

LAW AND VIOLENCE

THE QUESTION OF SOCIALIST HUMANISM
had been raised, in the postwar years, by Merleau-Ponty who remarked,

In the Soviet Union violence and deception are official and humanism is in daily life; in western democracies the principles are humane but deception and violence are found in practice (1).

According to socialist humanism, there is no choice between violence and nonviolence, but only two kinds of violences —*capitalist* violence and *socialist* violence. According to humanistic socialism, the violent means reduces to nothing the humanistic content of socialism.

1

THE HUMANISTIC CONTENT OF SOCIALISM
emerges in Marx's earlier works (2), (3), (4), (5). In these writings, young Marx was strangely influenced by Kant. This resemblance is striking in Marx's statements,

man can only achieve real perfection and happiness when he associates his own happiness and perfection with those of others ... (for) human self-realization can only be attained completely and generally if people treat one another *as ends in themselves*. (6).

Nevertheless, there is a great difference between the naturalistic-anthropological view of Marx and the ethical-axiological view of Keant. In

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- (1) Quoted in ⁸HERBERT MARCUS: *Socialist Humanism?*
 - (2) KARL MARX: *Deutsch-franzosische Jahrbucher.*
 - (3) KARL MARX: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts.*
 - (4) KARL MARX: *Critique on the Gotha Program.*
 - (5) KARL MARX: *German Ideology.*
 - (6) Quoted in MAREK FRITZHAND: *Marx's Ideal of Man.*

Marxian conception the humanistic content of socialism emerges not as a moral goal or ethical justification but rather as an economic need and a historical product (7) (8).

2

Herbert Marcus, a distinguished research fellow in Russian studies, admits that,

not only the political but also the technical apparatus and production became systems of domination into which the labouring classes are incorporated (9).

Nevertheless, he sees 'the historical idea of humanism today' in

a fundamental change in the direction of technical progress and a total reconstruction of the technical apparatus (10).

Would the illustrious scholar ask the feeling of a worker today, the answer should be, probably, the following, «Dear professor, to me it does not make any difference whether I am exploited by one of many capitalist bosses or a *unique* boss, the Omnipotent State.»

Marx could not foresee that the division of labour imposed by modern technocracy would turn the worker into a commodity not only in the capitalistic system based on private property but also in the state-capitalism absorbing private property.

It we cannot find any satisfactory solution for the intellectual crisis in socialist humanism today within the narrow frame of contemporary culture, we attempt to find answer in atemporal moral values.

3

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM ARE THE

two world-transforming forces of our Twentieth century, said Julius Moor, former professor at the Pazmany Peter (today Eotvos Lorand) University of Budapest, and he had the intellectual courage to publish his essay in 1947, during the Stalin regime, writing,

The destiny of mankind depends upon Christianity and Socialism

(7) KARL MARX: *On the Jewish Question*, Frankfurt am Main, 1927, Section I, vol. 1, p. 603.

(8) Quoted in EUGENE KAMENKA: *On Humanism*.

(9) HERBERT MARCUS: *On Humanism*.

(10) *Ibid.*

working shoulder to shoulder in behalf on the prosperity of mankind or, otherwise, the peoples of the globe shall be divided into two irreconcilable enemy blocks (11).

It is obvious that Marx's vision of true communism as *fraternity*, from a humanistic point of view, might be equated with the *universal brotherhood*, the highest social value of Christian ethics, which did appear much before the *Sermon on the Mount* in the *solidarity of mankind* of the classic stoics ... in Leviticus advising the Jews, *Thou shall love the neighbour as thyself* ... in China, Mo-Ti's urging *men love each other regardless of kinship* (12).

It was, indeed, the *Nazarene* who had taught first time in history that *men should love even his enemy*.

Was He the Son of God or deity humanized? This question belongs to theosophy. We should analyze the teachings of the historical Jesus rather than the divine nature of Christ.

Jesús was a carpenter; Peter, a fisherman; Paul, a worker in carpet textile. The rest of the apostles were peasants, day-labourers, and hired-men. It is not to wonder that this *cadre* attracted partisans from serfs and slaves, exploited by the capitalism of the Roman Empire.

Jesús went unto his disciples and said,

How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God (13).

Upon appointing seventy, he sent them to every city with the following message, *The labourer is worthy to his hire*.

And when a certain ruler asked Him, «Good Master, what should I do to inherit eternal life?» Jesus said,

Sell all that thou hast and distribute onto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven ... and come, follow me (14).

And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain and spoke,

Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for

(11) JULIUS MOOR: *Tegnap es Holnap Között* (Between Tomorrow and Yesterday), Revai, Budapest, 1947.

(12) * *The Myth of a Mortal God*, the Hourglass, Center of Interfaith Studies, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, Vol. Two, 1970, pp. 54-61.

(13) Mark, XII, 46-50.

(14) Mark, X, 21.

theirs is the kingdom of heaven ... Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God (15).

H. G. Wells, who was not a devout, in his *Outline of History*, remarks,

It is clear that this teaching condemned all the gradations of the economic system, all private wealth and personal privileges. All men belonged to the kingdom; all their possessions belonged to the kingdom. ... It is one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and shaken human mind (16).

If Karl Marx views the substance of true communism in the triumph of *distributive justice*, what is the reason of his saying that *Religion is the opium of the masses*. The 'holy alliance' between the Church and the Throne explains his anti-religious position. Princes still protected the bishops and the bishops justified the power of the princes, and both supported the rising capitalism in the Christian countries of the Nineteenth century. As Umberto Cerroni rightly remarks,

[in Marxian conception] man's problem was reduced from that of 'salvation' ... to that of 'liberation' ... social emancipation (17).

This transference of moral problem from the otherworldly sphere to the worldly sphere (a Renaissance thought) does not discourage us to believe that Marx's *earthly city of well-intentioned human beings* might be compared with Saint Augustine's *City of God* as well as with the *Utopia*, depicted by Thomas Moore who had been canonized.

Marx could not foresee that, one day, the promise of *true* communism of coming times should have a tremendous likeness to the promise of otherworldly happiness. This conflict between theory and practice was reflected on the mind of a Hungarian student I meet in Budapest, in 1972. He said,

I understand that our generation must make great sacrifices for communistic ideals; however, I do not see difference whatsoever between believing in a better afterlife or a better life of others after we will have died. We have, now, at least religious freedom. Today we are allowed to believe in God rewarding all efforts in behalf a true communism as promised by Marx (18).

(15) *The Sermon on the Mount*.

(16) H. G. Wells: *The Outline of History*, Doubleday, New York, 1961, p. 422.

(17) Quoted in MAREK FRITZHAND: *Marx's Ideal of Man*.

(18) Unauthorized reference.

The basic ethical principles of Christianity, we do believe, form that luminous bridge which joins *humanism* and *socialism* into *humanistic socialism*.

4

THE INTELLECTUAL CRISIS IN SOCIALIST humanism today stems from the tension between Marx's irrational belief in the perfectibility of 'the earthly city' and the imperfectibility of actual political systems.

According to Marx, the magic wand transfiguring the imperfect human being into a perfect one is no longer the pastoral staff of the bishops neither the witchcraft attributed to political scorcers, it is rather the enchantment radiated by an entrancing fairy-queen-Art. Marx believed that in the society of true and ultimate freedom

each man would be 'caught up' in productive labour with other men, fulfilling himself in social, co-operative creation. The struggle will be common struggle: in his work and in other men, man would find not dependence and unpleasantness, but freedom and satisfaction, just as *artistes find inspiration in their work and in the work of other artists* (19).

What is true of art, Marx believed, is true of all, free, productive labour. According to Ferdinand Tonnies, *friendship, tradition, and harmony* form the 'common sphere' of this ideal community (*Gemeinschaft*) in opposition to 'society' (*Gesellschaft*) which is nothing but bourgeois interest group.

The ideas of friendship and harmony are beautifully expressed at the end of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, depicting the true communist society as the community of ultimate freedom.

These final chords of the Marxian 'new world' symphony is a resonance of Kantian ideas,

The propedeutic of all beautiful art ... seems to lie not in precepts but in the culture of mental powers, called *humaniora* because *humanity* indicates *universal feeling of sympathy* and the faculty of being able to communicate universally our inmost feelings. For these properties taken together constitute the characteristic *social spirit of humanity ... distinguished from the limitations of animal life* (20).

(19) Quoted in EUGENE KAMENKA: *On Humanism*.

(20) Quoted in A. W. LEVI: *The Humanities Today*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1970.

Had Marx rise again, probably he would give the following advise, «Comrade, art cannot be created by plans imposed from outside; it knows no authorities and no discipline except the authority and disciplines of art itself.»

Resisting the ukases of tzars, the masters of Ninetieth century Russian literature expressed humanistic socialism in their works. The humorous sympathy of Gogol's *Death Souls* reminds of Erasmus's social satire in his *Praise of Folly*; Tourgenyev's *Memories of a Sportsman*, had a direct bearing on Alexander II's decision to liberate serfs; Dostoievsky's first story, *Poor Folk*, combines Russian patriotism with socialism; Tolstoy, excommunicated by the Orthodox Church, became the apostle of humanistic brotherly love.

The effect of the afore-mentioned precursors of Russian socialism greatly influenced on the works of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

5

THE CONCLUSION OF THIS OUTLINE HAS to clarify whether nationalism is consistent with humanism or it is by its very own nature supranational. It is obvious that the issue is not the nature of concepts but it is the nature of man and human life. We do believe that *the humanities is the scientific study concerned with every aspect of human life as well as humanism as the universal feeling of sympathy is concerned with the common destiny of mankind* (21).

If neither the radiant aureole of the Saints nor the sublime sacredness of artists have been able to outshine the magic splendor of gold, what kind of *living form* has made man *more humane* in the past and in the present? Was it the selfish dragon of liberal individualism devouring its own genitors? Was it the selfadoring Moloch of the collective swallowing its own generation? It was rather a powerful Titan, the only one triumphant in the bloody history of mankind, who —though causing revolutions and wars but offering the bliss of a *meaningful life* and eternal peace in the lap of the homeland— the Nation.

Celebrating victory, Generalissimo Stalin addressed to Russian *compatriots*, he did not address to 'communist comrades'; President Roosevelt

(21) * *World University of the Humanities - a Preliminary Study on the Humanities Conceived as Educational Task Force*, MAN Associates, Inc., Concord, North Carolina, 1972.

in the most decisive moments of the war, invoked not common interest, he did invoke 'common ideals' uniting American nation.

Nikita Khrushchev stated that «each country has its own, peculiar socialism»,

Nationalism and socialism are the leading historical ideas today. If I am asked that which of the two, nationalism or socialism, is more powerful, I would not hesitate to affirm that nationalism prevails. In Vietnam the issue is not that of 'capitalism' or 'socialism'. The Vietnamese, be of the North or the South, first of all is a Vietnamese and then a communist.», said Arnold Toynbee (22).

And so in Hungary, in 1956, when the traditional tricolour banners stirred up the mind of the Magyars. They did not rebel against socialism. They wanted Hungarian socialism corresponding with Magyar freedom tradition (23).

Forsaken by Western democracies they had to fail. But, if today a more humane socialism is being developed in Hungary, they did not die in vain.

A historian of coming times shall record as the miracle of the Twentieth century that the only ones allied with the Hungarian revolutionaries were those more or less one thousand Russian soldiers who, moved by humane feelings and universal sympathy, changed side.

By concluding with admiration of the Magyar martyrs sacrificing their lives for the sake of true communism respecting personal freedom. It is my honour to pay tribute to those unknown brave men of the Red Army who, in a critical moment of contemporary history, showed the world that beneath their steel-grey battle-dress, there were rosy human hearts.

LASZLO TARNOI DE THARNO

(22) Interview in *Life Magazine*, 1966.

(23) * «Coexistence or Nonexistence?» Academic Lectures, 1964-71, at American Universities, Mimeo.

NOTE.—The Text and Essays numbered 1, 6, 8, 9, 17 and 19 published in *Socialist Humanism - An International Symposium*, Doubleday-Anchor, Garden City, New York, edited by Erich From.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Of Books Referred to in the Text of Notes
The starred publications are those of the author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE AUTOR IS GREATLY INDEBTED TO HIS

colleagues and friends for their contributions of making man more humane; to Prof. F. J. von Rintelen for his realistic axiological approach to *Menschlichkeit* (*humaneness*) as 'living spirit'; to Prof. Luis Recasens Siches for his 'human life' as the ultimate scope of Law; to Prof. L. Bagolini for his interpreting justice as *understanding the possibility of reconciliation between opposing interests*; to Prof. Munoz Alons, for deriving humanism from *personal integrity*; however, if this outline has succeeded in fortifying the *faith in the common destiny of mankind*, it is the merit of Prof. Julius Moor, whose academic lectures in philosophy of law taught the autor that *the basic principles of Christian ethics and true nationalism* are the ultimate goals of the humanities. *