly political movement of the New Left.

5. However, a feeling of rebellion, of protest becomes politically effective only when it takes shape in concepts, images and purposeful ideas. This process, regarded individually, may be described as rationalising. When groups of people are involved, it is better to call it ideologising.

The philosophical foundation of every movement is an ideology. There is no movement without an ideology. Such an ideology which stamps a movement can be composed of elements from the most varying intellectual systems which appear to be united by one guiding principle. This principle, this common philosophical denominator for all the lines of thought comprised in the ideology of the New Left, is the leftist attitude of the supporters of the movement. This attitude is expressed by the readiness to a ruthless criticism of everything established. The leftist attitude, the prevailing inclination to rational criticism of the irrationally experienced present, is first of all the prerequisite of a certain intellectual behaviour pattern; it is a method of thinking, but not yet the essence of thinking. From this leftist attitude grows progressive thought, thought which forges into future from the present, which attempts to achieve a rational hold on the future. Leftist thought must – in order to achieve rational definitions – unload the ballast of the emotions and traditional thought patterns. Its philosophical content consists of rational ideals to be realised in the future. The methodology of the leftist attitude demands a certain preselection of theoretical systems which show a basic affinity to the leftist attitude and with the help of which the future is to be constructed.

6. The New Left covers a broad spectrum of philosophical tendencies. The young supporters of this movement have not yet created any original system for their theory of social criticism. In the same measure as the New Left follows the most dissimilar prophets who generally come from the generation of their fathers, or even their grandfathers, so the expression of their feelings and thoughts is prescribed in the most literal sense of the word by these intellectual leaders.

First of all, four chief philosophical tendencies must be distinguished:

a) Existentialism was welcome as a system of thought which gave expression to the experience of individual isolation. It regards man as being "cast" without relevance into a senseless and hostile environment. The

only escape from this situation is individual engagement, the autonomous establishment of the goal by the individual. The concept of having achieved membership in an intellectual elite by having set this goal has its inception and its formulation here.

b) Psychoanalysis serves the need of being able to trace cause and effect to one animalistic law explaining everything. The conception of man as a primitive, biological being which goes through a socialising process, a "taming", (Freud) and his early preformation and almost mechanical-seeming behaviour support the doubt in the validity of conventional values. These conceptions seem to be at least a partial solution to the enigma of the world. Against such profound attempts at explanation, purely political or economic theories are to be regarded as superficial and primitive. The special attraction of psychoanalysis as a scientifically practised method of destroying taboos may be mentioned here only in parenthesis. But it suffices the iconoclast needs of the young intellectuals.

c) The romanticising cultural criticism of the New Left, a modern form of Rousseauian glorification of the "noble savage", is at the same time a criticism of the conditions in the degenerate culture of the North Atlantic industrialised nations. This protest against the "rotten West" achieves militant reality in the struggles for independence by the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. These ignite the feelings for human justice, the longing for noble primitivism, the glorification of the romance of parti-sanism and the desire for the adventure of the radically new beginning of a young society.

d) Finally, as last and decisive traditions of thought, various tendencies of the epigones to Marxism determine the intellectual horizon of the New Left. Again all Marxist tendencies which place greater emphasis on its anarchist elements of thought are predominant. The permanent revolu-tion of the Trotskyites is an appropriate expression for the tireless criti-cism of existing conditions on the part of the New Left. However, the ascendancy of the Trotskyites is conditioned by still another circum-stance.

The disappointment, even desperation, over the social conditions grew out of the experience of the immobility of the political situation after the last war when world progress threatened to freeze in the "Cold War" of the two super powers. The misguided development of Marxism as practised in the Soviet Union was added to this. Soon a term was found for this deformation: it was called "Stalinism".

This was the scapegoat for all failures. It was also responsible for Trotsky's murder and so the latter became the last prophet of Marxism. His supporters became the keepers of the Grail of pure revolutionary doctrine.

A further event fostered the diaspora-like diffusion of neo-Marxist thinking outside of the most important centers for the veneration of this intellectual heritage, the Communist parties. The suppression of the Hungarian uprising had a highly explosive effect on organised Marxist extremism, especially on the organisations themselves. Thus many leftist socialist sects sprang up which strove to spread their doctrines, generally with success, for they were able to pass themselves off as opponents of the established Communists. The consequences of the events in Czecho-slovakia will be similar and will vary only in the degree of their effects, for now the critics of Communism and the supporters of Marxism meet at the point of interception set up by the New Left.

The contrast between Red China and the Soviet Union is also important as the point of departure for the formation of neo-Marxist sects. The number of germ cells of "true" Marxist thinking also increased on this basis.

Aside from these tendencies of epigonistic Marxism which mainly expand the theory of revolution, there are a few less spectacular trends which administer the old, original Marxist heritage of sociological and economic analysis. Class struggle and capitalist economic chaos are also by no means anachronistic concepts or terms for the New Left.

A special aspect of neo-Marxism — that is, a continuation of the tech-nological theorems of the original doctrine — strike me as being futuristic thought patterns. Human tools which old-time Marxism employed as charac-teristic fossils for determining past forms of society are now being raised to new honor as signposts for the future.

These philosophical tendencies as the intellectual foundations of the New Left have understandably become interwoven. The association bet-ween psychoanalysis with Marxist sociology should be especially stressed in this connection. But existentialist Marxism which in modern form deals chiefly with the original Marxist problem of alienation is also of positive value for the New Left's cultural and world weariness.

7. The always topical significance of the New Left consists in the problems

raised by some of the basic facts of human coexistence.

These are problems of the revolution or evolution of society. The problem of force, the chance offered by non-violence. A central point in the discussion is the nature of government, of which anarchy appears to be the negation. Finally, interrelated with all the previously mentioned problems, is the phenomenon of human authority, the weight of a human personality in association with its fellow-men. Hereby <u>auctoritas</u> must not be confused with <u>potestas</u>, the power of State, the power of office – this is only one part of the problems involving government. The dialectic of the problems of anarchy and authority seem to be the focal point for the New Left. The difficulty for the New Left lies in the fact that practised anarchy comes into conflict with the necessity of recognising authority, because only the latter makes possible the establishment of an ideological community. But the New Left is above all an ideological community. On the other hand, the demand for radical criticism is by its very definition hostile to authority; the appearance of sectarian, partial authorities only strengthens the disruption of society. The New Left's hostility towards authority is an expression of an underground, radical nihilism especially destructive for every human society.

8. The goal of established.Communism of developing a specific social formation determines its critical attitude towards the New Left. The New Left's criticism of established Communism has already been mentioned. This refers to the ruling Communist parties. The criticism expressed in many statements of the Soviet version of Communism in particular serves the New Left, often unintentionally, as an alibi. The world at large, accustomed to thinking in terms of East bloc-West bloc, assesses every criticism of the leading power in the East bloc, the Soviet Union, as a proof that the critic belongs to the camp of the East bloc opponents. This false estimate of the New Left's political position is supported by the general inclination to proclaim at certain intervals the death of every ideology. This sort of faith-healing is due to the most varying motives. The understandable aversion towards the narrow-mindedness of some ideologies and the thus resulting hope in the critical discernment of the former proponents of an ideology is not under discussion here. More important – and as a result of their irrealistic approach, more alarming – is the attempt to find signs of dissolution everywhere in Communism. The usual formula in this connection is: "Polycentrism". This is supposed to banish the ghost of revolutionary, Marxist Communism. The hope of diminishing the impact of the revolutionary ideology – which is associated with ascertaining the existence of a polycentrism – proceeds from the assumption that the establishment of numerous organisational centers

could stifle the fundamental and unifying ideas of an intellectual movement. This could surely happen. It would then only be a proof that the movement's intellectual foundations had already lost their momentum before.

The New Left is rather a proof that its intellectual, motivating forces are highly virulent even though the New Left's organisational forms, if they exist at all, are a model example of polycentrism.

·When judging the relationship between ruling Communism and the New Left, another method of argumentation proceeds from the criticism directed by the leading doctrinarians of the East bloc against the New Left. There is a great number of such critical statements. They must, however, be correctly evaluated. Aside from all remarks referring to the New Left's lack of discipline and ideological vagueness, there is the unmistakable formula: the New Left is the reserve army of world Communism. In order to be comprehensive, it may be recalled that the critical reports such as those of the Soviet public information system on the conditions in foreign capitalist countries are based almost exclusively on statements by representatives of the New Left in these countries – that is, with the exception of reports by their own commentators in the Soviet mass media.

9. The New Left is an international movement which shows an unmistakable intellectual consensus in spite of its chaotic organisation and its apparent lack of cohesion.

This consensus becomes apparent in the recognition of the same spiritual leaders, in the propagation of the same ideas, in the application of the same arguments and of the same methods of action.

This cohesion is partially explainable by the way in which the ideas of the New Left are spread. This occurs chiefly at the universities. The means of communication for the-intellectual missionary activities are also of importance in this connection. The New Left, as we now know it, was born in the United States in conjunction with similar events in Great Britain, whereby this interplay was largely due to the existing linguistic and cultural relations. However, the movement first received impetus and an abundance of convincing arguments in the United States. The general ideal that the United States represented to post-war Germany was enhanced by the general student and academic exchange and then projected influence from overseas into the Federal Republic.

There should be some discussion here of the reasons for the ready acceptance of North American social and critical behaviour models.

The New Left and its most important organisations, the SNCC and the SDS, were viewed in the United States as an autochthonus North American social movement. It was compared with the Populists of the eighties of the last century and with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW – Wobblies) at the turn of the century. They seemed to represent a new political beginning. Many of their social demands were, it is true, of importance only for the American political scene (the Negro problem), many were obsolete in comparison to the social progress made in the Federal Republic. However, the form of organisation, the striving for a new beginning, the refreshing way in which the demands were made and the new methods of demonstrating impressed the young intellectuals of the Federal Republic of Germany who were tired of bureaucracy and other young people with social-revolutionary ideals who wanted to enforce these ideals against tradition of every kind.

The problems raised by the New Left in the industrialised countries – the most important points here are the criticism of the university system as the key to criticism of society and the campaign against the Vietnam war – had repercussions inflamed by numerous international demonstrations in other European countries. France would be the first to be mentioned in this connection and then with less serious repercussions, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries.

10. The events in Czechoslovakia are a touchstone for the significance of the New Left.

Just as after the subjugation of the Hungarian rising in 1956, a wave of verbal indignation engulfed the world following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union. The voices of the New Left were strongly represented in this chorus, i. e. voices from the leftist-socialist and the revolutionary-Marxist camp. I almost have the impression that these voices were more numerous and received more attention now than was the case after the Hungarian rising.

This is firstly a confirmation that the New Left is firmly established in the public consciousness and that it is heard. In 1956, resignations from the Party and the establishment of new parties were rather gleefully registered as the formation of Communist sects. Now, the representatives of the New Left are supposed to give their opinions as experts, as _arbitri elegantiarum_, on what modern Communism should be like. Aside from the registration of their numerical strength, the tenor of their condemning statements merits attention. It is, if not always this briefly formulated, still in

its essential meaning: The action of the Soviet Union against the reform-Communism in Czechoslovakia is to be condemned, however, such a statement should not induce a generally hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union. Leaders in this direction are the Yugoslavs who have always been the New Left's favorite Communists.

This thesis of a rejection of anti-Sovietism finds expression in "no anti-Communism", "no return to the Cold War", etc.

An error concerning the evaluation of the consequences of the invasion of Czechoslovakia must be admitted here. One could be of the opinion that the Soviet Union would not risk an intervention in Czechoslovakia because this would spoil its chances of successful propaganda work in the world. The painfully constructed image of a peace-loving Soviet Union would be destroyed. It was to be assumed that criticism of the intervention and revulsion against a policy of force would also severely damage the policy of a people's front. However, this setback for the world-wide propagation of the Soviet Union's policy seems to be smaller than expected. During this development the New Left plays an important role on the political scene after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union. The blatant demonstration of power by the Soviet Union in connection with the attempts of a Communist regime to make the socialist order of society more attractive and effective helped the New Left to this new function.

Consequently, the discussion centers on the problem of reform Communism. The Soviet Union's avowals that it had acted against counter-revolution, that is against the attempt made to abolish Communism under the pretext of reforming it, must be proved to be untruthful. The New Left, therefore, announces everywhere that the national resistance movement against the Soviet Union's hegemony had been insignificant. It was the new spirit of socialism which the Soviet Union had suppressed.

This is certainly only half of the truth. However, the New Left prepares the field for the discussion of reform Communism with this half truth which, for reasons of tact and consideration for the persons concerned, nobody wants to refute by citing existing facts. It may be expected that in the near future everybody, friend or enemy of Communism, will discuss the possibility and even the necessity of a reform of Communism. This implies a raise in the value of Communism, for something which is in need of reform is perhaps also worthy of reform, i. e. not wrong in principle.

This position once having been taken, a careful but direct defence of the

Soviet Union and of Communism in the Soviet Union might be the next step. The German journalist Erich Kuby (”Ein Lehrgang in Hoffnung“, ”Süddeutsche Zeitung“ of September 7/8; 1968) offers a pertinent example. He ascribes the cautious behaviour of the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia to the unifying force of international Communism which overcomes all contradictions. Such an approach, of course, leaves no more room for the appreciation of a resistance on principle against every general policy of a rational salvation doctrine hostile to liberty.

In this way, the New Left does indeed function as an intellectual rearline and reserve for the activities of world revolutionary thought in the West. It will have to be observed which tendencies of the New Left in its criticism of society will prove to be especially tenacious and virulent in this process.

The New Left has already become far too strong for one to be still able to say: principiis obsta. However, the break in the course of daily politics — the invasion of Czechoslovakia — which illuminates the political scene like a flash and causes many representatives of the New Left to express their real fears and hopes, offers us the opportunity to say: cognosce principia.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOTIVES AND AIMS

OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT*

by
Dr. C. D. Kernig

1. The University and Universal Society

Student movements of recent years have been characterised by the multitude of motives and themes which have found expression in them, also by the fact that they have not taken place in any one particular region but in all parts of the world. Common to them all are the form of demonstration (sit-ins, go-ins, teach-ins) and the attempt, which has shown itself almost everywhere, to extend the demonstration to the streets and to the public at large. But there is no uniform authority — let alone a communist one — at the helm of these actions, for East European countries and a Moscow University were in fact likewise involved in such unrest. As for the variety of themes involved, at first sight the student movement would appear to be a manifestation of great confusion as much as of anything else. Italian students are seen to be demonstrating against German neo-Nazis, German students against American racists, American students against Greek dictators and all of them against the war in Vietnam, and on occasion for Marxism and against the Soviet Union. Problems of sex and ethics, as well as those of world politics, find expression and the questions of educational reform are often little more than a small red thread in an intricate tapestry depicting the image of a social reform. Whenever those forces which are classified politically as ”leftist“ are particularly noticeable in the student movement, what they then stand for is linked with classical Marxism only to a very limited degree. Intellectual appeal is made to such figure-heads as Mao Tse-tung, Che Guevara, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky and Marx, as well as Fromm, Marcuse, Riesmann, Fried, Bloch, Adorno, Unger, Barton and Bernstein; this only goes to confirm the first impression of great confusion. The effect of wearing Mao Tse-tung and Rosa Luxemburg badges on the same lapel is much the same as if Beethoven medals were for sale at a ’beat‘ festival. If we were still living in the age of Romanticism with its emphasis on the natural sciences,

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at the beginning of the last century, that is, at a time when representations of nature and society were part of one and the same picture — albeit a dubious one — then the great confusion would perhaps be more understandable. Today, in the age of computer techniques and programmed learning, it is more difficult to grasp.

But this brings us to the first revelation: student rebellion belongs to the domain of social scientists and students of the arts. Natural scientists take only a very occasional part in the proceedings. And in connection with this observation it is possible to detect a first pointer: in the whole history of the arts and social sciences there has possibly never ever been a greater internal confusion than there is today, and this is dictated by the actual existing state of affairs. Today we are living in an age in which, thanks to the speed of communications, one can gain knowledge of any event in the world, provided it is of some significance, no matter where one is located. Thus, for instance a social scientist is confronted with the fact that practically all forms of government that have ever been realized in history exist side by side in the world today, creating actual political and social problems. Whereas it was previously possible to contemplate for example the decline of one form of government and the rise of a new form — for instance, the change from a monarchy to a republic — nowadays, the pattern of behaviour in world political events involves the rules of tribal societies as well as of international organisations, monarchies, democracies, dictatorships, Soviet republics and totalitarian states.

The picture is much the same when we look at the patterns of economic behaviour which nowadays range from the most primitive to the most advanced. The same applies to methods of settlement, health schemes and educational systems as well as to social and ideological concepts and many other phenomena.

Admittedly, it is true that also in earlier times these things existed side by side in great variety; but what distinguishes our age is that despite their variety they become in like manner factors of world politics. The world society of tomorrow has already been realised as far as the techniques of transport and communication are concerned. I can get in touch with everyone and I can discover everything about everyone; my neighbour is no more a stranger to me than another who is at the farthest corner of the world. This unity of the future world society, as realised by telecommunications, is however in no way matched by an uniformity in political and social conditions. Rather it is these conditions which contribute towards the confusion of the probing mind. Given that a theoretician is scarcely in a position to formulate any uniform comprehensive

theory for the industrial society, or for a society in transition, it is quite impossible to elaborate a theory of world society as it exists today. The complexity of phenomena is so great that it does not appear to be possible when describing this complexity to reduce it to generally valid theoretical categories. This, therefore, leads to the idea that not the theoretical but the practical reduction of this complexity might be attempted, that is reform or revolution or progressive social change or whatever else one might like to call it; and to propagate this practical idea there is in turn the expedient of revolutionary theory, particularly in its Marxist form.

Since the unity of world society has already been realized in certain technical respects, and since it is conceivable in its totality, it is not surprising to find the idea that a universal reform of society could produce the complete unity of world society. This idea is not fostered by practising politicians, for they know what obstacles have to be surmounted on the road to this goal, and that it is unrealistic, either today or tomorrow, to speak of overcoming them. The idea itself belongs rather to the domain of those intellectuals who are basically prejudiced in their attitude to politics, in that they believe it is a form of human rationality which is still imperfect and due to be perfected. That these intellectuals should orientate their ideas of reform as well as attempt to test them by the model of the university institution is not a coincidence. The reasons for this are found primarily in the structure and history of the universities; secondly in the relation between teachers and students, and thirdly in the relation between the universities and society.

2. The Tradition and Structure of the Universities

The term "university" describes two complex totalities: firstly, the totality of subjects; and secondly, the totality of persons who are occupied with these subjects. The word itself stems from the Middle Ages when the universities came into existence and was applied to all the scientific institutes of higher education and academies in which the totality of disciplines, that is the "universitas literarum", was taught, disciplines comprising theology, jurisprudence, medicine and also the seven liberal arts. But the term "universitas" was used also to describe the community of "magistrorum et scholarum", that is the company of teachers and students, who joined together according to their place of origin to form "nationes". This is the source, for example, of the term "nation", which is used today to characterise people of a state. In the university the "nationes" — i. e. students and professors — elected their procurators and the assembly of

procurators in turn elected the rector. Then in the first half of the 13th century colleges of masters were formed which were called "ordines" or "facultates", and since the masters of certain subjects joined together, this resulted in the faculties as mentioned above (theology, jurisprudence, medicine and philosophy). These faculties became the institutions for conferring academic degrees. In this way the "nationes" were slowly suppressed by the "facultates" as far as administration was concerned. However, the "nationes" continued an existence of their own. With rules and regulations which they largely worked out for themselves they developed into Landsmannschaften or national fraternities and corporations, the forerunners of present-day student associations and fraternities. The university of Paris, with its division into "nationes" and "facultates" became the model for nearly all early European universities, for example Oxford, Cambridge, Prague, Heidelberg and many more. In nearly all these places less well-off students were often housed in colleges run by the church or in private hostels (in Paris for example in the Sorbonne); these institutions deserve mention here because they are the source of the later college and campus. A second wave of university foundations followed after the Reformation (for example in Marburg, Königsberg and Jena). As many universities were coming under the sovereignty of local princes, another development – that of grading professors – was taking place; this system of grading has survived in principle to this day, except for a few variations and a certain standardisation from the monetary point of view. Consequently we have "professores publici ordinarii", that is the professors in ordinary or those occupying a professor's chair; as a senate these professors elect the rector. They receive a set assured income. Beneath them come the "professores publici extraordinarii", assistant professors or readers who do not belong to the senate and who receive a lower income, and beneath them come the "privatim docenti", lecturers, who have no income other than the money paid by their students for attending the lectures. In the course of time the universities came more and more under state control. Curators were assigned to the universities as supervisors, and their supervision was not always limited to the financial side of the university. In the Anglo-Saxon countries this led to the separation of teaching and administration. In Germany the professors today still by law take part in the administration of the university along with a curator. This so-called self-administration of German universities often takes up more of the professors' time than their teaching – a curious state of affairs indeed. The result of the increasing direct or indirect association of the university with the state was a definite dichotomy in the "universitas". The community of teachers and students split up into colleges of professors on the one hand and into student-corporations on the other.

With the development of Burschenschaften or fraternities in the 17th and

18th centuries and with their coercive social code which was not always beneficial for their studies, it arrived at the point where the students considered their own social affairs to be the subject of their rules and regulations rather than the affairs of their university. Although a clear dichotomy became apparent, it did not yet at this time interfere with the universal concept of "universitas". After the European wars of liberation against Napoleon and the foundation of the German Burschenschaften or fraternities which followed subsequently in 1815, German universities became a stronghold of liberalism. The Carlsbad Decrees of 1819, numerous prosecutions against professors and the political supervision of universities led to considerable student unrest already in the years 1831 to 1833. A great scandal was caused in 1837 when seven professors at Göttingen were dismissed. This is the time at which most of the student associations were founded. Following the tradition of the "nationes", these were for the most part national associations (thus we have names like Saxonia, Franconia, Allemania, etc.). These student associations developed into social protection groups or clans for their members and in this role they could well be compared with the English system of clubs. Even between the two world wars their social influence was considerable and after 1945 their influence was felt in the attitudes of certain interest groups and in the recruitment of numerous elites, i. e. in the ruling classes.

The significance of the academic associations for the middle-class society of the 18th and 19th centuries must be seen in conjunction with the guild-system, the influence of which was admittedly reduced as a result of the industrial revolution, but whose rules and regulations were transferred to the academic guilds and to numerous chambers (e. g. chambers of commerce, chambers of doctors and apothecaries, and the like). Similarly, the formation of political parties must be seen against this same background. Thus for example the statutes of the Communist League of 1847, as composed by Engels, – and this still is the model for communist parties' statutes today as far as questions of party disciplines are concerned – were drawn up completely in the spirit of the corporation regulations prevailing at the time (cf. MEW, vol. 4, p. 596 ff.).

As the student associations became less significant with regard to internal affairs in the universities, their significance grew with relation to society as a whole. Whereas the "nationes" in their original form had still taken direct part in elections of procurators (Deans, also Heads of Department), the modern Landsmannschaften and corporations had no longer any such influence. But since their members supplied the ruling classes of society, those belonging to their ranks could more or less be regarded as the claimants to the leading positions in certain social circles in industry, diplomacy, law, banking, etc.. In the Anglo-Saxon countries this intermediary role has been undertaken by certain colleges

and particular academies, and in France by certain ecoles.

Given this tradition, the student body has taken an interest in social affairs both in the active and in the passive sense — in the sense of electing and being elected — and this has been an essential part of their academic development right through to the present day. Meanwhile, even British industrialists have noticed that for the efficiency of their management a knowledge of Horace, Sallust and Virgil and attendance at a particular college might be less important than training in economics and technology, and consequently the social interest in the academic associations loses its organisatory significance. Thus, just as guilds of handworkers lost their significance as a result of the industrial revolution, the system of academic guilds has lost its influence primarily as a result of the increasing significance of political parties. This helps us to understand how the political parties gained influence in the universities and how many young students and teachers became politically engaged. Given the increasing influence of technology not only in industry and on its growth, but also on administration and its practices, and on the system of education, the attainment of power and authority in the United States since the beginning of the 1950s and in Europe since the beginning of the 1960s has become increasingly more dependent on economic and technical criteria. In this respect natural scientists are immediately in a favourable position. Their academic qualifications are nowadays almost automatically identical with their social elitist qualifications. Taking account of the reluctance or refusal of natural scientists to take part in student rebellion and seeing it against this background, it is possible to conclude that students in the science faculties have, through their choice of discipline, also opted for the guild or protected order of the future. What they learn at university is identical with a universal need of society. Seen in this light, they have no reason to rebel.

As for the largest part of students in the social sciences and the arts, their position is different. For them the university of today is neither the "universitas" of yesterday nor the place in which they are being trained for something which will be of universal necessity tomorrow. Sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, linguists and historians made up the majority of rebelling and demonstrating students in Germany. The proportion of protestant theologians is likewise noticeable. The less decisive influence an academic discipline possesses for future social developments, the more its students cry for academic reforms. For students are anxious to graduate in courses of study which are not tarnished from the outset by obscurity and insignificance. Since their professors do not tell them that their subject as such is falling a prey to obsolescence, masses of students are still letting themselves be trained for something for which there is no mass need. Misguided courses of study — especially those with a mass follow-

ing — are a basic cause of student rebellion. Whilst the large industries with their numerous research institutes extend their feelers to the science faculties of the universities, in order to obtain from them an appropriate supply of young blood, no college, academy or corporation can wield so much prestige as to find influence among the elites of modern society on the strength of a knowledge of certain irregular verbs in Old High Church Slavonic or of details about the Arabic influence on the problems of the double use of "esse" in the High Middle Ages. Hence we find two lines of reform and rebellion, one is directed towards affairs within the university, the other towards affairs outside. The movement towards internal university affairs is of course particularly active in Germany because here the idea of the "universitas" in the sense of a community of teachers and students was more strongly cultivated than elsewhere. Here the students, although they are only partly informed about this tradition, wish to revive the "nationes" in the form of Fachschaften i. e. discipline orientated pressure groups with a view to having a say in the running of the universities; in this they imitate the contemporary proletarian form of guild, namely that of the trade unions. Since this reform movement is directed towards unmasking the courses of study for what they are, i. e. intellectual disciplines which have lost their significance in relation to social functions, the professors involved provide the most resistance to such reforms. Nobody likes to have his importance shown to be reduced and nobody likes to approve of reforms which would result in cutting down his salary. The fervour of student reform, which becomes paralysed within the university in face of the stability of the institution and in face of the authority of the professors, thus with a certain cogency turns to the public. Here the students try to set up another "universitas" again; as revolutionaries they are basically mourning for the old middle-class educated society which disappeared as a result of two world wars. With stacks of book-shelves in their home, displaying complete sets of collected works from Shakespeare to Thomas Mann, gentlemen in their eighties can sit by their fireside enthusing about their college-days and years at university.

Erich Fromm, one of the leading ideologists of the student Left, complains that the perfect communications-systems — developed as they are around the whole globe — do not offer a varied programme of the best and highest cultural achievements of the past but exude only shallow entertainment. Like many others he chooses to consider society as sick, rather than to realise that cheerful mediocrity is probably its healthiest sign. Adaptation to mediocrity as an expression of the needs of the masses is here felt to be loathsome. The readiness to reform the whole of society for the sake of a view and an attitude which is only partial has its roots here. At the same time adaptation of the few to the many is decried as a matter of coercion, whilst the adaptation of the many to the few — i. e. the revolutionaries — is exalted as liberation. At this point the

student reform movement comes into increasing conflict with the profound democratic tradition of our Western societies. But since this very democratic tradition is again claimed by the students as an argument against the authoritarian structure of the universities, it is as well now to take a closer look at the relation between students and professors.

3. The Relation between Teachers and Students

Teachers at universities have always enjoyed a high degree of authority, which stems both from their intellectual achievements and from their economic security. Unlike the earlier private tutor and the proverbially poor schoolmaster, the university teacher was never dependent on students or their parents. In antiquity he was used to drawing large congregations of students and in the Middle-Ages he could in addition often fall back on the support also of the monasteries. In the modern state university of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe the status of public officialdom or the condition of a life devoted completely to teaching gave rise to a social security for the teacher which had the effect of a social honour in return for intellectual originality. This admittedly led to many professorial whimsies. For, with the rise of socalled free-ranging research, their intellectual authority could be established also there where its significance could not be assessed by any social or economic standards.

The system of either straightforward or supplementary fees based on the number of students (Hörgelder) admittedly forced many teachers to give their teaching and research a certain purposive design. In this way the syllabuses could be influenced by individual assessments as to the usefulness of the curriculum. But this compulsion became less important the more the universities progressed towards the state system of paying fixed emoluments to nearly all their professors. Besides, most of those who provided state or private sources of finance for the universities regarded it to be taboo to restrict in any way the freedom of teaching in research. In Germany the universities' constitutions make it impossible for them to be steered by any outside interests. Since the introduction of obligatory education and the gradual acceptance of official examination rules as laid down by the state for university finals (e. g. for teachers, lawyers, medical students and pharmacists) a remarkable development has taken place with regard to educational requirements. An amalgam of views has appeared from professors, official state bodies and ministries and also, to a certain extent, from private industrial and commercial firms as to their own individual ideas of an ideal elite. The gradual consolidation of these amalgamated

ideas into social patterns of behaviour was bound in the course of time to strike the young generations – in an age of worldwide propagation of individual freedom and equality before the law – as an anachronistic and coercive system. In this way the authoritarian structure of the universities in the highly industrialised countries of Europe has come to find itself more and more out of joint with the ever deepening democratic tradition of society. This discrepancy has been brought to a head in several countries in recent years in the open conflict between students and professors or the socio-political views which they represent. In France the student unrest triggered off the national crisis in May 1968, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia is a direct effect of a reform movement in this country which was brought to life in the cultural field to a large extent by students in 1967.

In the Anglo-Saxon countries it would appear that the authoritarian structure of the universities was essentially mitigated by the fact that many teachers are in a position of competition (vacancies are advertised publicly, new appointments depend on evidence of recent publication, administration and teaching are separate) and that this competition, although on a higher level, is not unlike the competition between examination candidates. In the United States, where there is no medieval tradition on which the universities could model themselves as institutions, a relatively uncomplicated student teacher relation has developed. Their amicably deferencial etiquette has been imitated more and more, not only in many new universities in the underdeveloped countries, which are formed on the English-American pattern, but also in Europe itself.

Probably in them is to be found the form of teacher-student relationship which from the point of view of authority corresponds most to the contemporary social structure of highly industrialised countries. Apart from this, the social prestige of intellectuals in the United States is general and thus also the prestige of professors has risen in accordance with the development of the USA as a political world power and with the growing awareness of its technicological base. This, however, need not necessarily influence the conditions of authority in the universities. In the USA rising prestige cannot be translated into increasing administrative power so easily as in Germany. Not that this excludes a socially effective wealth of influence on the part of the professors. The fact that in the United States university education is assessed in professional life in values based on the duration and orientation of studies – and this applies even when projected final exams have not been taken – stands in contrast to European conditions where there is a certain tendency to regard discontinued studies as a sign of failure. Moreover, the European student is placed in the constrained position of having to extend his course of study both in time and in content right up to the full and final satisfaction of the examination condi-

tions; in Western and Eastern Europe this delicate situation was upset all the more as the freedom to learn was progressively restricted by intermediate examinations. Knowing that American students almost insist on their studies being directed in the utmost detail, one is saddened to find this same need prevalent in French and German universities, for example, where the long-established system of authority permits no personal guidance but only bureaucratic regulations. German universities, which in the 19th century were organised on the basis of purely personal relationships as far as guidance was concerned, have not kept up with social changes that have taken place since World War II. A small controlling body of professors, faced with the impossible situation of fulfilling all three of the classical duties — research, teaching and administration —, was joined by a large staff of assistants which was burdened with administrative functions and even produced new ones. These assistants found neither recognition from the professors as their chosen sucdessors nor respect from the students as mature mentors. Moreover, in order to retain the good will of the professors and to have regard for their own advancement, they were excluded from open actions of protest.

Many of the older students have claimed that the miserable plight of the. universities can be seen in a similar form and to a much wider extent in many other places and that it is in many respects a universal social phenomenon. Besides the conflict in the universities between the declared freedom of learning on the one hand and increasing bureaucratic regimentation on the other, between training facilities and sale value, they claim to observe various other conflicts:

a) within Western society a conflict between declared democratic liberties on the one hand and industrial-technical, economic, political-bureaucratic, and trade-union like pressures on the other hand; and

b) in the communist countries a conflict between declared socialism and socialism in practice; and

c) the universal conflict between the poor and the rich, the haves and the have-nots, especially in underdeveloped countries.

As a result of these observations it became natural to suppose a generally valid theory of conflict along the lines of the Marxist theory of class struggle, since it could apparently be applied to all regions and all stages of social development.

It seemed clear, from the basic viewpoint of social criticism, that the posi-

tions of class struggle were as obvious in the universities as in variously stratified situations of conflict throughout the world. All the above-mentioned types of conflict have found expression in the variously occasioned student revolts in Tokyo (1960), Saigon (1963), Berkeley (1964), Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Rome and Prague (1967/68), Warsaw, Belgrade and above all Paris (1968) and also at various times in Latin America and in Spain. The students taking part in the student movement have their own ideologically based interpretation of their movement, which on the whole is presented most cogently: they interpret the relation between teachers and students as a particular form of expression of a general situation of conflict characteristic of the whole world-situation. The level of their argumentation and verification is, however, very much tied to the views held by 19th-century social scientists and in this way they produce false positions. These false positions consist of old class-struggle formulae dressed up in a new and original language but without any of their antiquity in any way being changed. And yet it is these antiquated theories which are causing the crisis and revolution in such institutions as universities, parliament, parties, monopolies and the like, which, if not older, are at least as old as these arguments; it is as if two antiquaries were fighting each other.

In the very instances of leading social critics like Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, A. Fried, Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch, David Riesmann and others it is mostly overlooked that their critical acuity exhausts itself in specious innovations which are in fact derived from old arguments ranging from Marx and Engels to Freud. The language is new, but the conceptual system which they profess is not. The situation becomes utterly confounded by the fact that in the meantime a normal general education is no longer sufficient for an assessment of this absolete neo-criticism. It is rare enough for students to be able to do justice to the theories of their idols from a scientific-historical point of view or by means of methodical criticism. In addition the non-science students are nowadays rarely instructed any more in the disciplines of logic, epistemology and systematics, let alone in modern methodology. Thus the idols obtain their credibility more from the dignity of their office, from their public image and their worthyness than form the power of their arguments. In other words, their effect is an instance of that which the students are in fact campaigning against. The fronts are therefore completely criss-cross. In this connection it is worth noting that the traditional criteria of authority and leadership have been almost abolished, in the case of the universities, by two factors:

a) the multiplication of intellectual disciplines and
b) the differentiations which make it almost impossible to compare one of these disciplines with an other.

Whereas before it was only right to judge the authority of the university teacher by the range of his knowledge, the strength of his persuasive powers and the rank assigned to him as a scholar in the university society, today this is no longer possible. Nowadays hardly anyone is in a position to assess properly an authority in a subject other than his own. The scholars' claim to authority and leadership thus by necessity still rests to a large part on the tenure of certain offices. But this claim is put in question in very much the same way as happens with lesser qualified office-holders also in political, military and economic spheres or in other public spheres, especially with regard to the authority which is claimed to attach to their positions. If this should be not an exceptional phenomenon but rather an essential characteristic – i. e. an immutable and an alienable concomitant – of highgrade specialization in modern universities, analogous to modern industrial production and division of labour, this only goes to show that university reform must be seen within the context of the inevitable, democratic and egalitarian reformation of society as a whole. This view applies to the intellectual and professional opinion leaders of student opposition just as much as it is applied by them to all social concerns.

The relation between teachers and students cannot therefore be regarded as a socially and politically isolated pedagogic matter. Education has a social function, and the more society lives according to the rules of the division of labour, the more acceptable to society as a whole become real-cost calculations and the more designed become both research and teaching. The fact that the adaptation, which was in part forcefully brought about by the students, of the university system to the production conditions prevailing in modern society should have taken place precisely under the student and professional-intellectual protest against society's methods of adaptation shows on the one hand that the students can learn no more from their teachers than is available from the latter's conceptual systems but on the other hand explains why student rebellion is the domain of the non-scientist, i. e. of the student of politics, sociology and the art; the scientist conseives of nature only as it is and must test by experiment all his concepts. However, a large number of social scientists still hold that society should be as they conceive it; and they are quite happy to experiment with society until it has in fact reached this pitch. The universities will remain in a state of flux for as long as this basically ideologically determined position of scientific thought is overcome. The state of flux has long been in existence where the social sciences have been empirically, i. e. mathematically and statistically and thus scientifically orientated. Economists and sociologists working along these lines have therefore nothing to fear for the future of their professions.

4. The Relation between Universities and Social Change

The more that industrial and technical civilisation, with its specialised division of labour, impresses itself on life in general and on methods of working in particular in all inhabited parts of the world, the more the endowments which are transmitted from cultures outside Europe (for the most part from such traditional, religious institutions as Buddhist monasteries) become irrelevant for everyday life. The instructions for the shaping of future government and society proceed from universities of the European mould. This happens in two ways: directly – in the sense that the techniques and technologies developed here are passed on, together with the appropriate means required (i. e. in the form of development aid); indirectly – in the sense that abstract ideas are transmitted concerning these phenomena, which are of socio-political relevance in that they are to a large extent couched in terms of a Weltanschauung. The universities of industrialised countries – irrespective of whether they are of communist or Western nature – have thus reached a sphere of influence that is universal and universally effective. The students from underdeveloped countries who study at the universities of the highly industrialised countries, by adopting the criteria of thought and verification which they learn from Western science, imbibe not only the directives from the industrial and technical transformation of their native way of life but also the principles and programmes of social science and the rules of jurisprudence. These in fact amount to a revolution as far as home conditions of government and society are concerned. As long as their native countries are not prepared for this revolution (which can be due to all sorts of reasons), these students can find no appropriate field of acitivity when they return home from their studies. This situation in turn affects the universities involved in training these students, because they alone give thought to these problems. Only at the universities of the industrialised countries is access to be found to reflection on these problems in sociology, economics of education and politics. The models most accessible to this kind of reflection are, however, those which are associated with such social situations as failure, alienation and exploitation. Such are the theories pertaining to transformation of traditional social and govemmental forms. Such are the theories of revolution as elaborated in Europe, among which Marxism plays a special role.

With regard to the world at large, the universities are thus saddled with a socio-evolutionary, as well as socio-critical, responsibility. Other than in their place and at their time of origin, they have in fact never had such a historical role to play. The training of intellectuals for the underdeveloped countries must,

however, be judged as a socially stabilising factor, for whilst a newly-founded
state such as the Congolese Republic (population c. 14 million) with only
about 60 native graduates at its disposal could not attain a legal and peace-
able administration, other countries could do so thanks to a higher quota of
graduates. It is not possible yet today to assess the overall effect exercised by
the universities of the industrialised countries on the cultural changes in the
world, but it is clear that the universities of the Soviet and Western spheres of
influence have in this respect attained a range of influence which is greater and
wider than ever before. At the same time, however, they have become involved
in a process which is not yet fully comprehensible and in which they themselves
are subject to change. Admittedly, the structural identification of opposites like
poor and rich, exploited and exploiting, ruled and ruling, colonial and imperial,
and socialist and capitalist, finding expression alongside the demands for uni-
versity, educational and social reforms, has been considered by only a few as
the universal realisation of the "universitas" idea, of a world-wide community of
teachers and students, of those teaching and of those being taught. If one con-
siders how long the universities orientated their authoritarian structure in the
community of "magistrorum et scholarium" by a standard of value based on
knowledge, and how this orientation remained stable for centuries despite many
and varied social and political upheavals, it is understandable that there should
be a desire to hold up the idea of the "universitas" as the guiding principle for
a future society free of authoritarian rule. But if, on the other hand, one argues
that this guiding principle will only bring about a new version of anarchism, this
criticism does not affect the ideas of those social and university reformers whose
principles are rooted in the original constitution of the "universitas".

Nevertheless, the guiding principle of a universal society whose authoritarian
structure is determined by knowledge (i. e. differences in the knowledge of
individuals) is incompatible with the egalitarian democratic constitution of
Western countries. This guiding principle in fact implies that society should be
shaped according to a single criterion. It is most unlikely that any society would
permit such a reduction of the complexity of behaviour patterns, such a diminu-
tion in the wealth of a pluralistic endeavours, to retain only the one value of a
single regulator, even if this regulator should be called "knowledge", "reason"
or "science". The one and only society which claims in its ideology that it can
reach such a state of single-mindedness is the communist one. This may well
explain the attraction that Marxism holds for many Western intellectuals. They
keep hoping that the fragile uniformity of communist party-mindedness need
only be revalorised in order to establish the ideal society. The realities of Soviet
society and Soviet universities, however, give little support to this viewpoint. In-
deed, the traditional hierarchical structure of the educational institutes is
guarded more closely than in the West. With the party and the state still hold-

ing fast to the traditional criteria of authority and leadership, the restrictions
obstructing the necessary changes in the Soviet sphere will one day probably
lead to the transformation here being all the more abrupt and extensive, if
not revolutionary. This becomes more likely, the longer one persists in counter-
ing partial reforms, which could lead to a smooth transition, with the full force
of state opposition (as, for instance, in the case of the student unrest in Poland
in 1968).

Although the student movements at times aim far beyond their natural
capacity as far as decicions on these matters are concerned (one thinks here
of the Vietnam demonstrations in Europe), they nevertheless anticipate many
fruitful developments. At the same time they accept the global system of mass-
medium communications as an established and self-evident social reality which
is contradicted by political and moral realities in that they lag behind and are
rigid and intolerant by comparison. The modern student movements have a
politically stimulating effect in so far as they insist on changing social and politi-
cal conditions on a world scale, a scale on which it is already possible to think
and react in terms of technology and telecommunication. If within this frame
of action the barriers of misunderstanding and the ideological narrow-mindedness
of embattled positions can be overcome, this could well bring with it an opening
up of new ways of thinking in the social sciences with implications reaching far
beyond that which has led to their development from within the universities.

THE NEW INSPIRERS OF VIOLENCE

by
Brian Crozier

Why is there a "New Left"? A simple question calls for a simple answer: Because the "old" Left has largely ceased to appeal to those whose natural bent in politics is revolutionary, or because the messages of Marx, Lenin and even Mao Tse-tung are seen to have little relevance to western society as it now is, in the minds of those who criticise it and who turn to revolution only as a necessary evil. The philosophical advocates of violence within the New Left evidently fill a gap in that their works appeal to young men and women who are temperamentally of the Left, but who derive no stimulus from the appeal of earlier left-wing prophets.

And it is part of the problem that the older left-wing orthodoxies — among whom may be included the Trotskyists and the Anarchists, as well as the Marxist-Leninists — are aware of their own progressive failure to inspire the young; but are attempting, in some cases with success, to exploit, or gain control for their own ends, of the violent groups within the New Left. In this, they are of course helped by the fact that their experience is long and their organisation well established.

The problem is therefore more complex than the one that existed when the Cold War was in its infancy. It is no longer a question of concentrating all study and action upon a single, monolithic phenomenon. The New Left has many faces; and behind it hoping to cash in on its new-found glamour, is the old Left whose roots lie deeper in contemporary history.

The Message of Violence

If one's concern is with urban violence in the West, in its current phase, the most powerful influence of all is undoubtedly that of the late ERNEST "CHE" GUEVARA. The revolutionary sex-appeal of the young Argentine guerilla leader is incomparable; and the myth that surrounds his name, possibly invincible. All the ingredients are there; physical attractiveness, an agreeable personality, a medical degree (indicating a concern for suffering humanity), success in Cuba's guerrilla war, and not least, martyrdom in Bolivia. By whose hands is immaterial.

As Georges Sorel remarked two generations ago, the power of a political myth

bears no relation to its inherent credibility. The fact that "Che" Guevara's successes were won in small-scale tactical actions in highly favourable circumstances is overlooked; and so is the even more damaging fact that his attempted revolutionary war in Bolivia was a fiasco by any objective standards. The appeal of Guevara remains apparently undimmed.

But even if the subject of the myth were a less glamorous figure than Guevara, his message would still carry considerable revolutionary appeal, if only by virtue of its simplicity and optimism. The sceptical may point out that it is Utopian; but those in search of a hero will heed its romanticism. It may be summarised in the following selected quotations from his works and speeches: —

On The conditions for revolution. "It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them". ("Guerrilla Warfare", New York, 1961, p. 15). As has already been widely noted, this dictum is heretical from the standpoint of orthodox Marxism-Leninism, and even from that of Maoism. It is, however, an enormously attractive slogan for young people whose impulse is revolutionary, and who are impatient with the restrictions imposed on them in the name of discipline and correct analysis by orthodox Communist parties. To be fair to Guevara, he went on to write: "Where a government has come into power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted",

Justification of force. "When the forces of oppression come to maintain themselves in power against established law, peace is considered already broken". ("Guerrilla Warfare", p. 15). This concept was modified and sharpened (as were other ideas from "Guerrilla Warfare") in a speech by Guevara in Algiers in September, 1963, in the following passage: "The dictatorship always tries to maintain itself without showing too obviously that it is using force; to oblige it to unmask itself, to show itself in its true colours of a violent dictatorship of the reactionary classes, contributes to show the people their true nature and will deepen the struggle to the point where it will no longer be possible to pull back". (Translated from the French text, "Le Socialisme et L'Homme", Paris, 1968, p. 58).

One of the points that emerged from the recent student disturbances, especially in Paris in May 1968, was the students' argument that the authorities are using force to maintain themselves in power, and that all the students are doing is to defend themselves against that force. The importance of the paragraph just quoted is that it is an incitement to provocation of the authori-

ties. The course of behaviour it sanctions is clear: first, it provokes the authorities; this will oblige the authorities to use force; the revolutionaries may then use force on their own.

The role of the working class. "In underdeveloped America (Latin America) the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting". This quotation from page 15 of "Geerrilla Warfare" is complemented on the following page in these words: "(This) is a fundamental of strategy. It ought to be noted by those who maintain dogmatically that the struggle of the masses is centred in city movements, entirely forgetting the immense participation of the country people in the life of all the underdeveloped parts of America. Of course the struggles of the city masses of organised workers should not be underrated; but their real possibilities of engaging in armed struggle must be carefully analysed..."

This passage also is heretical by the standards of Marxism-Leninism, and even outdistances Mao Tse-tung in denying a special revolutionary role to the proletariat. It should be noted, however, that the second Havana Declaration, which Guevara quotes with approval on pp. 51 and 52 of "Le Socialisme et L'Homme", explained that the peasantry, by reason of its lack of culture, would have to accept the revolutionary and political leadership of the working class and of the revolutionary intellectuals. It is therefore possible to synthesise, from the works of Guevara, a message of singular appeal to student revolutionaries in the towns of the West, namely that is up to them to lead the revolution and that they are justified in provoking violence from the authorities.

On terrorism. Although Guevara does not use these terms, he distinguishes between disruptive and coercive terrorism, in the following passage from "Guerrilla Warfare", pp. 93—4: "We sincerely believe that terrorism is of negative value, that it by no means produces the desired effect, that it can turn a people against a revolutionary movement, and that it can bring a loss of lives to its agents out of proportion to what it produces. On the other hand, attempts to take the lives of particular persons are to be made, though only in very special circumstances; this tactic should be used where it will eliminate a leader of the oppression. What ought never to be done is to employ specially trained, heroic, self-sacrificing human beings in eliminating a little assassin whose death can provoke the destruction in reprisals of all the revolutionaries employed and even more". What Guevara is advocating in this instance is selective terrorism by the elimination of individuals. Although he does not specifically sanction the liquidation of "enemies of the people" as widely practised in South Vietnam, the passage quoted could be twisted to support that course.

Vietnam and American Imperialism. "Let us sum up in this way our aspira-

tions to victory: destruction of imperialism through the elimination of its strongest bastion — the imperialist domination of the United States of North America. To adopt as a tactical mission the gradual liberation of the peoples, one by one or in groups, by obliging the enemy to sustain a difficult struggle on a terrain that is not his own, by liquidating his subsistence bases which are his dependent territories". (Translated from French text of "To Create Two, Three, Numerous Vietnams", published in April 1967 as a special supplement to the Havana review, Tricontinental, p. 131, "Le Socialisme et L'Homme").

In an earlier passage in the same article, Guevara explained what he had in mind in these words: "America, the continent forgotten in the latest political struggles of liberation, which is beginning to make itself heard through the Tricontinental, through the voice of the vanguard of its people, which is the Cuban Revolution, will have a much more important task: that of creating the world's second or third Vietnam".

There is an obvious similarity between this Messianic call to action and the famous call by Marshal Lin Piao of China in September 1965, for the "countryside" of the world to encircle and overcome the "cities" of the world. But in the context that interests us today, the point is that in his 1967 article, Guevara provided a rallying cry for all aspiring revolutionaries who see the United States as the great imperialist enemy, and find in Vietnam a cause which they can passionately espouse.

REGIS DEBRAY shared with Guevara an admiration for the great leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro. Here too is a glamorous revolutionary figure, with the not inconsiderable assets of youth (he still is in his twenties), a fair intellect, revolutionary dedication, and the special advantage of martyrdom through a trial that became a cause celebre and an interminable prison sentence in Bolivia.

In his little work, "Revolution in the Revolution"? Debray went even further than Guevara in his revolutionary heresy. The key passages in his book occur in Part II, entitled "The Principal Lesson for the Present", in which he answers a series of questions concerning the Party, the guerrillas, and the relationship between them and the leader (pp. 95—116 in the English edition of 1967, or pp. 99—125 in the French edition of the same year). Debray's style lends itself less readily to succinct quotation than Guevara's, but the original points in his revolutionary message may be summarised as follows:

all peaceful tactics, such as the united front, are rejected, in favour of unlimited armed struggle;

the guerrillas are to be independent of the Communist Party, whose role is to be secondary until military victory has been achieved;

party members are urged to abandon the cities for the countryside;

the political and military leadership are to be vested in one man; until victory has been achieved politics must remain subservient to military considerations.

Although Debray, in common with Guevara, was writing as an advocate of peasant insurrections, his message holds enormous appeal to rebellious students in the towns, for he utterly rejects the discipline and political control of a party. Not only has he no time for Moscow's heavy orthodoxy, but he even rejects Mao's temporising call for a united front with non-Communist parties. For not only does he sanction violence, but he sees no possibility of an alternative course. And although he does not, of course, use the term "demagogue", he invites a charismatic figure to come forward and lead the revolution.

The rigid, disciplined, hierarchical – and, to this generation, profoundly tedious – discipline of the Party is therefore rejected in favour of unlimited power for one man. Debray's is a recipe for instant revolution, available to the first student who has the courage to pick up a stone and throw it at a police-man. Romanticism can go no further, and Utopia awaits those who adopt the course of violence.

With FRANTZ FANON Utopia is again within the grasp of those who take up arms in the cause of revolution, but the starkness of the message is even greater and his Utopia is reserved for the coloured peoples of the world, for the "colonised masses" or "natives". Fanon, too, basks in an aura of myth. He too, like Guevara, had the advantage of an early death – in his case of leukaemia at the early age of 37. He too was a doctor – a psychiatrist – and his additional symbolic distinction is that he was a black man, a French-speaking Negro from Martinique, who settled in Algeria and threw in his lot with the revolutionaries of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN).

His best-known and most influential book, Les Damnés de la Terre, is a powerful and disturbing work, a hymn of hate, which sees no hope for the oppressed except in the unbridled use of violence. His entire philosophy is con-tained in the following passages secleted from Les Damnés de la Terre:

"The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be

slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem."

"Everything up to and including the very nature of precapitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must here be thought out again. The serf is in essence different from the knight but a reference to divine right is necessary to legitimise this statutory difference. In the colonies, the foreigner coming from another country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines. In defiance of his successful transplantation, in spite of his appropriation, the settler still remains a foreigner. It is neither the fact of owning factories, nor estates, nor a bank balance which distinguishes the governing classes. The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, 'the others' ". (From the original English text published in France in 1963, pp. 32–3; another edition of the same translation has since appeared in Penguin Books under the title, "The Wretched of the Earth".)

"The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters". (p. 33).

"... for the colonised people this violence, because it constitutes their only worth, invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upwards in reaction to the settlers' violence in the beginning. The groups recognise each other and the future nation is already indivisible. The armed struggle mobi-lises the people; that is to say, it throws them in one way and in one direction". (p. 73).

"At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect". (p. 73).

"Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organised and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and give the key to them". (p. 117).

If one may summarise and paraphrase Fanon's message in a few simple sen-tences, what he is saying is this: "You are a coloured man. You are oppressed. Your oppressor is the white man. Kill him".

What happens <u>after</u> the white oppressor has been killed is nowhere specified. No message could be starker or more nihilistic. Thus Fanon is a Utopian, but he does not bother to delineate his Utopia.

The first edition of Fanon's <u>Les Damnes de la Terre</u> came with a preface by <u>Jean-Paul SARTRE</u>, who, in his later middle age, must be accounted one of the most powerful and pernicious influences within the New Left. The left-bank sage of Existentialism, once the most reliable of fellow-travellers, became disillusioned with Communism some years ago. Since then, he has moved considerably further to the left than meets with the approval of the increasingly conservative French Communist Party. Let us consider just two examples of Sartre in word and Sartre in deed.

In his preface to Fanon, Sartre achieves an astonishing harmony with the writer from Martinique, from the dark hysteria to the total vacuum of intellect. Here are some brief quotations:

"In order to triumph, the nationalist revolution must be socialist; if its career is cut short, if the native bourgeoisie takes over power, the new State, in spite of its formal sovereignty, remains in the hands of the imperialists".

"Our worthiest souls contain racial prejudice".

"They would do well to read Fanon; for he shows clearly that this irrepressible violence is neither sound and fury, nor the resurrection of savage instincts, nor even the effect of resentment. It is man re-creating himself".

"The child of violence, at every moment he draws from it his humanity. We were mean at his expense, he makes himself man at ours: a different man, of higher quality".

And now, an insight into Sartre's motivation – an almost pathological guilt complex, which, finding western society collectively guilty of the "crimes" described by Fanon, sanctions the destruction of society in the name of expiation. "This book had not the slightest need of a preface", he writes, "all the less because it is not addressed to us. Yet I have written one, in order to bring the argument to its conclusion; for we in Europe too are being decolonised: that is to say that the settler which is in every one of us is being savagely rooted out... You know well enough that we are exploiters. You know too that we have laid hands on first the gold and metals, then the petroleum of the 'new continents', and that we have brought them back to the old countries... Formerly our continent was buoyed up by other means: the Parthenon, Chartres,

the Rights of Man, or the swastika. Now we know what these are worth, and the only chance of our being saved from shipwreck is the very Christian sentiment of guilt. You can see it's the end. Europe is springing leaks everywhere".

Sartre goes on to castigate the "liberals, and the toughs of the tender Left", and to accuse them of trying to stave off the day of reckoning by putting "at the head of our affairs a Grand Magician whose business it is to keep us all in the dark at all costs".

Since Jean-Paul Sartre sanctions violence with the end of "revolutionary socialism" in view, since he considers western society rotten to the core and regards de Gaulle as a man placed where he is to keep French society in the dark about its own true character, it was scarcely surprising to find him on the side of the students behind the barricades in May. No one, of course actually reported seeing Sartre dropping paving stones on the heads of attacking CRS from fifth-storey windows. His deeds were, in fact, words, most notably in the example of the interview he gave to <u>Le Nouvel Observateur</u> on June 19, 1968, in which he:

> Approved of the violence of the students as "counter-violence" against the repression of society;

> argued that in the last analysis any attempt at a right-wing military takeover would be defeated if the workers simply stayed at home, since paratroopers cannot run factories;

> attacked Raymond Aron for declaring that students must defer to their professors, and challenged him to submit to cross-examination by the students.

Since Raymond Aron has dissected and described industrial society with his usual dispassionate clarity, this may be the right context in which to mention a rival philosopher whose name was much bandied about in recent student disturbances in various countries – Professor <u>HERBERT MARCUSE</u>.

To be sure, very few of the rioting students, in France or elsewhere, had ever read Marcuse – a fact that emerged in some of the bewildered statements the students made. But indirectly, his influence seems to have been insidious and potent, in the sence that the youthful revolutionaries, on being told of Marcuse's views of industrial society, found in them a mirror image of their own; to the extent that <u>Le Nouvel Observateur</u> put a likeness of the aged German-American philosopher on its cover on May 8 and described him as "l'idole des étudiants rebelles".

Unlike Fanon and Guevara, no one could describe Marcuse as simplistic. Indeed, it is hardly possible to summarise the philosophy of this obscure, prolix and turgid writer in a few choice quotations. Nor should one do him the injustice of failing to recognise that Marcuse's analysis of the shortcomings of industrial society (in the Soviet Union as well as in the West) is often acute and even profound. Moreover, his teaching falls short of actually advocating violence. This, however, is only a negative blessing, for he refers to violence in terms that make it seem respectable. He talks of the natural right of oppressed people to use violence, since "by doing so, they do not start a new chain of violence, but try to break an established one".

As the Greeks discovered, the obscurity of the oracle greatly increases its efficacy, since a statement that may be interpreted in various ways is less likely to disappoint than one that is unambiguously clear. Long passages of Marcuse's most influential book, One-Dimensional Man, are virtually incomprehensible; or, where intelligible, open to diverse interpretations. An exegesis of Marcuse's work, per se, is, however, perhaps less important than the interpretation of it made by the New Left, including the rebellious students.

Rightly or wrongly, within these circles the message attributed to Marcuse is of the alienation of man from his surroundings in the industrial society. Marcuse is held to argue that technology has made it possible for man to pacify existence, that is, to abolish war, cruelty, ugliness and oppression. In fact, however, the argument runs, man continues to be oppressed by those who control technology, who buy his acquiescence by continually raising his standard of living. The remedies proposed by Marcuse are of paralysing obscurity, and this fact is as important in assessing his influence as his criticism of society.

Marcuse, indeed, offers no hope, except for an imperfectly formulated vision of an ideal world in which the evils he deplores have been removed, by means left unstated. It is easy to imagine the effect of such a negative message on naturally receptive minds. And the minds of the restless students are naturally receptive: rightly or wrongly, they do feel themselves alienated from a society that has drawn them into an overcrowded educational system, to follow courses the purpose of which they question since their studies do not guarantee them an occupation that accords with their own estimate of their abilities and aspirations. Moreover, Marcuse assigns to students an elite role in promoting revolution. Hence the idolatry with which the students view his teaching.

Marcuse, in fact neatly complements Guevara, Debray and Sartre, and their collective message may be synthesised along these lines: "Society is oppressive,

since the needs of industry – including planned waste and armaments ("the warfare state") – are irrelevant to those of the individual. Society must therefore be overthrown, to be replaced by revolutionary – i. e. non-bureaucratic – socialism. Force must be used, since society imposes its norms by force".

The new brotherhood of violence

This lurid but not, perhaps, excessively fanciful, label describes the individuals and groups that practise political violence and acknowledge the inspiration of Guevara, Fanon, Debray, Sartre and Marcuse. One might add Trotsky, Bakunin, Mao Tse-tung and Vo Nguyen Giap to this short list of inspirers of violence; and if one does, then perhaps an acceptable label for the phenomenon would be "post-Leninist violence" (though Bakunin, of course, spoils the chronology).

Some of the names mentioned are of practitioners as well as theorists of violence. And if one is concerned with practice as well as theory, still within the concept of a "brotherhood of violence", one ought to include such names as Stokely Carmichael, Houari Boumedienne, Fidel Castro, Tariq Ali, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Rudi Dutschke, Karl Dietrich Wolff and many others whose inclusion would turn this list into a sterile catalogue.

That there is a certain underlying unity between these apparently disparate names, and that the link between them is the belief in, or practice of, violence, cannot be doubted. It is not by coincidence, for instance, that Stokely Carmichael, the American Negro advocate of "Black Power", in the course of his travels last year, visited North Vietnam, Algeria and Havana. On arriving in Algeria, he was waving a copy of Fanon's Les Damnés de la Terre and declaring that it was Fanon who had taught him about Algeria and its revolutionary struggle. In Havana, where he attended the Tricontinental Solidarity Conference, he threatened urban guerrilla warfare from coast to coast in the United States.

Fanon thus serves as a link between revolutionary Cuba and revolutionary Algeria, between Black Power and the Fidelista guerrillas in Latin America, and, therefore, between the students who are inspired by "Che" Guevara and the racialists of Black Power. Other links are Sartre, the teacher with the guilt complex who sees the students as his equals; and Debray, the overgrown student gaoled for associating with "real" revolutionaries. Objectively, the connection between Marcuse and Fanon-Guevara-Debray may seem tenuous; but not to those who shout their names on the campuses.

The message of the "new inspirers of violence" turns up, in one form or

another, in the posters, pamphlets, speeches, resolutions or news-sheets of revolutionary left-wing groups, whether of students or adults, in various western countries. The international New Left, which these groups collectively constitute, lacks either coherence or unity, except in destructiveness; nor is there any firm evidence of an established co-ordinating organisation, except for ad hoc purposes in connection with specific protest demonstrations.

The speed of modern communications, however, and the fact that the militant student leaders — the Cohn-Bendits, Tariq Alis, Rudi Dutschkes and Tom Haydens — travel and make inflammatory pronouncements in each other's countries, have built up an incipient if fragile unity of purpose. The existence of such powerful causes as Vietnam and the revulsion against paternalism in the universities, which transcend national boundaries, is a further factor in unifying scattered and fragmented groups.

One point is clear: inchoate and fragmented though it is, the New Left, drawing its inspiration from the prophets of violence, has become a major threat to civilised life in advanced industrial societies.

To prescribe remedies would be excessively ambitious within a necessarily limited study. But some remarks may be relevant.

Some suggestions

One observation concerns police action. Since provocation is an essential tactic of the violent minority in student and other demonstrations, restraint would seem a more intelligent response than brutality. Excessively strong repressive measures play into the hands of the violent minority, since they make martyrs of the ringleaders and involve the moderates on the side of the extremists by stimulating indignation among the former. This observation seems to be borne out by the course of recent disorders in Paris, West Berlin, New York (Columbia University) and Chicago, in contrast with that of demonstrations in London, which, though they involved violence, were kept within bounds.

There is nothing to be gained by minimising or dismissing student grievances where they exist, or by pretending that western society is without blemish. It may be relevant, however, to point out — for instance to moderate left-wingers who hesitate to join the extremists — the essential emptiness of the new inspirers of violence. If there is one thing they all have in common, apart from the sanctioning — explicit or implicit — of violence, it is the absolute absence of any constructive proposals to remedy esisting shortcomings. This is a defect that is shared by Marcuse and Fanon, by Guevara, Debray and Sartre.

Nor do the performance of regimes that might be termed "New Left" — such as those of Cuba and Algeria — shine as models for idealists. In both, standards of economic performance and ordinary justice are low. Moreover, though both denounce "imperialism" and "neo-colonialism", the former depends on the Soviet Union and the latter on France, the ex-colonial power, for economic and technical support.

It is quite possibly hopeless to try to demolish the myth of "Che" Guevara, which is already firmly anchored and which has been energetically exploited by the Cuban intelligence service. The "drop of water principle" should not, however, be despised. Objectively, Guevara was a small-time guerrilla commander whose successes were confined to Cuba, a special case in which the revolutionaries achieved a walkover victory against a brutal and corrupt dictatorship. When "Che" attempted to export revolution to Bolivia, he failed miserably, and fewer then a hundred followers gathered under his leadership. The irrelevance of Guevara's and Debray's theories to the real needs of peasant populations, and a fortiori, to those of modern urban societies, is indeed patent. Nor does Fanon offer anything except an incitement to coloured racialists.

Not all violence against established authority need, however, be condemned. Where a regime is oppressive and denies outlets for dissident opinion — as under dictatorships of the Right or Left — violence on the part of the oppressed may be morally defensible; as it was widely held to be in the European Resistance movements during the Second World War. But two points may be made:

1. Under democratic parliamentary systems, outlets for dissident opinion and even action — however imperfect — do exist. Violence is therefore unnecessary. If successful, it would merely substitute the tyranny of a minority for the alleged tyranny of the majority.

2. A clear distinction must always be made between disruptive and coercive violence. Intimidation of moderates, aimed at forcing them to toe a line determined by extremists, is always reprehensible. Such intimidation may take relatively mild forms, among students, or may involve torture and murder, as in Algeria or South Vietnam. Whatever the degree of intimidation, it should never be condoned.

Lastly any dispassionate observer is bound to be struck by the totalitarian tendency of the new brotherhood of violence. In an interview in May, Daniel Cohn-Bendit said: "We claim freedom of expression within the faculty, but we deny it to supporters of the Americans".

This may fall short of totalitarianism, but it is a form of selective tolerance (sanctioned by Marcuse) that points in a totalitarian direction. Essentially, the advocates of violence aim to enforce conformity and obedience on those who disagree with their methods or their critique of society; if necessary by terrorism or provocation. This is surely a thought to ponder.

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE RADICAL STUDENT MOVEMENT

AND RELATIONS WITH COMMUNISM

by
C. C. van den Heuvel

1. International aspects

The Radical Student Movement is an international phenomenon. It aims at international solidarity and internationalisation of its revolution.

It contains elements of world movements such as: anarchism, syndicalism, communism, socialism and pacifism.

It deals with world problems such as: war, peace, revolution, imperialism, capitalism, colonialism, racial segregation, liberation movements, poverty, education.

It deals with problems which exist everywhere in the world: conflict between the generations, discontent with the existing order.

It is convinced of the inadequacy of world systems like capitalism and communism.

It unites students from many countries who want to take an active part in the radical change of the existing social order.

The question whether the Radical Student Movement is an international organisation is more difficult to answer. Many people believe that there is an internationally organised conspiracy behind this student revolt. They believe that there must be some mastermind in the background, in charge of a co-ordinating body directing all radical activities in the different countries.

It cannot be denied that it appears at times that this is the case, as in various countries radical students are united by similar ideas and issues, protesting about the same matters, and acting and reacting in similar ways, and by the same means.

Although there is no proof that such an international coordinating body exists, various signs of cooperation can be observed.

In the first place, international contacts have been developed between groups in various countries. The leaders of such groups increasingly meet each other, exchanging views, discussing strategy and tactics, and planning combined action. This combined action usually takes the form of support of each other's activities.

Student groups from a number of countries were present in Paris during the student revolt in May 1968. They supported the revolution, not only morally, but were also involved in the riots against the police. German support was particularly noticeable. A group called the "SDS-Paris" was formed to maintain contact between the SDS in Germany and certain French groups.

Representatives of radical student groups from France, Britain and Italy support SDS action in Berlin.

Representatives of foreign radical student groups participate in demonstrations in London supporting Radical Student Alliance action.

American students, travelling in Europe, visit their radical friends in Germany, France and Britain.

It seems likely that these ever-increasing contacts will lead towards a more organised cooperation, particularly as far as syndicalist movements are concerned.

The first "Congress of European Syndicalist Students" was held in Brussels in March 1967. Several student organisations were represented: UNEF (Union Nationale des Etudiants de France); RSA (Radical Student Alliance) from Britain; ASTA (Allgemeiner Studenten Ausschuß) from Berlin; and Belgian, Swiss, Dutch, Irish, Spanish and Portuguese syndicalist student movements. It was decided to establish and develop student syndicalism in Europe, to transform national student unions into real syndicalist organisations, and that continuous efforts be made to coordinate their organised actions with syndicalist activity by the workers.

At a second congress in Berlin held some time later it was decided to continue this policy and to establish a coordinating secretariat in Amsterdam, directed by a leader of the Dutch Syndicalist Student Movement (SVB) Maarten Abeln. Although this secretariat has so far not been very active, it is a sign of growing international cooperation.

A second example of growing international cooperation is the establishment of the "Internationales Nachrichten- und Forschungsinstitut – INFI" (International Information and Research Institute). This institute was founded in Berlin immediately after the Vietnam conference, which was held in February 1968. This idea was put forward by Dutschke who suggested during this conference that a documentation-centre be created with the special task of investigating in a revolutionary scientific manner the abuse of science for war and oppressive purposes in the present phase of capitalism. The SDS functionaries who founded this centre described it as an effort to overcome the provincialism of various socialist groups so as to secure international cooperation in certain projects, as for instance, action against NATO. A council directs the activities of this institute, of which most members are SDS supporters. A number of working-committees have been established; one of these, dealing with Vietnam, investigates the possibilities for sabotage against the production of material for chemical- and bacteriological warfare. In SDS circles the activities of the institute up to the present time are criticised as being inadequate. They criticise the incapacity of the institute to help their French comrades when this was necessary, to organise the foreign workers and students from the Third World working in Berlin, and to realise cooperation with revolutionary student organisations.

While the prospects for development of Student Radicalism as an international movement seem to be favourable, yet the movement suffers from certain disadvantages.

The prospects look promising insofar as student radicalism is a phenomenon which exists in all Western countries. There is a growing critical attitude among the younger generations towards the existing order, coupled with a growing sense of international solidartity. Common issues and tactics are increasingly uniting students from all these countries. They tend more and more to visit each other, to exchange views and documents, and to learn about each other's ideas and activities through radio, television and the press. This is indicative of a grwoing desire for international cooperation.

However, there are also less encouraging signs. While it cannot be denied that something in the nature of a common ideology is developing so far, it lacks coherence and a solid foundation and is vague in its expression. It is determined more by feeling than by reason, and it does not seem to have the power of attracting and binding people for any length of time. It is too negative; it is opposed to too many things, and does not offer positive and constructive solutions.

Another weakness (and this applies to all student movements) is that most radical students after some time make their exit as students and gradually come to conform to the "Establishment" which they once condemned.

The role of vanguard of a revolutionary movement implies the capacity to inspire other groups. Recent events have shown that workers are not easily inspired by students, and not seeking to be led by them.

A further reason that may inhibit further development on an international scale is that some existing political parties are not unfavourably disposed towards certain elements and issues of student radicalism. They will adopt the line that much of what the students want is also what their party wants. Some parties will certainly be successful in their efforts to recruit radical students. The more successful they are, the less the chance there will be for an international radical student movement to develop.

2. Relations with Communism

Many people not only believe that the Radical Student Movement is an international conspiracy, but that it is also an international communist conspiracy. There is no evidence of this. Communism neither invented the Radical Student Movement, nor contributed very much to the emergence of this form of radicalism. In every country student radicalism started as an independent movement. There are, however, relations between radical student groups and communist organisations, in some countries more than in others. In none of those countries are the communists directing radical student movements. They have tried to exploit action by radical students for their own purposes, sometimes successfully, but more often not.

The two movements however, have something in common; they have certain common views and sentiments, common issues and actions. Communism opposes against the capitalist order, and aims at replacing it by a different order through revolutionary means. Thus communism is for action against the capitalist establishment. Communists and radical students profess a common rejection of capitalism and its institutions.

The more the Radical Student Movement develops, the more it reveals contradictions with communism.

Basically communism must be against any student radicalism which declares that the communist parties have failed, that the worker's class is no longer revolutionary and that the younger generation, particularly the students, should take over the role of vanguard of the masses.

In practice the communist attitude towards student radicalism is ambivalent. On the one hand they realise the dangers of a movement with anarchistic elements, dangerous for ideology, organisation and discipline. On the other hand they realize the existence of certain advantages; if this movement can be controlled it will form a powerful ally.

The Radical Student Movement is not only favourably inclined towards the communist rejection of the capitalist order, but also to the idea of a "united front" with the communists on various issues.

It rejects, however, a stern, systematic, dogmetic ideology, and also the organisational framework and discipline of communism.

It regards communism no longer as a revolutionary movement, but as a conservative system, particularly in the countries where they are in power. But also in the countries in which they are striving for power communism is regarded as being unable to act as the driving force in a revolutionary movement. It has become too bourgeois to play a leading role in a revolutionary situation. It is not radical enough; in their means and tactics the communists have become reformists and conservatives. The working class, its main ally, has identified itself with the establishment and is no longer interested in revolution.

Both Soviet communism and Chinese communism look at Student Radicalism with sympathy insofar as it opposes the capitalist order. The Chinese go even further in their propaganda support, as they do not share the "revisionist" communist parties' attitude or favour their grip on the radical student groups. They usually condemn not only the governments in the countries concerned but the communist parties as well. Therefore they do not share to the same extent the Russian objection to independent and anarchistic student action.

In regard to the revolution in France, the Chinese expressed their delight with the struggle of the students and workers. They violently condemned the French Government and the French communist party, and took the opportunity to reproach the Soviet press for giving wrong information about the student revolt, for affording insufficient support to the strikes of the workers.

Radical students are inclined to regard Chinese communism as being of a

higher quality than Soviet communism. The latter has become conservative, whereas Chinese communism is still revolutionary. Mao Tse-tung is one of their great heroes and the Chinese example is inspiring. Many of them even go so far in their sympathy with the latter to compare the cultural revolution in China with their own revolution.

Having considered how communism and Student Radicalism in general regard each other, the question remains: how does the situation differ in the various countries concerned. Two examples may be mentioned here: the situation in the United States of America, and in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Communism contributed little to the development of Student Radicalism in the United States of America; on the contrary it would seem that the communists were taken by surprise by the rapid growth of this movement in the middle sixties.

At the beginning, the SDS declared that as democrats they were basically in opposition to the communist system, which they regarded as being undemocratic in internal structure and in its mode of action.

Gradually they became less outspoken in their condemnation of communism and more inclined to regard with a more friendly eye certain communist ideas and issues.

They now openly declare that their organisation is an open organisation, which also welcomes communists and admit that there are actually communists in their ranks.

SDS maintains relations with the communist party, with the WEB Du Bois Clubs (a communist controlled youth organisation) and with Trotskyite and pro-Chinese groups and their youth affiliates.

J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI, has declared on several occasions that the SDS receives support from the communist party and in turn serves communist issues, and further that communists and members of subversive organisations are active in SDS.

In spite of relations of SDS with communism, this movement takes pains to proclaim itself as being independent, as it could do harm to its public image if it were categorised as a communist controlled organisation.

As in the United States of America, it is not difficult to indicate the state of

relations between the SDS and communism in Germany. SDS favours a system which contains elements of the doctrines of Marx and Lenin. SDS and communism have various issues in common and undertake common actions (against the Vietnam War, the Emergency Legislation, Springer concern etc.).

Up to the present time, the efforts of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) to direct the activities of the SDS, have been unsuccessful. Leading communists are afraid that the more radical SDS becomes, the more people will be inclined to turn away from communism. They also fear that their efforts to make the KPD legal again will be frustrated. They consider that there is too much anarchism in the SDS. They are also sceptical about this organisation's capacity to attract and to inspire the working class.

The SED-Berlin had hoped that student radicalism in West-Berlin would provide them with opportunities for combined action with non-communist groups. They issued many solidarity statements, hoping to be able to break out of their isolated position. On the other hand they fear that student radicalism could push them into the background. Therefore they consider that it is their task to assist the radical students in all possible ways, to establish as many contacts as possible and to try to guide their activities. In spite of all their efforts, the SED-Berlin has so far not been able to exert a deciding influence on the radical student groups.

In their combined actions, radical student movements often support communist issues. The NATO issue seems to be becoming increasingly important. Syndicalist student organisations from various West-European countries are getting more and more interested in combined action against NATO. (occupation and blocade of NATO bases, as well action within the NATO Armed Forces.)

The tendency of increasing contradictions between communism and Student Radicalism was evident at the Communist World Youth Festival in Sofia in the summer of this year. Radical students, most from Western Countries, and led by the German SDS, organised resistance against the Festival authorities. They issued statements, organised demonstrations and teach-ins. They opposed in particular the Festival's rigid structure, its constant manipulation and the lack of genuine discussion. They caused the festival committee and the Bulgarians a great deal of trouble. They were sharply criticised by the Bulgarian press and the authorities used the secret police to repress their action. It came to serious incidents, and as a result the organised resistance increased, including Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs.

In spite of these incidents in Sofia the communists continued to believe that they could use radical student action for their own purposes. On one occasion

they provided the facilities for an unofficial teach-in of the radical students, as during this meeting action against NATO would be discussed.

Although it is likely that the discrepancies between communism and Student Radicalism will increase, many common issues remain, and, as a result there will be common actions. It is therefore essential that there be a constant and careful watch on the relations between the two movements. However, merely to keep watch on this phenomenon would be an inadequate response to the challenge of student radicalism. Much more is needed, and above all to reduce student radicalism to more normal democratic proportions.

CONCLUSIONS

by
Dr. N. von Grote

1. The New Left constitutes a problem presenting many facets; it has no clear ideology and is composed of heterogeneous groups. But in its actions an emotional, "atmospheric" relationship is found to exist from time to time between these various groups. The discussions have proved that, despite all ideological differences, the New Left objective is to overthrow the present order, but has nothing to offer but utopia for the future. The New Left therefore has no alternative but to continue its spectacular activity in order to attract followers.

2. The New Left has a complicating effect on the East-West confrontation and on the dialogue between the two, as, on the one hand, it may give rise to confusion in the Eastern camp, and on the other hand it may be a potential reserve for polycentrist communism in its competitive policy of subversion. The utopian character of the future that the New Left is envisaging may lead their disappointed followers to turn to communism, as the established order of communism seems to many, after all, to offer the achievement, if only step by step, of certain aims.

3. At the present time the New Left has not yet acquired any potency as an autonomous factor, but if and when it emerges from its frustration it could begin to resort to violence (following in this respect Che Guevara, Regis Debray, etc.), it could then well become a danger, and plunge both State and Society by surprise action into a serious crisis.

4. In view of these considerations, it is necessary to give support to the nation and to society as a whole in their confrontation and dialogue with the New Left, and to prepare them to deal with a serious crisis.

5. The State and Society, and in particular the intelligentsia, must be encouraged to undertake necessary reforms of the existing order. Democracy must always be open to reform. It would be dangerous if the intelligentsia of the younger generation were to attempt to close the road towards reform, by following the path of violence.

6. Today the New Left is still applying individual terror, but it is known from experience what would happen is terror were organised on a world-wide basis.

7. Developments should not be allowed to continue by default. Society should be encouraged to build up authority, and to create effective examples.

8. A large proportion of youth of today is not yet ready to enter mature society. The generation that is now growing up must be better prepared for its role in society. This is not only a pedagogical, but also a political problem. The minority now in opposition must be given every opportunity to make itself useful for society. Youth must be shown that they are necessary. However unsympathetic some of their representatives may be, the creation of martyrs should be avoided. However, it would be a mistake to allow fear of this to weaken the legitimate exercise of authority when needed.

9. The New Left remains a problem, also in regard to the confrontation with communism, as, despite its split into varous groups, communism maintains the principle of overthrowing by whatever means that may be available, the social and economic order in the non-communist world.

10. An effort should be made to try to ascertain not only what the New Left is in opposition against, but also what are the social improvements that are aimed at by those representatives of the New Left who are prepared to engage in a peaceful dialogue. In many respects the protest could meet with approval; not however, the attempt at a negation of all current values, nor the adoptions of methods of violence. If a peaceful dialogue is declined, and the Left decides to proceed to violence, the basic causes of such behaviour should be determined, and society should act accordingly.