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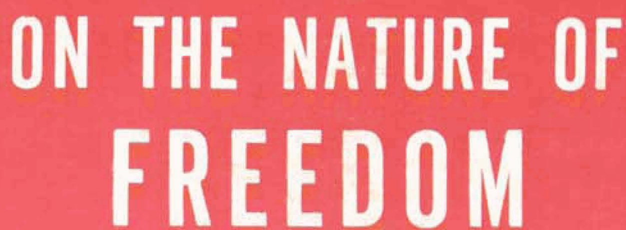

ON THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

The Marxist View

By HERBERT APTHEKER

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ON THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

The Marxist View

Based on a series of broadcasts made over Station KPFA, Berkeley, California, May-July, 1959.

By Herbert Aptheker

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About the Author

This pamphlet contains the full text of a series of broadcasts made by Dr. Aptheker over Station KPFA, of Berkeley, California, during May-July, 1959.

Herbert Aptheker is widely known as a scholar, historian and educator, and is presently the editor of the Marxist monthly, *Political Affairs*. He is the author of several major works including *American Negro Slave Revolts*, *Essays in the History of the American Negro*, *History and Reality*, *The Truth About Hungary*, and *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States.* His latest book, *The Colonial Era,* published in the Spring of 1959, is the first in a multi-volumed history of the formation, growth and development of the United States. He is also the author of numerous pamphlets, the latest of which are *Since Sputnik: How Americans View the Soviet Union*, *Freedom in History*, *The United States and China: Peace or War?* and *The German Question*. The present pamphlet is the second in a series which opened with *On the Nature of Revolution,* and will be followed by *In Defense of Democracy*.

Dr. Aptheker served in the Field Artillery for over four years in the Second World War, rising through the ranks from private to major. In 1939, he was awarded a prize in history by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. He was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1946-47, and is presently director of the Faculty of Social Science, in New York.

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ON THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

There is no more significant and controversial question agitating mankind today than that of the nature of freedom. In this pamphlet we shall attempt to discuss briefly certain central problems arising from a consideration of this topic; that which relates particularly to the history of the concept of freedom, marked as it is by changes with the passage of centuries, shall not be dwelt on here, since it was discussed by the present writer in an earlier pamphlet.*

I: The State and Political Power

The question of the state and the nature of political power, however, properly may be chosen as a starting point for our inquiry, for certainly the presence and the reality of freedom have hinged upon both, to a great degree.

On the whole, in classical political theory—from Aristotle to Locke to Burke—the state, or government, is viewed as a vehicle for the preservation of the existing societal status quo. In this literature, fundamental to that status quo was the property relationship characterizing it and, in a decisive fashion, determining it. From this analysis was derived the axiom that government existed in order to protect prviate property. That this should be axiomatic was perfectly natural, since all hitherto existing societies had been built upon the private ownership and control of the means of production, with differences in such societies reflecting differences in the kinds of productive means so owned, but not in the fact of their private ownership.

Connected with this was the idea that the existence of private property was the prerequisite of civilization. No doubt, this idea was tied to the fact that it was on the basis of the division of labor consequent upon such possession of property that technological and productive advances became possible upon which were erected

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**Freedom in History*, N. Y., 1958 (New Century Publishers).

the accoutrements of civilization. Therefore—and the transition appears altogether logical—it is only those who are among the propertied who should be among those who govern. Clearly, if private property is the basis of civilization, and if government exists to protect that private property and thereby maintain civilization, then surely those possessed of that private property are those in whom and only in whom is properly vested governmental authority. Or, as the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, John Jay, put it: "Those who own the country, should govern it."

This idea seemed all the more reasonable as it became more and more clear—to those benefiting from and fostering the idea—that just as the security of private property was of the essence of civilization, so only those who possessed private property were really civilized. It was but a step from this comforting observation, to the clinching conception that those who possessed private property not only were the civilized and therefore should be the government—whose main purpose, remember, was the security of that property—but that they were also the ones alone *capable* of conducting government. And that they *were* capable was proven—so went the argument—by the very fact that they had succeeded in acquiring private property. Hence, to cite again the words of a well-known American, it was, as John Adams said "the rich, the well-born and the able" who manifestly should be in charge of government. What is to be noted in particular in this quotation, is John Adams' assumption that what he was offering was a string of synonyms, and that, *of course*, the rich were the well-born, and that, *of course*, the rich and the well-born, were the able.

From this the corollary was clear, and was made explicitly in the classical literature, that while the rich were rich because they were able, and that being rich gave them opportunities to enhance further their notable abilities, the poor on the other hand, were poor because they were not able and that, therefore, their surroundings were such as to intensify their inherent inadequacy.

In all this it was assumed, as was natural for rulers of societies based upon the private ownership of the means of production, that acquisitiveness was of the essence of "human nature," and that the more successfully acquisitive one was the more notably "human" was he. That is, the very word, "success," connoted wealth; a "successful" man was one who had accumulated a goodly property. Happy it was, too, that the accumulation of property

demonstrated the existence of superior ability; hence, the wealth was a just reward for such ability as it was, simultaneously, the proof of that ability.

Note that, in a sense, the existence of the state was the existence of a necessary evil; that is, the requirement of a state demonstrated the evil inherent in mankind, an evil which reflected itself particularly in lawful rapacity for the possessions of another, whether that be his wife or some less animated property. Note, too, that it was the poor who, being no good at all, and therefore poor, were especially prone to this rapacity—for obvious reasons. Hence, it was the duty of the rich, in the name of civilization, itself, to restrain the poor. That is to say, it was required of the rich—who, being rich were relatively less evil than the poor and therefore thrice blessed with worldly goods—to restrain the poor and to govern them. Such restraint was the main function of government in general.

Sovereignty, then, or political power, inhered in the owners, with the classical forms for such sovereignty being either the tyrant or the oligarch; or, for small areas with homogeneous populations, a so-called democracy. With the concentration upon land ownership and the tying of control over productive labor to such ownership—which characterized the pre-capitalist era—more and more the idea developed that ownership of the earth inhered in God who had designated earthly rulers in clearly defined hierarchical patterns, and that these divinely-anointed ones held their property in accordance with His will. At the apex was the one earthly figure, in varying geographical areas, who was The Sovereign; it was in him personally that the sovereignty of the political entity resided.

Hence, Sovereign always was spelled with a capital S; his person was adorned with symbols of supreme power and dignity; and his name was gilded with phrases like His Supreme Highness, His Majesty, His Eminence, His Most Worshipful Person, The Sun God, The Supreme Ruler, and other monuments to man's verbal ingenuity when properly impelled and sufficiently rewarded.

The capitalist revolution against feudalism represented a two-pronged attack upon this ancient and medieval view of Sovereignty. In the first place, capitalism's destruction of feudalism carried with it the creation of the modern nation, and the complex feeling known as nationalism. In the second place, capitalism's destruction of feudalism required justification for an attack upon ancient and sanctified forms of rule, and also required the partici-

pation of masses of people of small or of no property in order to overcome the power of the aristocracy and the landlords.

The first development—the appearance of the modern reality of nation and idea of nationalism—meant that the sovereignty became national rather than personal. That is, for example, France existed in French men and French women; they make up France, they *are* France. Which is another way of saying that France is not that which is reached and dominated by the sword of Louis XIV, which had been the meaning of Louis' insistence: "The State, I am the State." Louis there was denouncing the newfangled concept of nationality—that France is not Louis but is the French people.

This tendency to repudiate the personal quality of Sovereignty was reinforced by the tactical and political needs of the bourgeoisie in leading the revolution against fedualism. That class itself had to justify its own demands for sovereignty, and in this direct way tended to make its character plural; at the same time, requiring mass assistance, such aid was justified and obtained on the basis of mass participation in sovereignty. True, from the earliest times, this bourgeoisie—even when revolutionary—was sorely troubled as to how far the masses might go; how seriously they might take the idea of sharing in actual sovereignty; and how difficult would be the matter of controlling them, with their vast numbers, once the feudal system was destroyed. This fear permeated the revolutions in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries; it was present in our own American Revolution. This is the meaning of Gouverneur Morris' warning, in 1774, that he feared where the revolutionary stirrings might end. "For the masses," said Morris, "this is a red dawning and mefears that ere noon, they will bite." Morris meant that they would bite not only the British overlords, which would be all right, but that they would bite the propertied in America, too, and that was not all right.

From this anti-feudal revolution developed the modern concept of popular sovereignty, really a verbal paradox, reflecting a political revolution undoing centuries of tradition and practice where the Sovereign was divine and individual, and where the point of his sovereignty was that he ruled *over* the populace. Now, with the anti-feudal revolution, came forward the idea not of sovereignty as being personal and being displayed in its domination over the people, but of sovereignty as being multiple and consisting, properly, in rule by, for, and on behalf of the people.

True it is that this revolution was not one that challenged the private ownership of the means of production. It was not one, therefore, which challenged the basic idea of the function of the State—to protect such property relationships. Hence there persisted, in this first propounding of the concept of rule by the people, a limiting feature in the definition of who constituted the people. The people were those with property; for clearly, still, the purpose of government was the protection of property. Hence, that meant protection against the rapacity of those without property—uncivilized and incapable as they were. Hence, too, that meant that only those with property properly could participate in the exercise of governmental functions. Therefore, it was the propertied who were the people; the remainder of the population were inhabitants, residents, masses, but not people.

This posed an awful riddle for the theoreticians of the new order; a riddle never answered successfully by adherents of that order. The riddle is this: given the concept of popular sovereignty and the fact that most inhabitants did not possess the means of production, how shall we make sure that this majority does not use the idea of popular sovereignty to insist upon their right to exercise political power? And then, if they do so insist and since they are a majority, how can they be kept from using that majority to gain political power and transform the State from what it has always been—namely an instrument for the preservation of the private ownership of the means of production—into its opposite, into an instrument for the elimination of the private ownership of the means of production?

No one more clearly expressed this dilemma than the Father of the American Constitution, James Madison; and he, after pondering it from all angles came to the conclusion that it was insoluble and that its pressing character would grow with the passing of the years. He thought—writing in 1833—that within one century the really critical stage would be reached in the effort to resolve this dilemma. That is, Madison gave capitalism until about 1933, when it would be, he thought, face to face with fearful crisis. James Madison was remarkably astute; the fourth President never more clearly demonstrated his astuteness than when he made that prophecy.

II: On the Theory of Political Parties

When sovereignty was personal, political parties, other than

that representing the Crown, were held to be seditious and, therefore, manifestly not to be permitted. This was because of the nature of a political party—an organization of like-minded people seeking to gain state power in order to accomplish certain purposes held by them to be of great consequence. If, however, sovereignty, that is to say, state power, belonged to the Monarch, then clearly no group of people legally could work together for the purpose of acquiring such power for themselves or their party.

It is for this reason that in England, where the power of feudalism was broken first, the modern political party did not appear until the reign of George III, that is, until the middle of the 18th century. That, also, is why when a party in opposition to the Crown did appear there, it was labelled the Whig Party, a term of opprobrium, since Whig means, in old Scottish, "horse-thief."

Such an opposition party, however, did appear in 18th century England, no matter what the extant political theory was and no matter how intense was the opposition to its appearance on the part of the Crown, because with the smashing of feudalism in England, the bourgeoisie insisted on making that victory safe by acquiring domination over the State apparatus. Hence, since in fact the modern political party resulted from and represented the existence of different classes with varying and often contradicting interests, the rise of a mercantile and industrial bourgeoisie in England meant that that class would insist on organizing politically with the purpose of taking the power of making state policy out of the hands of the landed aristocracy and the Court circles.

Yet, given the theory of sovereignty inhering in the person of the King, and the whole structure of government in England corresponding to that theory, such a development obviously would encounter stiff ideological and organizational opposition.

What happened was that the objective social reality—the rise of the bourgeoisie—produced de facto opposition parties. The Court and the landholders sought to smash this development by charging that it was unprecedented and downright seditious. The bourgeoisie sought to manufacture precedents by reference to "rights of Englishmen" enunciated under quite different circumstances, and to overcome the charge of sedition by swearing their loyalty to the King's person, while seeking to alter the legal structure by enlarging the powers of Parliament.

The structural alteration was accomplished—helped along con-

siderably by the success of the American Revolution—by the last years of George III's reign, and the modern parliamentary system, with its Prime Minister and Cabinet, date from that period. The ideological adjustment accompanied this social and legal change, and is most prominently associated with the name of Edmund Burke. It is Burke who developed most cogently a rationalization for the existence of multiple parties, though each party was supposed to be seeking exclusive domination over state power.

As we have indicated, this process took several generations, and from the 16th through much of the 18th centuries it was accompanied by fearful instability in English governments and by much violence: most Prime Ministers of England in this nearly two hundred year period were removed from office by trial and condemnation, suffering either execution, long imprisonment, or exile.

But, given the achievement of sufficient basic change, Burke's ideological solution could both be arrived at and approved. What Burke suggested was the co-existence of multiple parties, on the basis of two common points of agreement, namely, loyalty to the private ownership of the means of production, and to the symbol of the Crown.

In this way, the assumption continued that government belonged to the propertied classes and existed, fundamentally, for the purpose of preserving that private property. Where gentlemen of property agreed on that, they could form different political parties based upon the ownership of different forms and kinds of property, but all such parties would agree on the two fundamentals and thus would be loyal (and legal) political parties. The differences among parties, then, would reflect differences in outlook and interest of varying kinds of propertied classes; but these differences would be kept on the *tactical* level so far as the basic interests of the State and of civilization were concerned. They would be differences as to how best to advance the interests of the State and civilization—with both resting upon the private ownership of the means of production. Any political party or grouping which did not agree to these fundamentals would not be a bona fide political party, but would rather be a seditious organization.

The British, with their genius for institutionalizing things, institutionalized this solution, too. It appears in the existence of the ruling party—or The Government—and the leading minority party —or Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition. Everything is capitalized

and everything is proper. This reflects itself further in the fact that two Members of Parliament are paid by the State a higher salary than all other Members—one is the Prime Minister, who is paid extra for his services as Her Majesty's First Minister; the other is The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, who is paid for his duties as that Leader, and who is assumed to be performing necessary functions for the stability of Her Realm and of civilization by leading the (tactical) Opposition.

The American Experience

What is the original attitude towards political parties when success is achieved in establishing a republic based upon the sovereignty of the people? If political power is held, in fact, by the people, how in theory can several parties legitimately exist, if the purpose of a political party is to obtain state power? The answer was that such parties could not legitimately exist; that was exactly the attitude of the Founding Fathers. It was held that the existence of political parties in England reflected the corruption and tyrannical character of that government against which the colonists had rebelled successfully. For if the people were in power, then a political party seeking power could only be counter-revolutionary, *i.e.,* could only seek to undo the sovereignty of the people.

On this same reasoning, the original theory of democracy was that it would exist on the basis not of diversity of opinion, but rather on the basis of unanimity of opinion. This unanimity would flow from the common interest of all and from the share of all in the exercise of political power. For this reason, too, it was assumed that the existence of political parties in a democratic republic would be anachronistic and/or illegal.

This is why there is no mention of political parties in the Constitution of the United States. This is why political parties as such were in poor repute in the 18th and early 19th centuries in the United States. This is why President Washington, in his last Message to Congress, warned against the appearance of "factions"—a synonymn then for parties—as threatening the very existence of the Republic. This is why, when Jefferson went about organizing his political opposition to Hamilton, and of course did it in the form of a political party, he did this secretly and bound his friends, like James Madison, to the keeping of that secrecy. This is why one does not find the open acknowledgment of the existence of political parties as such in the United States until

1816, when the first explicitly labelled national convention of a political party was held—and that was the Hartford Convention which marked the demise of the Federalist Party.

Related to the concept of unanimity—so far as the political base of the new republic was concerned—was the provision in the Constitution guaranteeing to each State a Republican form of government. For the Founders, a government based upon the sovereignty of the people had to be republican in form. But in the guarantee of such a form we have a paradox. The paradox is that the same document which asserts the sovereignty of the people simultaneously insists that the form of government for each of the States must be republican—that is, here is a provision prohibiting the sovereign people, who, being sovereign, presumably are omnipotent—from destroying the Republic. This means that the people, while sovereign, are saying, under the Constitution, that they may not have any form of government other than republican, which is to say, they are forbidden to have a monarchy—the alternative closest at hand and the form just recently revolutionized. Monarchy was a form, let it be noted, that might very well have come into being in America, for the English Crown had not given up, at that time, its hope of undoing the American Revolution; nor were there missing from American life Tories and monarchists, some of them, indeed, in high military and political circles.

This prohibition is quite absolute; it holds no matter how large a number of people in any particular State, might want something else. If, for instance, 95% of the people of New York State should desire that Mr. Dewey be their King, and if they proceeded to install the aforesaid gentleman as King Tom, the United States would be required by the Constitution to forbid this course, even if that required the use of force against the overwhelming majority of presumably deluded New Yorkers.

While this sounds absurd today, since the restoration of monarchy in the United States is not a danger, the theory behind it exists and remains valid. Thus, for instance, it forms the heart of the Potsdam Treaty terminating World War II; there the Allies pledged that the German people were to have a free form of government, and that they could choose any form of government they wished, except fascist. That is, if 90% of the German people wanted a fascist-form of government, they were not to be free to choose one. This prohibition was made in the name of advancing freedom; the prohibition does advance freedom, and it is the failure

to enforce that prohibition which has damaged the cause of human freedom.

Size and Homogeneity

There remain two particular features of the American experience at the republic's founding that are especially relevant to a consideration of the nature of freedom. Both involved the question of the feasibility and the durability of republican-democratic government and both had appeared constantly in the classical literature on political science. These were the insistence, in the first place, that such government was possible only within a small geographical area and among a homogeneous population; and, in the second place, that even where such territorial and demographic requirements were met, such government would not last long because of an allegedly immutable tendency towards the concentration of power in the hands of smaller and smaller groups of men, until the democratic-republican form of government had been transformed into an oligarchy and a tyranny—whereupon, possibly, went the classical literature, the whole cycle might start revolving again.

The Revolutionary Fathers of the American Republic were aware, of course, of these arguments; and those among them who ardently desired the preservation of the democratic-republican form worked out an answer to both, the two parts of which were as inter-related as were the two difficulties. In both, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were especially prominent.

Quite boldly, it was argued that far from vast size being an impassable barrier to the erection of a viable republican form of government, the enormous size of the infant republic would be a source of strength and would help make it possible for the infant to reach adulthood. The theory was that while pure and direct democracy obviously would require—given limitations on travel and communication—very limited political entities, on the style of the ancient Greek city-states, this would not be true for a republican-democracy, where indirection through the method of representation would replace direct democratic government.

For that type of government, great expense would be an advantage, in terms of durability, for—especially in the United States, where the great size was accompanied by marked sectional and regional differences—it would make impossible the concentra-

tion of power in one particular area to such a degree as to outweigh the strength of the other areas. And just as the very size would make unwholesome concentration of political power most difficult, so the great variation in the nature of the numerous sections also would make such concentration quite unlikely.

The two features combined, then, would seem to make reasonably certain the impossibility of such a concentration of power in any one geographical area as to threaten the existence of the democratic-republican form. The political structure which would reflect and express the advantages flowing from the great size and the marked sectional divergencies would be the federal one, with the multiple form of sovereignty existing in the sovereignty of each of the States and the sovereignty of the central government in matters concerning the whole nation, as such.

The defense against unwholesome concentration of power which geography offered would be enhanced by the fact that there was a widespread dispersion of different and often antagonistic, or at least rivaling, economic classes—as planters, small farmers, merchants, financiers, industrialists, fur-traders, fishermen, etc.—whose diversity would militate against social concentration of power, just as geography militated against area concentration. This would be strengthened further by the diversity of national origin and religious backgrounds of the people making up the American nationality, which, again, from the demographic viewpoint, would reinforce the tendency towards the dispersal of political power already present geographically and economically.

Notice that nothing in the above considerations contradicted the fundamental assumption of political theory, namely, that governments existed for the purpose of preserving private property and that, therefore, the governors were the propertied and the governed were the propertyless. The problem of tyranny was the problem of the concentration of power in the hands of one element among the propertied and the use of such power to violate the interests of other propertied groups; against this, the democratic republic would assure some protection. The problem of anarchy was represented by the seizure of power by the non-propertied. This was anarchic in that it violated the classically-postulated purposes of government; government so transformed became non-government. That is to say, it became anarchy, and against that all men of property, no matter of what kind—*i.e.*, all men of respectability and of good sense—would be united.

The Revolutionary Fathers felt that these federal arrangements would be helpful, too, in counteracting the allegedly inherent tendency of democratic-republican governments towards greater and greater concentration of political power into fewer and fewer hands until oligarchy appeared. But there was another device which they felt also would help in preventing that concentration of power which hitherto had doomed all attempts at democratic rule. And the Fathers believed that this might work despite their own acute awareness of the attractions that power held for those of mortal flesh—an awareness that they frequently expressed in language too long neglected by the twentieth century.

This devise was the system of checks and balances and the separation of powers which were made fundamental features of the constitutional structure of the United States. It was thought that making each of the three elements of government—executive, legislative, judicial—independent of each other and co-equal in power would serve to prevent the concentration of power into the hands of one clique or one man—and the man especially feared in the light of eighteenth century experience was the Executive. In addition to this separation, there was the system of checks and balances manifested in the two-house legislature with the concurrence of each necessary for the passage of a law, and then the need of Executive approval, or, if vetoed, the overcoming of this veto requiring a two-thirds vote. Such arrangements, it was felt, made the appearance of tyranny, especially in the guise then best-known, *i.e.*, monarchy, as nearly impossible as human ingenuity could devise.

Once again, the Fathers had in mind not only the prevention of tyranny, as they understood it, but also of anarchy, as they understood, and feared, that. Hence, both the federal structure and the system of checks and balances made very difficult the effective exercise of real political power by the masses of the people who did not possess the means of production. But exactly this, too, was a goal if democratic-republican government were to endure, for the first object of government as such—all government, no matter what its form—was the protection of the private possession of the means of production, a basic arrangement characterizing all hitherto existing forms of civilization.

It is worth noting that this latter purpose has been expressed often in the literature; however, the former purpose, the prevention of tyranny, has been less fully comprehended and less often

noticed. The two elements were present together, however, as was natural for a bourgeoisie which had just led in a national and anti-colonial revolution, which, with great mass support and participation, had defeated the British throne.

As the maturing of capitalism into monopoly capitalism and imperialism makes more and more anachronistic and inhibiting the private ownership of the means of production—given the increasing socialization of the method of production, and the mounting objections of the colonial peoples—the assumption of rule by and for the propertied, in the face of the theory of popular sovereignty becomes more and more impossible to reconcile. James Madison—as we already noted—therefore projected that capitalism would be able to last, in its bourgeois-democratic form, until the mid-thirties of the twentieth century; then, predicted the Father of the U.S. Constitution, it would face a crisis of unprecedented and probably insoluble dimensions.

Implicit in the system of checks and balances is the concept of the benign nature of the government itself—meaning the particular, new, government set up as a result of the successful revolution in the New World. This represented an important break with the traditional idea of government being necessitated because of the villainy of mankind, and that therefore all government, in its origin, was attainted. Actually, the break was not complete, in the sense that this new government was still held to be—assumed to be, in fact—a government of and by the propertied for their protection; and the protection was needed because of the villainy of men—especially men without property. Still, there was present, in the roots of the United States government, this idea of its being benign.

Hence, given the system of checks and balances, the government itself is pictured as an impartial and paternal judge. This classless attitude toward the government, which has been and is so marked a characteristic of American popular opinion—among white Americans, at any rate—owes much of its viability to the manner in which this government was created. It was, in fact, the product of a popular revolution; and its present form was the result of reasoned debate among very able and patriotic gentlemen. It was, in fact, to a large degree, the product of popular agreement (or, at least, acquiescence); and it was, when thus established, the most advanced and most democratic government in existence. It maintained—with good objective reason—this reputa-

tion for some generations, with the only major blotch on that reputation being the existence of chattel slavery. But then, since the slaves were Negroes, the concept of racism was both necessary and handy for the retention of the view of the government as being really popular and really devoted, impartially, to the welfare of all its citizens.

Particularly significant was the manner in which the form of the U.S. government was created; that is, through debate and plebiscite. This seemed to confirm the New World Republic as the living embodiment of the Age of Reason. And, since it was held that the destruction of feudalism ushered in a socio-economic system that really corresponded to the requirements of nature—that really was not artificial at all—it seemed especially fitting that the infant revolutionary Republic should deliberately go about creating a governmental structure that also reflected the triumph of reason over superstition, and therefore, of freedom over tyranny.

III: Bourgeois Concepts of Freedom

Let us inquire into the meaning of freedom as conveyed in the literature on the subject produced in the course of the replacement of feudalism by capitalism and in the generations which have seen the growth and maturing of capitalism.

First, it is of the greatest importance to see that when capitalism replaced feudalism, advocates of the change and adherents of the new system insisted that both represented the triumph of reason and, hence, of freedom. Capitalism—that is to say, the free market, the system of free enterprise, the contractual agreement freely entered into by co-equal participants, the supremacy and immutability of the law of supply and demand, the nice manner in which the allegedly innate desire for personal aggrandizement fitted in with the accomplishment of human progress, the guarantee in all this that merit would be rewarded and lack of it penalized—this system, capitalism, it was held, was not really a social system in the sense of any kind of man-made construct but was rather the achievement in human relations of the reasonable and natural order of things. The law of supply and demand was as constant and as natural as the law of gravity; the whole functioning of free enterprise and the unencumbered market was as inexorable and as natural as the coming and going of the tides.

The Age of Faith marks the era of feudalism; the Age of Reason

marks the era of capitalism. This reason, which was the hallmark of the new science—itself the instrumentality for the development of that technique so consequential to the rise and appearance of capitalism and to its defeat of feudalism—was held to have triumphed not only in matters of physics and astronomy, but also in matters of politics and economics.

All this was enhanced by the fact that capitalism was in rebellion against the status-concentrating, closed, regulatory feudalism; what it sought was elimination of all artificial regulation and the free play of the newly discovered laws of politics and economics. Hence, *laissez-faire*—leave things alone, now that we have things arranged in their natural way.

The first component, then, of the concept of freedom in the classical bourgeois outlook, is to see freedom as the absence of restraint. Freedom is viewed negatively; I do not mean by this, of course, that it is demeaned. On the contrary, it is highly valued. I mean only that freedom is viewed in terms of what government may not do; it is viewed in terms of opposition to power and to the exercise of power. Thus, Lord Morley, one of the keenest analysts of the problem of freedom among those operating outside the Marxist view, in a work revised by himself as late as 1921, emphasized that "liberty is not a positive force," and spoke of "liberty, or the absence of coercion," showing clearly that he felt the two ideas to be synonymous.*

Thus, while freedom is held to mean the absence of restraint, this absence applies to the citizens of the government; it is they who are free to the extent that they enjoy an absence of restraint. This carried with it a corollary, namely, the necessity to restrain the government—to delimit its power. So, the absence of governmental tyranny derives out of a restrained government. And, at times, the existence of such restraint is held to be synonymous with a free society, or with the existence of liberty. Thus, Dean Acheson, the former Secretary of State, writing in *The Yale Review* (Summer, 1959), declares that "the rights of Englishmen . . . were specific and detailed restraints upon power"—a rather paradoxical posing of rights as deriving from restraints, but again emphasizing

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* John Viscount Morley, *On Compromise* (Thinker's Library edit., 1933, 3rd impression, London, 1946, p. 125). In a footnote at this point Morley stated that "there is a sense" "in which liberty is a positive force"; but he went on to write that it is so in that it has "a bracing influence on character."

the negative quality of the rights, or the negative quality of freedom. Hence it is that in the classical enunciation of freedoms, the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution, one finds that these Rights are actually an enumeration of those things which the government is forbidden to do.

The concentration in this assumes the evil nature of power; it assumes that the foe of freedom is power. This is not a far-fetched assumption when one remembers the historical record as to the uses of power. But the fact that it is an assumption and is so deeply ingrained in one's thinking, sometimes makes it an item that we do not really think about. Note, however, again, the assumption of the evil quality of political power; from this follows the axiom that to the extent such power is curbed to that extent is freedom present; *i.e.*, to that extent is there an absence of restraint upon the person.

These postulates work and are meant to work only if a fundamental proposition is adhered to. That fundamental proposition, we repeat, is that the basic ingredient of civilization is the private ownership of the means of production, for the protection of which the government and the state exist. The whole point of the superiority of capitalism is that it provides a system, allegedly, for the natural and unencumbered functioning of private-property ownership. Hence, since that system has been discovered—a truth found, like gravity—the less government, the better. Indeed, with such a system, government itself is but a necessary evil.

It is necessary because the poor we always have with us; these are the incapable ones, those without ability, without merit; hence these are the poor and they are without ownership of the means of production. They will live by the grace of God and the grace of those better and more meritorious ones who do possess the means of production; and for them, government is necessary. It is necessary to see to it that they do not, in their ignorance, avarice, and sinfulness, destroy the social order, destroy civilization. It is needed, also, to see that no one element or group among the propertied so far forget themselves as to seek to usurp all power for themselves in order to enrich themselves at the expense of others owning property. With this arrangement, the government will prevent both tyranny and anarchy; a just government will prevail holding even the balance wheels of a natural political economy, marked by reason and blessed by God.

Freedom Purely Political

In addition to the ideas of the restraint of power and the absence of restraint upon citizens, very important to the bourgeois concept of freedom was its limitation to matters of politics. That is, classically, freedom is purely political; it has no relevance to the economic. This follows as a matter of course if one accepts the view that capitalism *is* economic freedom; that capitalism is the achievement of reason in matters of economy. Accepting this view makes mischievous at best and tyrannical at worst any meddling with, any regulating of, the economy.

This view had in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries less inconsistencies than it appears to have today—at least to many people—because in those centuries the fact that government's first obligation was the security of private property was institutionalized in that only the propertied were allowed to participate in selecting those who did the governing, and only the highly propertied were allowed themselves to be among the governors.

Nevertheless, the potency of this idea remains great even in so developed a bourgeois-democratic republic as the United States. Thus, it is still generally assumed that one's own business really is his own; again, there remains a quite grudging acceptance of any kind of regulatory enactment, whether for the safety of the workers or the purity (or, at least, harmlessness) of the product issuing from the business. And the whole process of labor relations is still held to be fundamentally outside the ken of government, with government intervening only when matters of public security become involved, or when it appears as an "impartial" arbiter or arranger. The impact of the idea is reflected, also, in the persistency with which matters of health and social welfare are confined to the mercies of private medicine or "charity."

Inequality and Freedom

The concentration upon the purely political carries over to the very formal nature of the idea of equality in bourgeois freedom. Here the equality was a matter of law only; it did not extend fully even into the political realm insofar as those without sufficient property were debarred from participating in the selection of state officers or from holding office. In addition, in bourgeois theory, the existence of inequality in matters of material possession was

held to be a proof of the existence of a free government. I do not mean to say that it was held that the existence of rich and poor was itself proof of the absence of tyranny; of course, this was not the classical view, and of course it was well known that rich and poor had existed with political tyranny.

But it was held in classical bourgeois political theory that a free government would be one in which ability and lack of it would have free reign; it was also held that the presence or absence of wealth was the basic determinant of the existence or absence of ability. Hence, it followed that where one had a free government, and a natural economic order—*i.e.*, capitalism—one would have, without any inhibition, the fullest play of abilities; therefore, a free government would be one in which inequality in economic terms would be present. Economic inequality, then, was a hallmark of the existence of political freedom, which is to say freedom, for freedom was only political.

Basic, then, to the bourgeois concept of freedom were: 1) capitalism as a natural system of political economy; 2) the absence of governmental restraint; 3) the presence of restraint upon government; 4) power as essentially evil and requiring control if freedom is to exist; 5) freedom has relevance only to the political, not to the economic; 6) the existence of economic inequality as a hallmark of and a necessary consequence of freedom.

There are three more important components of the bourgeois concept of freedom that require development. These are, to state them summarily, first, the idea of spontaneity as being an essential element of freedom; second, the concentration upon individualism as vital to freedom; and, third, the strain of eliteism that runs through this presentation of freedom. Let us consider each of these.

Spontaneity

Spontaneity is viewed as important to freedom in the sense that when action is fortuitous it is devoid of compulsion, restraint and regulation. We speak of being as "free as the wind"; of being "free and easy." The idea stems from the rebellion against the regulatory character of feudalism, and from the idea of capitalism as being a natural system, functioning automatically, properly and reasonably, if only left alone. From this it is but a step to insist

that spontaneity itself is of the essence of freedom. This is particularly true where, as in bourgeois theory, power itself is viewed with extreme hostility; hence, the planned or organized exercise of control or direction—the opposite of spontaneity—must be the foe of freedom.

There is, also, in the concentration upon spontaneity, a reflection of philosophical idealism with its denial of materially based and structurally induced causes as being fundamental sources accounting for economic, social, and political phenomena. This also follows quite logically from the view of capitalism as being a natural order; it has the added virtue of making absurd or irrelevant proposals for social change of a radical nature.

Individualism

The emphasis upon individualism also follows very logically from all the postulates of the bourgeois theory of freedom. If capitalism is a natural order, *laissez-faire* is proper; if *laissez-faire* is proper then it is "every man for himself," in a system that is self-adjusting and runs itself—like any other natural thing—and one must expect to "sink or swim." You must "stand on your own feet"; no one "owes you a living"; you have to "make your own pile." You may even have to be ruthless; certainly you will have to be and want to be "rugged."

Everything, then, is individually centered; the widest possible extension meriting approval is responsibility for one's family. It is not a far step from this to the glorification of one's "pleasures," and to the pursuit of such personalized pleasures as being the purpose and the end of life. Religion offers some muting of this; but even there, salvation is an individual matter.

This, too, is related to the early concept of political office as being a source of self-enrichment—something institutionalized, for instance, in seventeenth and eighteenth century England, in the American "spoils system," and in the American meaning of the word, "politician." There is, in fact, a stark ambiguity in the whole idea of public servant in a society geared to self-enrichment as being of the essence of the organism. Related to that is the idea that failures move into areas of such service—incompetents, as teachers, for if you know you do, and if you do not know then you teach—or ministers, who are out of this world and rather effeminate anyway, and those on the public payroll, who are ne'er-do-wells

and hangers-on and errand boys for the inevitable "big shots."

A rigorous presentation of this outlook was made in the work entitled *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other,* written by the eminent American sociologist, William Graham Sumner, in the late 1880's. Mr. Sumner, for many years a professor at Yale University, and perhaps best known for his book, *Folkways,* produced in the first-mentioned work—which sold very well in its day, by the way—a full-scale defense of complete individualism.

The content of Sumner's book is indicated in the reply its author made to the question posed in his title; asking what social classes owed to each other, Sumner replied: "Nothing." Back some seventy years ago, sociologists had not yet developed the sophisticated approach of denying the existence of classes, so Sumner accepted this as universally understood. But he was troubled by the wave of radicalism, liberalism and "do-goodism" that appeared here, especially after the "Long Depression" of 1873-79. And he undertook to show that given the natural and inevitable quality of capitalism, any tampering with the way in which wealth was distributed, or any infringement upon the absolute inviolability of property rights was utterly wrong-headed and could lead only to disaster. The poor were poor because they were inefficient, or stupid, or otherwise defective; and the rich were rich because they were the opposite of the poor. Any attempt to undo the working of nature in the economic and social spheres would result in increased suffering, would be unjust, and could only be highly transitory because no matter what was done artificially, ability and quality would tell and fairly soon the rich would be rich again and the poor would be poor again.

It is this kind of thinking which made the misapplication of Darwinism to society so attractive to adherents of capitalism and produced a Social-Darwinism whose history has been ably chronicled by James Bert Loewenberg and others.

Eliteism

A logical extension of all this is a firm commitment to eliteism. Eliteism is organic to all societies marked by the private possession of the means of production; it is basic to dominant thinking whereever class-stratification exists. In capitalism it is especially strong, because there nature allegedly has triumphed and so those who are on top must be on top not because of caste or inheritance or

other artificial contrivances, but because of superior ability. Hence has been achieved the true aristocracy and the natural elite—all the more convinced of their being a bona fide elite because they are supposed to be "self-made" and really the victors in a "fair contest." The eliteism, so marked a feature of capitalism, is further intensified by the racism that has been associated with the development and growth of capitalism, and especially with present-day capitalism or imperialism.

Capitalism in fact has been characterized by this dual eliteism. There is, first, the internal, where those who possess the means of production and who effectively dominate the society are held to be superior to the rest of the population, making up the vast majority. There is, second, the external, composed of the darker peoples of the earth (in particular instances, as in our own country, this can simultaneously be internal, too) who are referred to as the "backward" peoples.

The darker ones are to produce raw materials for sale at prices others administer and shipped in conveyances others own and marketed at prices others set; and they are not to produce finished products of their own, but rather are to purchase these from advanced areas, again under terms set by those advanced areas. These peoples, being over-exploited, are the underdeveloped; but the underdevelopment is to be charged not to the exploitation, but to themselves, and is to be a proof of their inferiority. That is, the very feature that accounts for the exploitative relationship, is fastened upon as the source not of the exploitation, but of the backwardness.

With this external eliteism, and its especially marked exploitation, some of the intensity of the conflicts threatening the home order may be diluted. That is, on the basis of the super-exploitation of the darker, colonial peoples, relatively higher standards may be permitted for our "own" inferior ones. And these relatively higher standards will apply not only to standards of living, but also to political practices. Pertinent is the remark made by Marx in a letter to Engels, written May 23, 1856, soon after the writer had returned from a tour of Ireland: ". . . one can already notice here that the so-called liberty of English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies."

It is not coincidental that the development of bourgeois democracy in the direction of enfranchisement of the non-propertied occurs with the development of imperialism. The possibility of

dropping some economic benefits to selected layers of the "inferior" classes at home, makes possible also the enhancement of their political rights, especially as the former process tends to develop opportunism and class collaborationism at home. Actually, the process is a highly complex one, and the basic source of both economic and political advance for working people in the home areas of imperialism lies in their own struggles, organizations, and strength. Nevertheless, the possibility of yielding and the policy of concession—and the development of a kind of "unity" of classes—are also closely tied in with the benefits of imperialism, so far as the elite is concerned.

By the same token, the breakup of imperialism is enhanced by the simultaneous cracking of both layers of elitist domination. That is, the revolt of the darker peoples complements the internal conflicts; their intensification in turn inspires a swifter pace in the external.

The basic point, for present purposes, is the fact that "freedom" in bourgeois theory and practice has been basically elitist and racist. It always has carried with it something of the wolf's "freedom" to eat the sheep; the freedom of the former is the death of the latter. In this fundamental manner, the freedom-concept in bourgeois theory and practice always has had about it a certain anti-humanistic essence, understandable, of course, in a theory expressive of the limitations of a social order still confined to the pre-human epoch of history.

IV: The Marxist Concept of Freedom

In contrast to the bourgeois theory of freedom, the Marxist does not view it negatively, but rather positively. That is, while the bourgeois theory of freedom focuses upon the absence of restraint upon the individual, and the presence of restraint upon the government, in terms of what it may *not* do, the focus of the Marxist theory is opposite. It tends to view freedom not so much in terms of what may not be done, but rather in terms of what can be and should be done.

The negative quality of the bourgeois theory springs from its view of capitalism as a natural and altogether salutary system—as, indeed, that ordering of society in which reason has triumphed and therefore one in which the laws of nature are in operation. Under such circumstances, the less done the better; in this case,

prohibitions against the state are of the essence of assuring freedom. This, it is of the utmost importance to remember, assumed the private ownership of the means of production, and the safeguarding of that relationship as the essential function of the state and as the hallmark of a civilized society.

The State and Power

In this sense, the State—so far as the propertied classes are concerned—is an evil; it is necessary, however, in terms of restraining the non-propertied, those outside the ken of politics, and in terms of international intercourse.

The Marxist view is altogether different. It sees capitalism not as natural and beneficent, but as artificial and parasitic. It sees capitalism as a progressive *force*, relative to the feudalism it displaces, but not as a progressive *system*, because of its class nature and its exploitative essence. The Marxist view holds that the private ownership of the means of production—to be carefully distinguished from other forms of property—far from being a hallmark of civilization, is the fundamental constituent of all prehuman history; and that, especially with the intensified socializing of the relations of production, the retention of the individualized mode of appropriation becomes more and more stultifying, not only economically, but also socially, ethically, and psychologically.

Hence, the Marxist view of the State is class-oriented. The Marxist agrees with the classical bourgeois approach which sees the protection of private property ownership as basic to the function of the State; but evaluating such ownership in terms exactly the opposite of those of the bourgeoisie, the Marxist sees this commitment on the part of the State as the root of its evil quality. But the Marxist, seeking the transformation of that property relationship, simultaneously seeks the transformation of the nature of the State from an organ for its preservation into an organ for its elimination. In the former case, given the idea of the naturalness of the economic foundation, the whole point of freedom will be the absence of restraint; in the latter case, given the idea of the exploitative nature of the economic foundation, the whole point in the effort to achieve freedom will be the active searching for the means of altering that foundation.

The bourgeoisie, having rebelled against feudalism and autocracy and having achieved, in its own mind, the final Elysium of a

reasonable social order, in conformity with natural laws and rewarding merit and penalizing its absence, will be exceedingly suspicious of power *per se;* it will view political power as a possible threat to its own order. The Marxist views power also in class terms and sees it as being used to maintain capitalism, the system giving power its particular content. But the Marxist does not take a hostile or necessarily suspicious view of power *per se;* it depends upon what kind of power, with what source, and used for what ends.

Freedom — Political and Economic

The bourgeosie views freedom as a concept having only political content; it considers economic matters as irrelevant to problem of freedom. This is because for the bourgeoisie, as we have emphasized, capitalism is not really an economic system but is, rather, a natural order. Capitalism *is,* for the bourgeoisie, economic freedom; its retention requires only non-interference with its natural functioning. There have been all sorts of compromises of this pure view, of course, in the recent past; but these compromises reflect the fact that capitalism, being in general crisis, is therefore doctoring its ideology and its practice. The compromises do not negate the reality of the basic assumption of bourgeois theory relative to the non-economic nature of freedom concepts.

The Marxist insists upon the artificial, man-made, and historically-derived character of capitalism; he, therefore, insists that coercion, not freedom, characterizes the economics of capitalism. Furthermore, the Marxist views the economic substratum of a social order as ultimately decisive for its nature; he, therefore, holds that the existence of class divisions—the organization of society on the basis of those who own and those who do not own the means of production—assures the domination of society by the owners, and the subordination in society of the ownerless.

Hence, while in bourgeois theory, freedom has only a political meaning and no relevance to economic matters, in Marxist theory the economic relations fundamentally determine societal characteristics and content and therefore these relations have the closest connection with the question of freedom. The problem of freedom to the Marxist is human and therefore societal; it is not simply political. The Marxist view being dialectical is never compartmentalized; therefore, in freedom, as in everything else, it sees the

question as a unity and as a whole, not as an abstraction and as a part.

On Equality

Bourgeois theory sees economic inequality as an attribute of a free society. While, at its finest, this theory insists that "all men are created equal," this insistence is political, legal, formal. It is an insistence that in matters of the polity, and in matters of the law, no man, because of wealth, descent, or for any other reason, was to have an advantage (politically, legally) over another man. It is to be noted, in the first place, that even within formal, political, and legal limits, this idea, even when first enunciated, in 1776, ruled out women, and meant only white men, and in the latter instance meant free white men, not those held in indenture. And even with free white men, it admitted political inequality in the existence of discriminatory legislation from an economic and religious point of view. But leaving aside these exceptions—important as they are—and accepting the phrase as written in full, bourgeois equality, like bourgeois freedom, has application only to the political.

But, political equality deriving out of the naturalness of the economy, assured the coming into being of economic inequality. This inequality, the result of differing abilities, was, then, a hallmark of a free society. Even among the most enlightened and most revolutionary of the bourgeois democrats—like Jefferson—who tended to fear the appearance of too sharp economic inequalities as threatening the stability of society, what they desired was not the elimination of such inequality but its muting and, at most, its limitation.

In Marxist theory, economic inequality is viewed as an attribute of an unfree society. The emphasis upon the economic as at the root of societal reality and as at the heart of actual power, naturally would lead to the condemnation of economic inequality as being violative of freedom. While, then, Marxism is not equalitarian in the sense of anarchism—where there is no allowance for the development of such technical and economic proficiency as to allow abundance, nor for incentive prior to the achievement of the possibility of such abundance and during the transition from capitalism to socialism—still Marxism is basically equalitarian. It does view significant divergence in income with suspicion, and it does see this as fundamentally reflective of the still limited techniques

and ethics of socialism; and its sees its elimination as one of the distinguishing features of Communism as contrasted with socialism.

Individualism

The individualism so heavily emphasized by bourgeois theory is suspect in Marxist theory. The suspicion has two roots: (1) that the individualism is fundamentally a luxury of those who own the means of production and has in it more irresponsibility and hedonism than any real effort to develop the potential or the creativity of the individual human being; (2) that the individualism partakes of the cannibalistic and is in conflict with the highly socialized nature of modern life. From these considerations flow the attributes that C. Wright Mills has described: "the U.S.A. [is] an overdeveloped society full of ugly waste and the deadening of human sensibility, honoring ignorance and the cheerful robot, pronouncing the barren doctrine and submitting gladly, even with eagerness, to the uneasy fun of a leisureless and emptying existence." Mills does not differentiate enough in his description of our society, especially in class terms, but I think no perceptive person will deny the large element of truth in his analysis.

Furthermore, the individualism conflicts with the collective needs of society; more and more, therefore, practice departs from principle. This, in turn, arouses fierce feelings of guilt and of ennui or cynicism, which help induce anti-social patterns of behavior and multiplying cases of breakdown.

The Marxist view of human beings generally is an optimistic one; the dominant bourgeois outlook is rather gloomy. It is true that the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary youth, when it sought to remake the world, tended to take a very positive approach to people, expressed most beautifully and exuberantly by Shakespeare who, it will be remembered, compared man to a veritable god. But the bourgeoisie, when it saw man as noble, meant men of property, men of propriety, men who mattered. And the strain that sees man as damned and as a worm, which runs through the entire record of class-divided history, is never wholly absent from the bourgeois literature. It becomes increasingly important—as do so many other attributes of medievalism—with capitalism's decline. Today, in the United States, with the ascendancy ideologically of the New Conservatism, this demeaning of human nature is dominant.

Marxism insists upon the corrupting quality of class society, not the corrupt quality of human beings. Moreover, while bourgeois theory assumes the enervating effect of impoverishment and oppression, Marxism insists upon the corroding influence of class domination and the ennobling influence of common struggle. The bourgeoisie tends to see the debilitating effect of victimization; Marxism sees the victim, but does not see him as passive, anl sees his struggle as continual and creative.

To the bourgeoisie, to have had ancestors who were slaves is shameful; to have had ancestors who were slaveowners is a mark of distinction, and the more numerous their slaves, the greater the distinction. The Marxist's evaluations are opposite.

Marxism and Eliteism

All class-divided societies, and notably capitalism, have taken a basically elitist view of civilization. All of them, reflecting the domination of the majority by a minority, have developed theories justifying such an arrangement. These theories, whether of a religious or a secular guise, in fact have held that the rule by the few was necessary and proper because the many were the inferior (or the more sinful) of the few. In capitalism it is insisted that the minority who possess the means of production obtain and retain that possession as a result of superior ability and that therefore the eliteism is really a natural expression of capacity and is highly beneficial.

This may be justified ideologically by the insistence that the few are the Elect—religiously speaking—oɪ that the few are the more intelligent—psychologically and "scientifically" speaking. For the latter purpose, developed in our more secular age, so-called intelligence tests are concocted, and corrupted, misapplied and misinterpreted to demonstrate—to no one's surprise and to the elite's comfort—that the well-to-do are the bright ones and the poor are the stupid ones.

Inferentially, the results on the tests explain the positions in society, while, in fact, the tests are based upon the stratifications in society, and the whole method of testing and grading and interpreting reflects the same stratification. And so each explains the other, and all is right in the best of all possible worlds. Then the educational system is geared in accordance with the findings; thus again assuring that similar findings will recur, and also assuring,

it is hoped, the continuance of the status quo that produced the original findings in the first place.

These are some of the main ideological trappings for the internal eliteism of capitalism, which, in essentials, go back more or less unchanged to the beginnings of recorded history. The venerable nature of the theory, by the way, gives it additional authority.

With capitalism's expansion come the colonialism of the 17th and 18th centuries and the imperialism of the 19th and 20th centuries. Both widen and deepen capitalism's exploitation, and both bring the rulers of capitalism into collision with differing societies and peoples. These societies are to be undone and their peoples exploited; both distasteful undertakings beg for rationalization, especially in view of their apparent contradiction with religious and political ideas developed for home use in the course of anti-feudal efforts. The eliteism organic to ruling-class thought is brought into play to justify this rapine and oppression; happily, the victims this time are not only of different religion and speech and custom, but also are of a different color. Hence develops the particular eliteism known as racism; the internal and external eliteism of the bourgeois epoch feed each other and together help mightily in sustaining the whole exploitative structure.

In fact—and to a degree, in articulated theory—the external eliteism is an important source of what political freedom does develop in the homes of western capitalism. Just as John C. Calhoun insisted that only with the enslavement of the black was the freedom of the white possible, so imperialism has insisted that only with the super-exploitation and gross deprivation of the darker peoples of the world could there be any economic concessions or political reforms at home.

Marxism rejects eliteism and racism root and branch. It points to its existence as vitiating bourgeois-democratic theory and practice, and it insists that the substance of the elitist theory is false. The superior capacity of the rulers in class-stratified societies in the past has been basically in the areas of domination, guile, and deception; and the superior position has reflected domination of the means of production and hence of the means of communication. The vast majority of human beings, deprived of the ownership of the means of production, have been the doers and the creators in all history. It is they who have produced; they have sustained the few, not the few the many.

The superior capacity of the rich has been the capacity to rule; its possession of power has been based upon its possession of the means of production. With this domination has gone a system of eliteism that has deprived and still deprives the majority of mankind of the cultural, educational, political and material treasures of the world. This has meant the denial of freedom to the vast majority of humanity; on the basis of that denial, others have had varying portions and forms of freedom.

Marxism holds that these treasures, produced by the labor of the deprived majority, belongs really to them, and that they are fully capable, given the opportunity, of enjoying them. Marxism holds that the vast majority, coming into effective possession of the means of production will be able to overcome—have already in fact overcome, in the Lands of Socialism—what Marx called "the realm of necessity." On this basis, having provided a sufficiency of the needs of mankind, is it then possible to create, in Marx' words, "a real realm of freedom." Then will be forged a Communist society in which the fullest freedom of self-expression in all spheres of human activity—and none colliding with the others' self-expression—will exist.

Then will appear, for the first time, a society on earth in which the vast majority are literate, cultured, secure, healthy and fraternal; this will make possible such a renaissance of culture and such a growth of human capacity as has never yet even been dreamed.

On Spontaneity and Planning

As we have noted, one of the components of freedom in the bourgeois view is spontaneity. This stems in part from the historical root of capitalism in rebellion against the regulated and status-conscious nature of feudalism; it stems, too, from the idea of the naturalness of capitalism with, consequently, the wisest thing being to "let nature takes its course." Somehow, only the unforetold can be free. Marxism's view is quite otherwise.

In terms of spontaneity, what is more spontaneous than a boat in a tossing sea, with one untrained man aboard? But suppose one adds training to the man, and he employs that training. Is there not then a loss of spontaneity? But is there a loss of freedom? Is there rather not a gain in the freedom of the man, insofar as he is now more the master of his own fate than he was before? And if one gives this man, oars and sails so that he may employ his training more effectively; and adds a compass; and a map; and a

motor; and a crew of well-trained men with whom he may work and who may share in the various tasks? Does not each one of these additions lessen the spontaneity and enhance the freedom?

Planning seems an intrusion where it is held that the prevailing order is self-regulating, and that nothing harms its functioning so much as interference with that self-regulation. This helps develop in capitalist society an insistence that that which is planned, having lost spontaneity has lost freedom. But all this is based, usually without articulation, on the assumption that capitalism is a natural order and does function naturally. For in other matters no one acts in this planless and spontaneous manner. No one, for instance, would think of erecting a building without a plan; and no one would think of drawing up a plan for a building without some knowledge of the nature of materials, the laws of physics, the rules of design, etc. Such knowledge and such planning are prerequisites for the building; without them, and other things, one is not able to, or, in other words, is not free to, erect the building.

Conclusion

If one structures his view of all life and society in terms of the dialectical-materialist outlook, then that which is obvious in the building of a house is equally obvious in life and society as a whole. It is infinitely more complex and difficult in the latter than in the former, but the principle is the same. This is the meaning of Engels' famous phrase that "freedom is the appreciation of necessity." "Freedom," Engels continued in his *Anti-Duehring*, "does not consist in the dream of independence of natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends." Hence, "freedom of the will means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject."

Hence, too, as Engels pointed out, freedom "is necessarily a product of historical development." It grows as knowledge grows. The growth of knowledge leads ever nearer to the achievement of truth; the latter objectively exists; the former is the way to it. And, in the Biblical phrase, "Know ye the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." Stripping the word truth of its religious quality, of its dependence upon faith; secularizing it, and making it depend upon science, one has the path towards the achievement of freedom, in the Marxist view.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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