

corruption and graft, over-elaborate organization, meaningless "standardization" and red tape, are very serious. If we fully attain these five objectives in the Party, the government and the army, our policy of "better troops and simpler administration" will achieve its purpose, our difficulties will surely be overcome, and we shall silence the gibes about our approaching "collapse".

NOTES

¹ These figures are the totals paid in agricultural tax (public grain) by the peasants of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region from 1940 to 1942.

² For "better troops and simpler administration" see "A Most Important Policy", pp. 99-102 of this volume.

SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING METHODS OF LEADERSHIP

June 1943

1. There are two methods which we Communists must employ in whatever work we do. One is to combine the general with the particular; the other is to combine the leadership with the masses.

Our task, if no general and widespread call is issued, the masses cannot be mobilized for action. But if persons in leading positions confine themselves to a general call — if they do not personally, in some of the organizations, go deeply and concretely into the work called for, make a break-through at some single point, gain experience and use this experience for guiding other units — then they will have no way of testing the correctness or of enriching the content of their general call, and there is the danger that nothing may come of it. In the rectification movement of 1942, for example, there were achievements wherever the method of combining the general call with particular and specific guidance was used, but there were no achievements wherever this method was not used. In the rectification movement of 1943, each bureau and sub-bureau of the Central Committee and each area and prefectural Party committee, in addition to making a general call (a rectification plan for the whole year), must do the following things, gaining experience in the process. Select two or three units (but not too many) from the organization itself and from other organizations, schools or army units in the vicinity. Make a thorough study of those units, acquire a detailed knowledge of the development of the rectification movement in them, and a detailed knowledge of the political history, the ideological characteristics, the real in-study and the strong and weak points in the work of some (again not too many) representative members of

This decision on methods of leadership was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

their personnel. Furthermore, give personal guidance to those in charge to find concrete solutions for the practical problems facing those units. The leaders in every organization, school or army unit must do likewise, as each of these has a number of subordinate units. Moreover, this is the method by which the leaders combine leading and learning. No one in a leading position is competent to give general guidance to all the units unless he derives concrete experience from particular individuals and events in particular subordinate units. This method must be promoted everywhere so that leading cadres at all levels learn to apply it.

3. Experience in the 1942 rectification movement also proves it is essential for the success of the rectification that a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement, made up of a small number of activists and with the heads of the given unit as its nucleus, and that this leading group should link itself closely with the masses taking part in the movement. However active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand, if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level. The masses in any given place are generally composed of three parts, the relatively active, the intermediate and the relatively backward. The leaders must therefore be skilled in uniting the small number of active elements around the leadership and must rely on them to raise the level of the intermediate elements and to win over the backward elements. A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it. In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who come forward in the course of the struggle must constantly be promoted to replace those original members of the leading group who are inferior by comparison or who have degenerated. One fundamental reason why the work in many places and many organizations cannot be pushed ahead is the lack of a leading group which is united, linked with the masses and kept constantly healthy. A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people, or a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance

with the actual circumstances (and not thrown together artificially) and is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the teachers, the other staff and the students. In every organization, school, army unit, factory or village, whether large or small, we should give effect to the ninth of Stalin's twelve conditions for the bolshevization of the Party, namely, that on the establishment of a nucleus of leadership.¹ The criteria for such a leading group should be the four which Dimitrov enumerated in his discussion of cadres policy — absolute devotion to the cause, contact with the masses, ability independently to find one's bearings and observance of discipline.² Whether in carrying out the central tasks — war, production, education (including rectification) — or in checking-up on work, examining the cadres' histories, or in other activities, it is necessary to adopt the method of linking the leading group with the masses, in addition to that of linking the general call with particular guidance.

4. In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses". This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

5. The concept of a correct relationship between the leading group and the masses in an organization or in a struggle, the concept that correct ideas on the part of the leadership can only be "from the masses, to the masses", and the concept that the general call must be combined with particular guidance when the leadership's ideas are being put into practice — these concepts must be propagated everywhere during the present rectification movement in order to correct the mistaken viewpoints among our cadres on these questions. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, drawing together the activists to form a nucleus of leadership, and they do not see the importance of, or are not good at, linking this nucleus of leadership closely with the masses, and so their leadership becomes bureaucratic and divorced from the masses. Many comrades do not

see the importance of, or are not good at, summing up the experience of mass struggles, but fancying themselves clever, are fond of voicing their subjectivist ideas, and so their ideas become empty and impractical. Many comrades rest content with making a general call with regard to a task and do not see the importance of, or are not good at, following it up immediately with particular and concrete guidance, and so their call remains on their lips, or on paper or in the conference room, and their leadership becomes bureaucratic. In the present rectification movement we must correct these defects and learn to use the methods of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular in our study, in the check-up on work and in the examination of cadres' histories; and we must also apply these methods in all our future work.

6. Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership — such is the basic method of leadership. In the process of concentrating ideas and persevering in them, it is necessary to use the method of combining the general call with particular guidance, and this is a component part of the basic method. Formulate general ideas (general calls) out of the particular guidance given in a number of cases, and put them to the test in many different units (not only doing so yourself, but by telling others to do the same); then concentrate the new experience (sum it up) and draw up new directives for the guidance of the masses generally. Comrades should do this in the present rectification movement, and also in every other kind of work. Better leadership comes with greater skill in doing this.

7. In relating to subordinate units any task (whether it concerns the revolutionary war, production or education; the rectification movement, check-up on work or the examination of cadres' histories; propaganda work, organizational work or anti-espionage, or other work), a higher organization and its departments should in all cases go through the leader of the lower organization concerned so that he may assume responsibility; in this way both division of labour and unified centralized leadership are achieved. A department at a higher level should not go solely to its counterpart at the lower level (for instance, a higher department concerned with organization, propaganda or anti-espionage should not go solely to the corresponding department at the lower level), leaving the person in over-all charge of the lower organization (such as the secretary, the chairman, the

director or the school principal) in ignorance or without responsibility. Both the person in over-all charge and the person with specific responsibility should be informed and given responsibility. This centralized method, combining division of labour with unified leadership, makes it possible, through the person with over-all responsibility, to mobilize a large number of cadres — on occasion even an organization's entire personnel — to carry out a particular task, and thus to overcome shortages of cadres in individual departments and turn a good number of people into active cadres for the work in hand. This, too, is a way of combining the leadership with the masses. Take, for instance, the examining of cadres' histories. If the job is done in isolation, if it is done only by the few people in the organization department in charge of such work, it certainly cannot be done well. But if it is done through the administrative head of a particular organization or school, who mobilizes many or even all of his staff, or many or even all of his students, to take part in the work, while at the same time the leading members of the organization department at the higher level give correct guidance, applying the principle of linking the leadership with the masses, then undoubtedly the task of examining the cadres' histories will be satisfactorily accomplished.

8. In any given place, there cannot be a number of central tasks at the same time. At any one time there can be only one central task, supplemented by other tasks of a second or third order of importance. Consequently, the person with over-all responsibility in the locality must take into account the history and circumstances of the struggle there and put the different tasks in their proper order; he should not act upon each instruction as it comes from the higher organization without any planning of his own, and thereby create a multitude of "central" tasks and a state of confusion and disorder. Nor should a higher organization simultaneously assign many tasks to a lower organization without indicating their relative importance and urgency or without specifying which is central, for that will lead to confusion in the steps to be taken by the lower organizations in their work and thus no definite results will be achieved. It is part of the art of leadership to take the whole situation into account and plan accordingly in the light of the historical conditions and existing circumstances of each locality, decide correctly on the centre of gravity and the sequence of the work for each period, steadfastly carry through the decision, and make sure that definite results are achieved. This is also a problem of method of leadership, and care must be taken to

only one
central task
at a time

solve it when applying the principles of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular.

9. Details concerning methods of leadership are not dealt with here; it is hoped that comrades in all localities will themselves do some hard thinking and give full play to their own creativeness on the basis of the principles here set forth. The harder the struggle, the greater the need for Communists to link their leadership closely with the demands of the vast masses, and to combine general calls closely with particular guidance, so as to smash the subjectivist and bureaucratic methods of leadership completely. All the leading comrades of our Party must at all times counterpose scientific, Marxist methods of leadership to subjectivist, bureaucratic methods of leadership and use the former to overcome the latter. Subjectivists and bureaucrats do not understand the principles of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular; they greatly impede the development of the work of the Party. To combat subjectivist and bureaucratic methods of leadership, we must promote scientific, Marxist methods of leadership both extensively and intensively.

NOTES

¹ See J. V. Stalin, "The Prospects of the Communist Party of Germany and the Question of Bolshevization", *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VII, p. 39.

² See Georgi Dimitrov, "Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism", *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Eng. ed., Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1937, pp. 138-39.

SOME POINTED QUESTIONS FOR THE KUOMINTANG

July 12, 1945

The last few months have witnessed a new event inside China's anti-Japanese camp, launched by many Kuomintang-led party organizations to wreck unity and undermine it. It assumes the form of an attack on the Comintern fact directed against the whole Chinese nation.

Consider first the Kuomintang armies. In armies throughout the country, as many as 200,000 the main forces are stationed in the Northwest. The 38th Group Armies, all under Hu Tsung-nan, Chief of the 3rd War Zone. Of these, two have the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, with assigned defence duty along the Yellow River at Tungkuan, against the Japanese invaders. This region has been under Japanese occupation for more than four years, and people there so long as there was no military clash. But now an unexpected change has taken place. Of the defence duty along the river -- the 1st, 16th and 20th Armies, two have been removed, the 1st Army Corps to the area of Lyu and Chushua and the 90th to the area of Lu. The 1st Army is actively preparing to attack the Border Region. A part of the river defence is left unmanned to the Japanese invaders.

This inevitably makes people ask: What are the relations between these Kuomintang people and the Japanese? Day in day but many Kuomintang people are spreading propaganda that the Communist Party

Consider that Tiao-tung wrote his editorial for me in

are mere abstractions, and when the mist surrounding them is dispelled, it becomes clear that men do not make several distinct histories—the history of law, the history of morals, the history of philosophy, etc.—but only one history, the history of their own social relations, which are determined by the state of the productive forces in each particular period. *What is known as ideologies is nothing but a multiform reflection in the minds of men of this single and indivisible history.*

Editorial Note
p. 6. Foot at p. 12

THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY¹

I

In the second half of the seventies the late Kablitz wrote an article entitled, "The Mind and the Senses as Factors of Progress," in which, referring to Spencer; he argued that the senses played the principal role in human progress, and that the mind played only a secondary role, and quite a subordinate one at that. A certain "esteemed sociologist" replied to Kablitz, expressing amusement and surprise at a theory which placed the mind "on the footboard." The "esteemed sociologist" was right, of course, in defending the mind. He would have been much more right, however, had he proved without going into the details of the question that Kablitz had raised, that his very method of presenting it was impossible and impermissible.

Indeed, the "factors" theory is unsound in itself, for it arbitrarily picks out different sides of social life, hypostasizes them, converts them into forces of a special kind, which, from different sides and with unequal success, draw the social man along the path of progress. But this theory is still less sound in the form presented by Kablitz, who converted into special sociological hypostases, not the various sides of the activities of the *social man*, but the different spheres of the *individual mind*. This is a veritable Herculean pillar of abstraction; beyond this one cannot go, for beyond it lies the comic kingdom of utter and obvious absurdity. It is to this that the "esteemed sociologist" should have drawn the attention of Kablitz and his readers.

Perhaps, after revealing the depths of abstraction into which the effort to find the predominating "factor" in history had led Kablitz, the "esteemed sociologist" might, by chance, have made some contribution to the critique of this "factors" theory. This would have been very useful for all of us at that time. But he proved unequal to his mission. He himself subscribed to that theory, differing from Kablitz only in his leanings toward *eclecticism*, and, consequently, all the "factors" seemed to him

equally important. Subsequently, the eclectic nature of his mind found particularly striking expression in his attacks on dialectical materialism, which he regarded as a doctrine that sacrifices all other factors to the economic "factor" and reduces the role of the individual in history to nothing. It never occurred to the "esteemed sociologist" that the "factors" point of view is alien to dialectical materialism, and that only one who is utterly incapable of thinking logically can see in it any justification of so-called *quietism*. Incidentally, it must be observed that the slip made by our "esteemed sociologist" is not unique; very many others have made it, are making it and, probably, will go on making it.

Materialists were accused of leanings toward quietism even before they had worked out their dialectical conception of nature and of history. Without making an excursion into the "depth of time," we will recall the controversy between the celebrated English scientists, Priestley and Price. Analyzing Priestley's theories, Price argued that materialism was incompatible with the concept of free will, and that it precluded all independent activity on the part of the individual. In reply Priestley referred to everyday experience. He would not speak of himself, he said, though by no means the most apathetic of creatures, but where would one find more mental vigor, more activity, more force and persistence in the pursuit of extremely important aims than among those who subscribe to the doctrine of necessity? Priestley had in view the religious, democratic sect they known as Christian Necessarians.* We do not know whether this sect was as active as Priestley, who belonged to it, thought it was. But that is not important.

There can be not the slightest doubt that the materialist conception of the human will is quite compatible with the most vigorous practical activity. Lanson observes that "all the doctrines which called for the utmost exertion of human will asserted, in principle, that the will was impotent; they rejected

*A Frenchman of the 17th century would have been surprised at this combination of materialism and religious dogma. In England, however, nobody thought it strange. Priestley himself was very religious. Different countries, different customs.

free will and subjected the world to fatalism."* Lanson was wrong in thinking that every repudiation of what is called free will leads to fatalism; but this did not prevent him from noting an extremely interesting historical fact. Indeed, history shows that even fatalism was not always a hindrance to energetic, practical action; on the contrary, in certain epochs it was a *psychologically necessary basis for such action*. In proof of this, we will point to the Puritans, who in energy excelled all the other parties in England in the 17th century; and to the followers of Mohammed, who in a short space of time subjugated an enormous part of the globe, stretching from India to Spain. Those who think that as soon as we are convinced of the inevitability of a certain series of events we lose all psychological possibility to help bring on, or to counteract, these events, are very much mistaken. †

Here, everything depends upon whether my activities constitute an inevitable link in the chain of inevitable events. If they do, then I waver less and the more resolute are my actions. There is nothing surprising in this. When we say that a certain individual regards his activities as an inevitable link in the chain of inevitable events, we mean, among other things, that for this individual, lack of free will is tantamount to *incapability of inaction*, and that this lack of free will is reflected in his mind as the *impossibility of acting differently from the way he is acting*. This is precisely the psychological mood that can be expressed in the celebrated words of Luther: "Here I stand, I can do no other," and thanks to which men display the most indomitable energy,

*See his *Histoire de la littérature française*, I.

†It is well known that, according to the doctrines of Calvin, all men's actions are predetermined by God: "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he within himself has ordained what it behoves shall happen to each man" (*Institutio*, III, Ch. 5). According to the same doctrine, God chooses certain of his servants to liberate unjustly oppressed peoples. Such was Moses, who liberated the people of Israel. Everything goes to show that Cromwell also regarded himself as such an instrument of God: he always called his actions the fruits of the will of God, and probably he *quite sincerely* was convinced that they were so. For him, all these actions were colored by necessity beforehand. This did not prevent him from striving for victory after victory; it even gave this striving indomitable power.

perform the most astonishing feats. Hamlet never knew this mood; that is why he was only capable of moaning and reflecting. And that is why Hamlet would never have accepted a philosophy according to which freedom is merely necessity transformed into mind. Fichte rightly said: "As the man is, so is his philosophy."

II

Some people have taken seriously Stammler's remarks about the allegedly insoluble contradiction that is said to be characteristic of a certain West European social-political theory [Marxism]. We have in mind the well-known example of the eclipse of the moon. As a matter of fact, this is a supremely absurd example. The combination of conditions that are necessary to cause an eclipse of the moon does not, and cannot under any circumstances, include human action; and, for this reason alone, a party to assist the eclipse of the moon can arise only in a lunatic asylum. But even if human action did serve as one of these conditions, none of those who keenly desired to see an eclipse of the moon would join the eclipse of the moon party if they were convinced that it would certainly take place *without their aid*. In this case, "their quietism" would merely be abstention from *unnecessary*, i.e., *useless*, action and would have no affinity with real quietism.

If the example of the eclipse of the moon were no longer to appear nonsensical to the above-mentioned party, it must be entirely changed. We would have to imagine that the moon is endowed with a mind, and that her position in celestial space, which causes her eclipse, appears to her as the fruit of the self-determination of her own will; that this position not only gives her enormous pleasure, but is absolutely necessary for her peace of mind; and that this is why she always passionately strives to occupy it.* After imagining all this, the question would have to

*"It is as if the compass needle took pleasure in turning toward the north, believing that its movement was independent of any other cause, and unaware of the imperceptible movements of magnetic matter." Leibniz, *Théodicée*, Lausanne, 1760, 598.

be asked: What would the moon feel if she discovered, at last, that it is not her will and not her "ideals" which determine her movement in celestial space, but, on the contrary, that her movement determines her will and her "ideals"? According to Stammler, such a discovery would certainly make her incapable of moving, unless she succeeded in extricating herself from her predicament by some logical contradiction. But such an assumption is totally groundless. This discovery might serve as a *formal* reason for the moon's bad temper, for feeling out of harmony with herself, for the contradiction between her "ideals" and mechanical reality. But since we are assuming that the "moon's psychological state" *in general*, is determined, in the last analysis, by her movement, the cause of her disturbed peace of mind must be sought for in her movement. On careful examination, it might be found that when the moon was at her apogee she grieved over the fact that her will was not free; and when she was at her perigee, this very circumstance served as a new, formal cause of her happiness and good spirits. Perhaps, the opposite might have happened; perhaps it would have transpired that she found the means of reconciling free will with necessity, not at her perigee, but at her apogee.

Be that as it may, such a reconciliation is undoubtedly possible; being conscious of necessity is quite compatible with the most energetic, practical action. At all events, this has been the case in history so far. Men who have repudiated free will often have excelled all their contemporaries in strength of will, and asserted their will to the utmost. Numerous examples of this can be cited. They are known universally. They can be forgotten, as Stammler evidently does, only if one deliberately refuses to see historical reality as it actually is. This attitude is strongly marked among our subjectivists, for example, and among some German philistines. Philistines and subjectivists, however, are not men, but mere *phantoms*, as Belinsky would have said.

However, let us examine more closely the case in which a man's own actions—past, present or future—seem to him entirely colored by necessity. We already know that such a man, regarding himself as a messenger of God, like Mohammed, as one chosen by ineluctable destiny, like Napoleon, or as the ex-

pression of the irresistible force of historical progress, like some of the public men in the 19th century, displays almost elemental strength of will, and sweeps from his path like a house of cards all the obstacles set up by the small-town Hamlets and Hamlet-kins.* But this case interests us now from another angle, namely: When the consciousness of my lack of free will presents itself to me only in the form of the complete subjective and objective impossibility of acting differently from the way I am acting, and when, at the same time, my actions are to me the most desirable of all other possible actions, then in my mind necessity becomes identified with freedom and freedom with necessity; and then, I am unfree only in the sense that *I cannot disturb this identity between freedom and necessity*, I cannot oppose one to the other, *I cannot feel the restraint of necessity*. But such a lack of freedom is at the same time its *fullest manifestation*.

Zimmel says that freedom is always freedom from something, and, when freedom is not conceived as the opposite of restraint it is meaningless. That is so, of course. But this slight, elementary truth cannot serve as a ground for refuting the thesis that freedom means being conscious of necessity, which constitutes one of the most brilliant discoveries ever made by philosophic thought. Zimmel's definition is too narrow; it applies only to freedom from external restraint. As long as we are discussing only such restraints it would be extremely ridiculous to identify freedom with necessity: a pickpocket is not free to steal your pocket-handkerchief while you are preventing him from doing so and until he has overcome your resistance in one way or another. In addition to this elementary and superficial conception of freedom, however, there is another, incomparably

*We will quote another example, which vividly illustrates how strongly people of this category feel. In a letter to her teacher, Calvin René, the Duchess of Ferrara (of the house of Louis XII) wrote as follows: "No, I have not forgotten what you wrote me: that David bore mortal hatred toward the enemies of God. And I will never act differently, for if I knew that the King, my father, the Queen, my mother, the late lord, my husband (*feu monsieur mon mari*) and all my children had been cast out by God, I would hate them with a mortal hatred and would wish them in Hell".... What terrible, all-destroying energy the people who felt like this could display! And yet these people denied that there was such a thing as free will.

more profound. For those who are incapable of thinking philosophically this concept does not exist at all; and those who are capable of thinking philosophically grasp it only when they have cast off dualism and realize that, contrary to the assumption of the dualists, there is no gulf between the subject and the object.

The Russian subjectivist opposes his utopian ideals to our capitalist reality and goes no further. The subjectivists are stuck in the bog of dualism. The ideals of the so-called Russian "disciples" [the Marxists] resemble capitalist reality far less than the ideals of the subjectivists. Notwithstanding this, however, the "disciples" have found a bridge which unites ideals with reality. The "disciples" have elevated themselves to monism. In their opinion, in the course of its development, capitalism will lead to its own negation and to the realization of their, the Russian "disciples"—and not only the Russian—ideals. This is historical *necessity*. The "disciple" serves as an *instrument of this necessity* and cannot help doing so, owing to his social status and to his mentality and temperament, which were created by his status.

This, too, is an *aspect of necessity*. Since his social status has imbued him with this character and no other, he not only serves as an instrument of necessity and cannot help doing so, but he *passionately desires, and cannot help desiring*, to do so. This is an *aspect of freedom*, and, moreover, of freedom that has grown out of necessity, i.e., to put it more correctly, it is freedom that is identical with necessity—it is necessity transformed into freedom.* This freedom is also freedom from a certain amount of restraint; it is also the antithesis of a certain amount of restriction. Profound definitions do not refute superficial ones, but, supplementing them, include them in themselves.

But what sort of restraint, what sort of restriction, is in question in this case? This is clear: the moral restraint which curbs the energy of those who have not cast off dualism; the

*"Necessity becomes freedom, not by disappearing, but only by the external expression of their inner identity." Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Nürnberg, 1816.

restriction suffered by those who are unable to bridge the gulf between ideals and reality. Until the individual has won this freedom by heroic effort in philosophical thinking he does not fully belong to himself, and his mental tortures are the shameful tribute he pays to external necessity that stands opposed to him. But as soon as this individual throws off the yoke of this painful and shameful restriction he is born for a new, full life, hitherto never experienced; and his *free* actions become the *conscious and free* expression of necessity. Then he will become a great social force; and then nothing can, and nothing will, prevent him from

*Bursting on cunning falsehood
Like a storm of wrath divine...*

III

Again, being conscious of the absolute inevitability of a given phenomenon can only increase the energy of a man who sympathizes with it and who regards himself as one of the forces which called it into being. If such a man, conscious of the inevitability of this phenomenon, folded his arms and did nothing he would show that he was ignorant of arithmetic.

Indeed, let us suppose that phenomenon A must necessarily take place under a given sum of circumstances. You have proved to me that a part of this sum of circumstances already exists and that the other part will exist in a given time, T. Being convinced of this, I, the man who sympathizes with phenomenon A, exclaim: "Good!" and then go to sleep until the happy day when the event you have foretold takes place. What will be the result? The following: In your calculations, the sum of circumstances necessary to bring about phenomenon A included *my activities*, equal, let us say to *a*. As, however, I am immersed in deep slumber, the sum of circumstances favorable for the given phenomenon at time T will be, not S, but $S - a$, which changes the situation. Perhaps my place will be taken by another man, who was also on the point of inaction but was saved by the sight of my apathy, which to him appeared to be pernicious.

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In that case, force *a* will be replaced by force *b*, and if *a* equals *b*, the sum of circumstances favorable for A will remain equal to S, and phenomenon A will take place, after all at time T.

But if my force cannot be regarded as being equal to zero, if I am a skilful and capable worker, and nobody has replaced me, then we will not have the full sum S, and phenomenon A will take place later than we assumed, or not as fully as we expected, or it may not take place at all. This is as clear as daylight; and if I do not understand it, if I think that S remains S even after I am replaced, it is only because I am unable to count. But am I the only one unable to count? You, who prophesied that the sum S would certainly be available at time T, did not foresee that I would go to sleep immediately after my conversation with you; you were convinced that I would remain a good worker to the end—the force was less reliable than you thought. Hence, you too counted badly. But let us suppose that you had made no mistake, that you had made allowance for everything. In that case, your calculations will assume the following form: you say that at time T the sum S will be available. This sum of circumstances will include my replacement as a *negative magnitude*; and it will also include, as a *positive magnitude*, the stimulating effect on strong-minded men of the conviction that their strivings and ideals are the subjective expression of objective necessity. In that case, the sum S indeed will be available at the time you appointed, and phenomenon A will take place.

I think this is clear. But if this is clear, why was I confused by the idea that phenomenon A was inevitable? Why did it seem to me that it condemned me to inaction? Why, in discussing it, did I forget the simplest rules of arithmetic? Probably because, owing to the circumstances of my upbringing, I already had a very strong leaning toward inaction and my conversation with you served as the drop which filled the cup of this laudable inclination to overflowing. That is all. Only in this sense—as the cause that revealed my moral flabbiness and uselessness—did the consciousness of necessity figure here. It cannot possibly be regarded as the *cause* of this flabbiness; the causes of it are the circumstances of my upbringing. And so... and so—arithmetic is

a very respectable and useful science, the rules of which should not be forgotten even by—I would say, particularly by—philosophers.

But what effect will the consciousness of the necessity of a given phenomenon have upon a strong man who does *not sympathize* with it and *resists* its taking place? Here the situation is somewhat different. It is very possible that it will cause the vigor of his resistance to relax. But when do the opponents of a given phenomenon become convinced that it is inevitable? When the circumstances favorable to it are very numerous and very strong. The realization by its opponents that the phenomenon is inevitable and the relaxation of their energy are merely manifestations of the force of circumstances favorable to it. Such manifestations, in their turn, are a part of the favorable circumstances.

But the vigor of resistance will not be relaxed among all the opponents; among some of them the consciousness that the phenomenon is inevitable will cause the resistance to grow and become transformed into the vigor of despair. History in general, and the history of Russia in particular, provides not a few instructive examples of this sort of vigor. We hope the reader will be able to recall these without our assistance.

Here we are interrupted by Mr. Kareyev, who, while of course disagreeing with our views on freedom and necessity and, moreover, disapproving of our partiality for the "extremes" to which strong men go, nevertheless, is pleased to encounter in the pages of our journal the idea that the individual may be a great social force. The worthy professor joyfully exclaims: "I have always said that!" And this is true. Mr. Kareyev, and all the subjectivists, have always ascribed a very important role to the individual in history. And there was a time when they enjoyed considerably sympathy among advanced young people who were imbued with noble strivings to work for the commonweal and, therefore, naturally were inclined to attach great importance to individual initiative.

In essence, however, the subjectivists have never been able to solve, or even to present properly, the problem of the role of the individual in history. As against the influence of the *laws*

of social-historical progress, they advanced the "activities of critically thinking individuals," and thus created, as it were, a new species of the factors theory: critically thinking individuals were *one factor* of this progress; its own laws were the *other factor*. This resulted in an extreme incongruity, which one could put up with as long as the attention of the active "individuals" was concentrated on the practical problems of the day and they had no time to devote to philosophical problems. But the calm which ensued in the eighties gave those who were capable of thinking enforced leisure for philosophical reflection, and since then the subjectivist doctrine has been bursting at all its seams, and even falling to pieces, like the celebrated overcoat of Akakii Akakievich. No amount of patching was of any use, and one after another thinking people began to reject subjectivism as an obviously and utterly unsound doctrine.

As always happens in such cases, however, the reaction against this doctrine caused some of its opponents to go to the opposite extreme. While some subjectivists, striving to ascribe the widest possible role to the "individual" in history, refused to recognize the historical progress of mankind as a process expressing laws, some of their later opponents, striving to bring out more sharply the coherent character of this progress, were evidently prepared to forget that *men make history, and, therefore, the activities of individuals cannot help being important in history*. They have declared the individual to be a *quantité négligeable*. In theory, this extreme is as impermissible as the one reached by the more ardent subjectivists. It is as unsound to sacrifice the thesis to the antithesis as to forget the antithesis for the sake of the thesis. The correct point of view will be found only when we succeed in uniting the points of truth contained in them into a synthesis.*

IV

This problem has been of interest to us for some time, and we have long wanted to invite our readers to join us in tackling

*In our striving for a synthesis, we were forestalled by the same Mr. Kareyev. Unfortunately, however, he went no farther than to admit the truism that man consists of a soul and a body.

It. we were restrained, however, by certain ^{fears} ~~fears~~; we thought that perhaps our readers had already solved it for themselves and that our proposal would be belated.

These fears have now been dispelled. The German historians have dispelled them for us. We are quite serious in saying this. The fact of the matter is that lately a rather heated controversy has been going on among the German historians over great men in history. Some have been inclined to regard the political activities of these men as the main and almost the *only* spring of historical development, while others have been asserting that such a position is one-sided and that the science of history must have in view, not only the activities of great men, and not only political history, but historical life as a whole (*das Ganze des geschichtlichen Lebens*).

One of the representatives of the latter trend is Karl Lamprecht, author of *The History of the German People*. Lamprecht's opponents accused him of being a "collectivist" and a materialist: he was even placed on a par with—*horrible dictu* [horrible to say]—the "Social-Democratic atheists," as he expressed it in winding up the debate. When we became acquainted with his views we found that the accusations hurled against this poor savant were utterly groundless. At the same time we were convinced that the present-day German historians were incapable of solving the problem of the role of the individual in history. We then decided that we had a right to assume that the problem was still unsolved even for a number of Russian readers, and that something could still be said about it that would not be altogether lacking in theoretical and practical interest.

Lamprecht gathered a whole collection (*eine artige Sammlung*, as he expresses it) of the views of prominent statesmen on their own activities in the historical milieu in which they pursued them; in his polemics, however, he confined himself for the time being to references to some of the speeches and opinions of Bismarck. He quoted the following words, uttered by the Iron Chancellor in the North German Reichstag on April 16, 1869:

"Gentlemen, we can neither ignore the history of the past nor create the future, I would like to warn you against the mistake

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that causes people to advance the hands of their clocks, thinking that thereby they are hastening the passage of time. My influence on the events I took advantage of is usually exaggerated; but it would never occur to anyone to demand that I should make history. I could not do that even in conjunction with you, although together, we could resist the whole world. We cannot make history; we must wait while it is being made. We will not make fruit ripen more quickly by subjecting it to the heat of a lamp; and if we pluck the fruit before it is ripe we will only prevent its growth and spoil it."

Referring to the evidence of Joly, Lamprecht also quotes the opinions which Bismarck expressed more than once during the Franco-Prussian war. Again, the idea that runs through these opinions is that "we cannot make great historical events, but must adapt ourselves to the natural course of things and limit ourselves to securing what is already ripe." Lamprecht regards this as the profound and whole truth. In his opinion, a modern historian cannot think otherwise, provided he is able to peer into the depths of events and not restrict his field of vision to too short an interval of time. Could Bismarck have caused Germany to revert to natural economy? He would have been unable to do this even at the height of his power. General historical circumstances are stronger than the strongest individuals. For a great man, the general character of his epoch is "empirically given necessity."

This is how Lamprecht reasons, calling his view a universal one. It is not difficult to see the weak side of this "universal" view. The above quoted opinions of Bismarck are very interesting as a psychological document. One may not sympathize with the activities of the late German Chancellor, but one cannot say that they were insignificant, that Bismarck was distinguished for "quietism." It was about him that Lassalle said: "The servants of reaction are no orators; but God grant that progress has servants like them." And yet this man, who at times displayed truly iron energy, considered himself absolutely impotent in face of the natural course of things, evidently regarding himself as a simple instrument of historical development. This proves once again that one can see phenomena in the light of necessity

and at the same time be a very energetic statesman. But
 it is only in this respect that Bismarck's opinions are interesting; they
 cannot be regarded as a solution of the problem of the role of
 the individual in history.

According to Bismarck, events occur of themselves, and we
 can secure what they prepare for us. But every act of "securing"
 is also an historical event. What is the difference between such
 events and those that occur of themselves? Actually, nearly
 every historical event is simultaneously an act of the "securing"
 by somebody of the already ripened fruit of preceding develop-
 ment and a link in the chain of events which are preparing the
 fruits of the future. How can acts of "securing" be opposed to
 the natural course of things? Evidently, Bismarck wanted to
 say that individuals and groups of individuals operating in
 history never were and never will be all-powerful. This, of
 course, is beyond all doubt. Nevertheless, we would like to
 know what their power—far from omnipotent, of course—de-
 pends on; under what circumstances it grows and under what
circumstances it diminishes. Neither Bismarck nor the learned
 advocate of the "universal" conception of history who quotes
 him answers these questions.

must examine
 under what cir-
 the ind. influences
 particular events

It is true that Lamprecht gives more reasonable quotations.*
 For example, he quotes the following words of Monod, one of
 the most prominent representatives of contemporary historical
 science in France:

"Historians are too much in the habit of paying attention
 only to the brilliant, clamorous and ephemeral manifestations
 of human activity, to great events and great men, instead of
 depicting the great and slow changes of economic conditions
and social institutions, which constitute the really interesting
 and intransient part of human development—the part which,
 to a certain extent, may be reduced to laws and subjected, to
 a certain extent, to exact analysis. Indeed, important events
 and individuals are important precisely as signs and symbols.

*Leaving aside Lamprecht's other philosophical and historical essays, we refer
 to his essay, "Der Ausgang des geschichtswissenschaftlichen Kampfes," *Die*
Zukunft 1897, No. 41.

politics is the reflection of the ec. base.

of different moments of ^{the} historical developments. But most of the events that are called historical have the same relation to real history as the waves which rise up from the surface of the sea, gleam in the light for a moment and break on the sandy shore, leaving no trace behind them, have to the deep and constant motion of the tides."

Lamprecht declares that he is prepared to put his signature to every one of these words. It is well known that German savants are reluctant to agree with French savants and the French are reluctant to agree with the German. That is why the Belgian historian Pirenne was particularly pleased to emphasize, in *Revue Historique* the fact that Monod's conception of history coincides with that of Lamprecht. "This harmony is extremely significant," he observed. "Evidently, it shows that the future belongs to the new conception of history."

V

We do not share Pirenne's pleasant expectations. The future cannot belong to vague and indefinite views, and such, precisely, are the views of Monod and particularly of Lamprecht. Of course, one cannot but welcome a trend which declares that the most important task of the science of history is to study social institutions and economic conditions. This science will make great progress when such a trend definitely becomes consolidated.

In the first place, however, Pirenne is wrong in thinking that this is a new trend. It arose in the science of history as far back as the twenties of the 19th century; Guizot, Mignet, Augustin Thierry and, subsequently, Tocqueville and others, were its brilliant and consistent representatives. The views of Monod and Lamprecht are but a faint copy of an old but excellent original. Secondly, profound as the views of Guizot, Mignet and the other French historians may have been for their time, much in them has remained unelucidated. They do not provide a full and definite solution of the problem of the role of the individual in history. And the science of history must provide this solution if its representatives are destined to rid themselves

of their one-sided conception of their subject. The future belongs to the school that finds the best solution of this problem, among others.

The views of Guizot, Mignet and the other historians who belonged to this trend were a reaction against the views on history that prevailed in the 18th century and constituted their antithesis. In the 18th century the students of the philosophy of history reduced everything to the conscious activities of individuals. True, there were exceptions to the rule even at that time: the philosophical-historical field of vision of Vico, Montesquieu and Herder, for example, was much wider. But we are not speaking of exceptions; the great majority of the thinkers of the 18th century regarded history exactly in the way we have described.

In this connection it is very interesting to peruse once again the historical works of Mably, for example. According to Mably, Minos created the whole of the social and political life and ethics of the Cretes, while Lycurgus performed the same service for Sparta. If the Spartans "spurned" material wealth, it was due entirely to Lycurgus, who "descended, so to speak, into the depths of the hearts of his fellow-citizens and there crushed the germ of love for wealth" (*descendit pour ainsi dire jusque dans le fond du cœur des citoyens*, etc.).* And if, subsequently, the Spartans strayed from the path the wise Lycurgus had pointed out to them, the blame for this rests on Lysander, who persuaded them that "new times and new conditions called for new rules and a new policy."† Researches written from the point of view of such conceptions have very little affinity with science, and were written as sermons solely for the sake of the moral "lessons" that could be drawn from them.

It was against such conceptions that the French historians of the period of the Restoration revolted. After the stupendous events at the end of the 18th century it was absolutely impossible any longer to think that history was made by more or less prominent and more or less noble and enlightened individuals

**Œuvres Complètes de l'abbé de Mably*, London, 1783, IV, 3, 14-22, 24, 192.

†*Ibid.*, 10.

18th Century
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who, at their own discretion, imbued the unenlightened but obedient masses with certain sentiments and ideas. Moreover, this philosophy of history offended the plebeian pride of the bourgeois theoreticians. They were prompted by the same feelings that revealed themselves in the 18th century in the rise of bourgeois drama. In combating the old conceptions of history, Thierry used the same arguments that were advanced by Beaumarchais and others against the old aesthetics.* Lastly, the storms which France had just experienced very clearly revealed that the course of historical events by no means was determined solely by the conscious actions of men; this circumstance alone was enough to suggest the idea that these events were due to the influence of some hidden necessity, operating blindly like the elemental forces of nature, but in accordance with certain immutable laws.

It is an extremely remarkable fact—which nobody, as far as we know, has pointed to before—that the French historians of the period of the Restoration applied the new conception of history as a process conforming to laws most consistently in their works on the French Revolution. This was the case, for example, in the works of Mignet. Chateaubriand called the new school of history fatalistic. Formulating the tasks which it set the investigator, he said:

“This system demands that the historian shall describe without indignation the most brutal atrocities, speak without love about the highest virtues and with his glacial eye see in social life only the manifestation of irresistible laws due to which every phenomenon occurs exactly as it inevitably had to occur.”†

This is wrong, of course. The new school did not demand that the historian should be impassive. Augustin Thierry even said quite openly that political passion, by sharpening the mind of the investigator, may serve as a powerful means of discovering

*Compare his first letter on *l'Histoire de France* with *l'Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux* in the first volume of *Œuvres complètes de Beaumarchais*.

†*Œuvres complètes de Chateaubriand*, Paris, 1804, VII, 58. We also recommend the next page to the reader; one might think that it was written by Mr. N. Mikhailovsky.

the truth.* Even only slight familiarity with the historical works of Guizot, Thierry or Mignet would show that they strongly sympathized with the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the lords temporal and spiritual, as well as with its efforts to suppress the demands of the rising proletariat. What is incontrovertible is the following: The new school of history arose in the twenties of the 19th century at a time when the bourgeoisie had already vanquished the aristocracy, although the latter was still striving to restore some of its old privileges.

The proud consciousness of the victory of their class was reflected in all the arguments of the historians of the new school. And as the bourgeoisie was never distinguished for knightly chivalry, one can sometimes discern a note of harshness toward the vanquished in the arguments of its scientific representatives. "*Le plus fort absorbe le plus faible,*" says Guizot, in one of his polemical pamphlets, "*et il est de droit.*" [The strongest absorbs the weakest, and he has a right to do so.] His attitude toward the working class is no less harsh. It was this harshness, which at times assumed the form of calm detachment, that misled Chateaubriand. Moreover, at that time it was not yet quite clear what was meant when it was said that history conformed to certain laws. Lastly, the new school may have appeared to be fatalistic because, striving firmly to adopt this point of view, it paid little attention to the great individuals in history.† Those who had been brought up on the historical ideas of the 18th century found it difficult to accept this. Objections to the views of the new historians poured in from all sides, and then the controversy flared up which, as we have seen, has not ended to this day.

*See "Considérations sur l'histoire de France," appendix to *Récits des temps Mérovingiens*, Paris, 1840, 72.

†In a review of the third edition of Mignet's *History of the French Revolution*, Sainte-Beuve characterized that historian's attitude toward great men as follows: "In face of the vast and profound popular emotions which he had to describe, and of the impotence and nullity to which the sublimest genius and the saintliest virtue are reduced when the masses arise, he was seized with pity for men as individuals, could see in them, taken in isolation, only their weakness, and would not allow them to be capable of effective action, except through union with the multitude."

In January 1826, in a review in the *Globe* of the fifth and sixth volumes of Mignet's *History of the French Revolution*, Sainte-Beuve wrote as follows:

"At any given moment by the sudden decision of his will, a man may introduce into the course of events a new, unexpected and changeable force, which may alter that course, but which itself cannot be measured owing to its changeability."

It must not be thought that Sainte-Beuve assumed that "sudden decisions" of human will occur without cause. No, that would have been too naive. He merely asserted that the mental and moral qualities of a man who is playing a more or less important role in public life, his talent, knowledge, resoluteness or irresoluteness, courage or cowardice, etc., cannot help having a marked influence on the course and outcome of events; and yet these qualities cannot be explained solely by the general laws of development of a nation; they are always, and to a considerable degree, acquired as a result of the action of what may be called the accidents of private life. We will quote a few examples to explain this idea, which, incidentally, seems to me clear enough as it is.

During the War of the Austrian Succession the French army achieved several brilliant victories and it seemed that France was in a position to compel Austria to cede fairly extensive territory in what is now Belgium; but Louis XV did not claim this territory because, as he said, he was fighting as a king and not as a merchant, and France got nothing out of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. If, however, Louis XV had been a man of a different character, the territory of France would have been enlarged and as a result her economic and political development would have taken a somewhat different course.

As we know, France waged the Seven Years' War in alliance with Austria. It is said that this alliance was concluded as a result of the strong pressure of Madame Pompadour, who had been extremely flattered by the fact that, in a letter to her, proud Maria-Theresa had called her "cousin" or "dear friend" (*bien bonne amie*). Hence, one can say that had Louis XV been a man of stricter morals, or had he submitted less to his favorite's

influence, Madame Pompadour would not have been able to influence the course of events to the extent that she did, and they would have taken a different turn.

Further, France was unsuccessful in the Seven Years' War; her generals suffered several very shameful defeats. Speaking generally, their conduct was very strange, to say the least. Richelieu engaged in plunder, and Soubise and Broglie were constantly hindering each other. For example, when Broglie was attacking the enemy at Villinghausen, Soubise heard the gunfire but did not go to his comrade's assistance, as had been arranged and as he undoubtedly should have done, and Broglie was obliged to retreat.* The extremely incompetent Soubise enjoyed the protection of the aforesaid Madame Pompadour. We can say again that had Louis XV been less lascivious, or had his favorite refrained from interfering in politics, events would not have turned out so unfavorably for France.

French historians say that there was no need whatsoever for France to wage war on the European continent, and that she should have concentrated all her efforts on the sea in order to resist England's encroachments on her colonies. The fact that she acted differently was again due to the inevitable Madame Pompadour, who wanted to please "her dear friend," Maria-Theresa. As a result of the Seven Years' War, France lost her best colonies, which undoubtedly greatly influenced the development of her economic relations. In this case, feminine vanity appears in the role of the influential "factor" of economic development.

Do we need any other examples? We will quote one more, perhaps the most astonishing one. During the aforesaid Seven Years' War, in August 1761, the Austrian troops, having united with the Russian troops in Silesia, surrounded Frederick near Striegau. Frederick's position was desperate but the Allies were tardy in attacking, and General Buturlin, after facing the enemy for twenty days, withdrew his troops from Silesia, leaving only a

*Incidentally, others say that Broglie was to blame for not waiting for his comrade, as he did not want to share the laurels of victory with him. This makes no difference to us, as it does not alter the case in the least.

part of his forces as reinforcements for the Austrian General Laudon. Laudon captured Schweidnitz, near which Frederick was encamped, but this victory was of little importance. Suppose, however, Buturlin had been a man of firmer character? Suppose the Allies had attacked Frederick before he had time to entrench himself? They might have routed him, and he would have been compelled to yield to all the victors' demands. And this occurred barely a few months before a new accidental circumstance, the death of Empress Elizabeth, immediately changed the situation greatly in Frederick's favor. We would like to ask: What would have happened had Buturlin been a man of more resolute character, or had a man like Suvorov been in his place?

In examining the views of the "fatalist" historians, Sainte-Beuve gave expression to another opinion which is also worthy of attention. In the aforementioned review of Mignet's *History of the French Revolution*, he argued that the course and outcome of the French Revolution were determined, not only by the general causes which had given rise to the Revolution, and not only by the passions which in turn the Revolution had roused, but also by numerous minor phenomena which had escaped the attention of the investigator and which were not even a part of social phenomena, properly so called. He wrote:

"While the passions [roused by social phenomena] were operating, the physical and physiological forces of nature were not inactive: stones continued to obey the law of gravity; the blood did not cease to circulate in the veins. Would not the course of events have changed had Mirabeau, say, not died of fever, had Robespierre been killed by the accidental fall of a brick or by a stroke of apoplexy, or if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet? And will you dare to assert that the outcome would have been the same? Given a sufficient number of accidents, similar to those I have assumed, the outcome might have been the very opposite of what, in your opinion, was inevitable. I have a right to assume the possibility of such accidents because they are precluded neither by the general causes of the Revolution nor by the passions roused by these general causes."

Then he goes on to quote the well-known observation that history would have taken an entirely different course had Cleopatra's nose been somewhat shorter; and, in conclusion, admitting that very much more could be said in defense of Mignet's view, he again shows where this author goes wrong. Mignet ascribes solely to the action of general causes those results which many other, minor, dark and elusive causes had helped to bring about; his stern logic, as it were, refuses to recognize the existence of anything that seems to him to be lacking in order and law.

VI

Are Sainte-Beuve's objections sound? I think they contain a certain amount of truth. But what amount? To determine this we will first examine the idea that a man can "by the sudden decision of his will" introduce a new force into the course of events which is capable of changing the course considerably. We have quoted a number of examples, which we think very well explain this. Let us ponder over these examples.

Everybody knows that during the reign of Louis XV military affairs steadily went from bad to worse in France. As Henri Martin has observed, during the Seven Years' War the French army, which always had numerous prostitutes, tradesmen and servants in its train, and which had three times as many pack horses as saddle horses, had more resemblance to the hordes of Darius and Xerxes than to the armies of Turenne and Gustavus-Adolphus.* Archenholtz says in his history of this war that the French officers, when appointed for guard duty, often deserted their posts to go dancing somewhere in the vicinity, and obeyed the orders of their superiors only when they thought fit.

This deplorable state of military affairs was due to the deterioration of the aristocracy, which, nevertheless, continued to occupy all the high posts in the army, and to the general dislocation of the "old order," which was rapidly drifting to its

**Histoire de France*, 4th edition, XV, 520-21.

doom. These *general* causes alone would have been quite sufficient to make the outcome of the Seven Years' War unfavorable to France. But undoubtedly the incompetence of generals like Soubise greatly increased the chances of failure for the French army which these general causes already provided. Soubise retained his post, thanks to Madame Pompadour; and so we must count the proud Marquise as one of the "factors" significantly reinforcing the unfavorable influence of these general causes on the position of French affairs.

The Marquise de Pompadour was strong, not because of her own strength, but because of the power of the king who was subject to her will. Can we say that the character of Louis XV was exactly what inevitably it was bound to be, in view of the general course of development of social relations in France? No, given the same course of development a king might have appeared in his place with a different attitude toward women. Sainte-Beuve would say that the action of obscure and intangible physiological causes was sufficient to account for this. And he would be right. But, if that is so, the conclusion emerges that these obscure physiological causes, by affecting the progress and results of the Seven Years' War, also in consequence affected the subsequent development of France, which would have proceeded differently if the Seven Years' War had not deprived her of a great part of her colonies. Does not this conclusion, we then ask, contradict the conception of a social development conforming to laws?

No, not in the least. The effect of personal peculiarities in the instances we have discussed is undeniable; but no less undeniable is the fact that such an effect could occur only *in the given social conditions*. After the battle of Rosbach, the French became fiercely indignant with Soubise's protectress. Every day she received numbers of anonymous letters, full of threats and abuse. This very seriously disturbed Madame Pompadour; she began to suffer from insomnia.* Nevertheless, she continued to protect Soubise. In 1762 she remarked in one of her letters to him that he was not justifying the hopes that had been placed in him, but

*See *Memoires de madame du Haliffet*, Paris, 1824, 181.

she added: "Have no fear, however, I will take care of your interests and try to reconcile you with the king."* As you see, she did not yield to public opinion.

Why did she not yield? Probably because French society of that day *had no means of compelling* her to do so. But why was French society of that day unable to do so? It was prevented from doing so by its form of organization, which in turn was determined by the relation of social forces in France at that time. Hence, it is the relation of social forces in the last analysis, which explains the fact that Louis XV's character and the caprices of his favorite could have such a deplorable influence on the fate of France. Had it not been the king who had a weakness for the fair sex, but the king's cook or groom, this would not have had any historical significance.

Clearly, it is not the weakness that is important here, but the social position of the person afflicted with it. The reader will understand that these arguments can be applied to all the above-quoted examples. In these arguments it is necessary to change only what needs changing, for example, to put Russia in the place of France, Buturlin in place of Soubise, etc. That is why we will not repeat them.

It follows, then, that by virtue of particular traits of their character individuals can influence the fate of society. Sometimes this influence is very considerable; but the possibility of exercising this influence, and its extent, are determined by the form of organization of society, by the relation of forces within it. The character of an individual is a "factor" in social development only where, when, and to the extent that social relations permit it to be such.

We may be told that the extent of personal influence may also be determined by the talents of the individual. We agree. But the individual can display his talents only when he occupies the position in society necessary for this. Why was the fate of France in the hands of a man who lacked totally the ability and desire to serve society? Because such was the form of organization of that society. It is the form of organization that in any given period

*See *Lettres de la marquise de Pompadour*, London, 1772, 1.

determines the role and, consequently, the social significance that may fall to the lot of talented or incompetent individuals.

But if the role of individuals is determined by the form of organization of society, how can their social influence, which is determined by the role they play, contradict the conception of social development as a process expressing laws? It does not contradict it; on the contrary, it serves as one of its most vivid illustrations.

Here, however, we must observe the following. The possibility—determined by the form of organization of society—that individuals may exercise social influence opens the door to the role of so-called *accident* in the historical destiny of nations. Louis XV's lasciviousness was an inevitable consequence of the state of his physical constitution, but in relation to the general course of France's development the state of his constitution was *accidental*. Nevertheless, as we have said, it did influence the fate of France and served as one of the causes which determined this fate. The death of Mirabeau, of course, was due to pathological processes which obeyed definite laws. The inevitability of these processes, however, did not arise out of the general course of France's development, but out of certain particular features of the celebrated orator's constitution and out of the physical conditions under which he had contracted his disease. In relation to the general course of France's development these features and conditions were *accidental*. And yet, Mirabeau's death influenced the further course of the Revolution and served as one of the causes which determined it.

Still more astonishing was the effect of accidental causes in the above-mentioned example of Frederick II, who succeeded in extricating himself from an extremely difficult situation only because of Buturlin's irresolution. Even in relation to the general cause of Russia's development Buturlin's appointment may have been accidental, in the sense that we have defined that term, and, of course, it had no relation whatever to the general course of Prussia's development. Yet it is not improbable that Buturlin's irresolution saved Frederick from a desperate situation. Had Suvorov been in Buturlin's place, the history of Prussia might have taken a different course.

It follows, then, that sometimes the fate of nations depends on accidents, which may be called *accidents of the second degree*. "In allem Endlichen ist ein Element des Zufälligen," said Hegel. [In everything finite there are accidental elements.] In science we deal only with the "finite"; hence we can say that all the processes studied by science contain some accidental elements. Does not this preclude the scientific cognition of phenomena? No. "Accident is relative. It appears only at the point of intersection of inevitable processes." For the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, the appearance of Europeans in America was *accidental* in the sense that it did not follow from the social development of these countries. But the passion for navigation which possessed West Europeans at the end of the Middle Ages was not accidental; nor was the fact that the European forces easily overcame the resistance of the natives. The consequences of the conquest of Mexico and Peru by Europeans were also not accidental; in the last analysis, these consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the economic position of the conquered countries on the one hand, and the economic position of the conquerors on the other. And these forces, like their resultant, can fully serve as objects of scientific investigation.

The accidents of the Seven Years' War exercised considerable influence upon the subsequent history of Prussia. But their influence would have been entirely different at a different stage of Prussia's development. Here, too, the accidental consequences were determined by the resultant of two forces: the social-political conditions of Prussia on the one hand, and the social-political condition of the European countries that influenced her, on the other. Hence, here too, accidents do not in the least hinder the scientific investigation of phenomena.

We know now that individuals often exercise considerable influence upon the fate of society, but this influence is determined by the internal structure of that society and by its relation to other societies. But this is not all that has to be said about the role of the individual in history. We must approach this question from still another side.

Sainte-Beuve thought that had there been a sufficient number of petty and dark causes of the kind that he had mentioned,

the outcome of the French Revolution would have been the opposite of what we know it to have been. This is a great mistake. No matter how intricately the petty, psychological and physiological causes may have been interwoven, under no circumstances would they have eliminated the great social needs that gave rise to the French Revolution; and as long as these needs remained unsatisfied the revolutionary movement in France would have continued. To make the outcome of this movement the opposite of what it was, the needs that gave rise to it would have had to be the opposite of what they were; and this, of course, no combination of petty causes would ever be able to bring about.

The causes of the French Revolution lay in the character of *social relations*; and the petty causes assumed by Sainte-Beuve could lie only in the *personal qualities of individuals*. The final cause of social relationships lies in the state of the productive forces. This depends on the qualities of individuals only in the sense, perhaps, that these individuals possess more or less talent for making technical improvements, discoveries and inventions. Sainte-Beuve did not have these qualities in mind. No other qualities, however, enable individuals directly to influence the state of productive forces, and, hence, the social relations which they determine, i.e., *economic relations*. No matter what the qualities of the given individual may be, they cannot eliminate the given economic relations if the latter conform to the given state of productive forces. But the personal qualities of individuals make them more or less fit to satisfy those social needs which arise out of the given economic relations, or to counteract such satisfaction.

Plekhanov
X

The urgent social need of France at the end of the 18th century was the substitution for the obsolete political institutions of new institutions that would conform more to her economic system. The most prominent and useful public men of that time were those who were more capable than others of helping to satisfy this most urgent need.

Capable
Mirabeau

We will assume that Mirabeau, Robespierre and Napoleon were men of that type. What would have happened had premature death not removed Mirabeau from the political stage?

The constitutional monarchist party would have retained its considerable power for a longer period; its resistance to the republicans would, therefore, have been more energetic. But that is all. No Mirabeau could, at that time, have averted the triumph of the republicans. Mirabeau's power rested entirely on the sympathy and confidence of the people; but the people wanted a republic, as the Court irritated them by its obstinate defense of the old order. As soon as the people had become convinced that Mirabeau did not sympathize with their republican strivings they would have ceased to sympathize with him; and then the great orator would have lost nearly all influence, and in all probability would have fallen a victim to the very movement that he vainly would have tried to check.

Approximately the same thing may be said about Robespierre. Let us assume that he was an absolutely indispensable force in his party; but even so, he was not the only force. If the accidental fall of a brick had killed him, say, in January 1793, his place, of course, would have been taken by somebody else, and although this person might have been inferior to him in every respect, nevertheless, events would have taken *the same course* as they did when Robespierre was alive. For example, even under these circumstances the Gironde would probably not have escaped defeat; but it is possible that Robespierre's party would have lost power somewhat earlier and we would now be speaking, not of the *Thermidor*² reaction, but of the *Floreal*, *Prairial* or *Messidor* reaction. Perhaps some will say that with his inexorable Terror, Robespierre did not delay but hastened the downfall of his party. We will not stop to examine this supposition here; we will accept it as if it were quite sound. In that case we must assume that Robespierre's party would have fallen not in *Thermidor*, but in *Fructidor*, *Vendemiaire* or *Brumaire*. In short, it may have fallen sooner or perhaps later, but it certainly would have fallen, because the section of the people which supported Robespierre's party was totally unprepared to hold power for a prolonged period. At all events, results "opposite" to those which arose from Robespierre's energetic action are out of the question.

Nor could they have arisen even if Bonaparte had been struck down by a bullet, let us say, at the Battle of Arcole. What he did in the Italian and other campaigns other generals would have done. Probably they would not have displayed the same talent as he did, and would not have achieved such brilliant victories; nevertheless the French Republic would have emerged victorious from the wars it waged at that time because its soldiers were incomparably the best in Europe.

As for the 18th of *Brumaire* and its influence on the internal life of France, here too, *in essence*, the general course and outcome of events would probably have been the same as they were under Napoleon. The Republic, mortally wounded by the events of the 9th of *Thermidor*, was slowly dying. The *Directoire* was unable to restore order which the bourgeoisie, having rid itself of the rule of the aristocracy, now desired most of all. To restore order a "good sword," as Siéyès expressed it, was needed. At first it was thought that General Jourdan would serve in this virtuous role, but when he was killed at Novi, the names of Moreau, MacDonald and Bernadotte were mentioned.* Bonaparte was only mentioned later; and had he been killed, like Jourdan, he would not have been mentioned at all, and some other "sword" would have been put forward.

It goes without saying that the man whom events had elevated to the position of dictator tirelessly must have been aspiring to power himself, energetically pushing aside and crushing ruthlessly all who stood in his way. Bonaparte was a man of iron energy and was remorseless in the pursuit of his goal. But in those days there were not a few energetic, talented and ambitious egoists besides him. The place Bonaparte succeeded in occupying probably would not have remained vacant. Let us assume that the other general who had secured this place would have been more peaceful than Napoleon, that he would not have roused the whole of Europe against himself, and therefore, would have died in the Tuileries and not on the island of St. Helena. In that case, the Bourbons would not have returned to France at all; for them, such a result would certainly have been

**La vie en France sous le premier Empire*, de Broc, Paris, 1895, 35-36.

the "opposite" of what it was. In its relation to the internal life of France as a whole, however, this result would have differed little from the actual result. After the "good sword" had restored order and had consolidated the power of the bourgeoisie, the latter would have soon tired of its barrack-room habits and despotism. A liberal movement would have arisen, similar to the one that arose after the Restoration; the fight would have gradually flared up, and as "good swords" are not distinguished for their yielding nature, the virtuous Louis-Philippe perhaps would have ascended the throne of his dearly beloved kinsmen, not in 1830, but in 1820, or in 1825.

All such changes in the course of events to some extent might have influenced the subsequent political, and through it, the economic life of Europe. Nevertheless, under no circumstances would the final outcome of the revolutionary movement have been the "opposite" of what it was. Owing to the specific qualities of their minds and characters, influential individuals can change the *individual features of events and some of their particular consequences*, but they cannot change their general trend, which is determined by other forces.

VII

Furthermore, we must also note the following. In discussing the role great men play in history, we nearly always fall victim to a sort of optical illusion, to which it will be useful to draw the reader's attention.

In assuming the role of the "good sword" to save public order, Napoleon prevented all the other generals from playing this role, and some of them might have performed it in the same way, or almost the same way, as he did. Once the public need for an energetic military ruler was satisfied, the social organization barred the road to the position of military ruler for all other talented soldiers. The power of this position became a power that was unfavorable to the appearance of other talents of a similar kind.

This is the cause of the optical illusion which we have mentioned. Napoleon's personal power presents itself to us in an

extremely magnified form, for we attribute to him the social power which had brought him to the front and supported him. Napoleon's power appears quite exceptional because the other powers similar to it did not pass from the potential to the real. And when we are asked, "What would have happened if there had been no Napoleon?" our imagination becomes confused and it seems to us that without him the social movement upon which his power and influence were based could not have taken place. ✓

In the history of the development of human intellect, the success of some individual hinders the success of another *individual* much more rarely. But even here we are not free from the above-mentioned optical illusion. When a given state of society sets certain problems before its intellectual representatives, the attention of prominent minds is concentrated upon them until these problems are solved. As soon as they have succeeded in solving them, their attention is transferred to another object. By solving a problem a given talent A diverts the attention of talent B from the problem already solved to another problem. And when we are asked: What would have happened if A had died before he had solved problem X?— we imagine that the thread of development of the human intellect would have been broken. We forget that had A died B, or C, or D might have tackled the problem, and the thread of intellectual development would have remained intact in spite of A's premature demise.

In order that a man who possesses a particular kind of talent may, by means of it, greatly influence the course of events, two conditions are needed: First, this talent must make him more conformable to the social needs of the given epoch than anyone else. If Napoleon had possessed the musical gifts of Beethoven instead of his own military genius he would, of course, not have become an emperor. Second, the existing social order must not bar the road to the person possessing the talent which is needed and useful precisely at the given time. This very Napoleon would have died as the barely known General, or Colonel, Bonaparte had the older order in France existed

another seventy-five years.* In 1789, Davout, Désaix, Marmont and MacDonald were subalterns; Bernadotte was a sergeant-major; Hoche, Marceau, Lefebvre, Pichegru, Ney, Masséna, Murat and Soult were non-commissioned officers; Augereau was a fencing master; Lannes was a dyer; Gouvion Saint-Cyr was an actor; Jourdan was a peddler; Bessières was a barber; Brune was a compositor; Joubert and Junot were law students; Kléber was an architect; Martier did not see any military service until the Revolution. †

Had the old order continued to exist until our day it would never have occurred to any of us that in France, at the end of the last [the 18th] century, certain actors, compositors, barbers, dyers, lawyers, peddlers and fencing masters had been potential military geniuses. ‡

Stendhal observed that a man who was born at the same time as Titian, in 1477, could have lived forty years with Raphael, who died in 1520, and with Leonardo da Vinci, who died in 1519; that he could have spent many years with Correggio, who died in 1534, and with Michelangelo, who lived until 1563; that he would have been no more than thirty-four years of age when Giorgione died; that he could have been acquainted with Tintoretto, Bassano, Veronese, Julian Romano and Andrea del Sarto; that, in short, he would have been the contemporary of all the great painters, with the exception of those who belonged to the Bologna School, which arose a full century later.** Similarly, it may be said that a man who was born in the same year as Wouwermann could have been acquainted per-

*Probably Napoleon would have gone to Russia, where he had intended to go just a few years before the Revolution. Here, no doubt, he would have distinguished himself in action against the Turks or the Caucasian highlanders, but nobody here would have thought that this poor, but capable, officer could have become the ruler of the world under favorable circumstances.

†See *Histoire de France*, V. Durey, Paris, 1893, II, 524-25.

‡In the reign of Louis XV, only one representative of the third estate, Chevert, could rise to the rank of lieutenant-general. In the reign of Louis XVI it was even more difficult for members of this estate to make a military career. See Rambeaud, *Histoire de la civilisation française*, 6th edition, II, 226.

***Historie de la Peinture en Italie*, Paris, 1889, 23-25.

sonally with nearly all the great Dutch painters;* and a man of the same age as Shakespeare would have been the contemporary of a number of remarkable playwrights.†

X It long has been observed that great talents appear whenever the social conditions favorable to their development exist. This means that every man of talent who *actually appears*, every man of talent who becomes a *social force*, is the product of *social relations*. Since this is the case, it is clear why talented people, as we have said, can change only individual features of events, but not their general trend; *they are themselves the product of this trend*; were it not for that trend they never would have crossed the threshold that divides the potential from the real.

It goes without saying that there is talent and talent. "When a fresh step in the development of civilization calls into being a new form of art," rightly says Taine, "scores of talents which only half express social thought appear around one or two geniuses who express it perfectly."‡ If, owing to certain mechanical or physiological causes unconnected with the general course of the social-political and intellectual development of Italy, Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci had died in their infancy, Italian art would have been less perfect, but the general trend of its development in the period of the Renaissance would have remained the same. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo did not create this trend; they were merely its best representatives. True, usually a whole school springs up around a man of genius, and his pupils try to copy his methods

*Terburg, Brower and Rembrandt were born in 1608; Adriaen Van-Ostade and Ferdinand Bol were born in 1610; Van der Holst and Gerard Dow were born in 1615; Wouwermann was born in 1620; Werniks, Everdingen and Painaker were born in 1621; Bergham was born in 1624 and Paul Potter in 1629; Jan Steen was born in 1626; Ruisdal and Metsu were born in 1630; Van der Haiden was born in 1637; Hobbema was born in 1638 and Adrian Van der Velde was born in 1639.

†"Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Middleton and Heywood, who appeared at the same time, or following each other, represented the new generation which, owing to its favorable position, flourished on the soil which had been prepared by the efforts of the preceding generation." Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, Paris, 1863, I, 468.

‡*Ibid.*, I, 5.

to the minutest details; that is why the gap that would have been left in Italian art in the period of the Renaissance by the early death of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci would have influenced strongly many of the secondary features of its subsequent history. But in essence there would have been no change in this history, provided there were no important change in the general course of the intellectual development of Italy due to general causes.

It is well known, however, that quantitative differences ultimately pass into qualitative differences. This is true everywhere, and is therefore true in history. A given trend in art may remain without any remarkable expression if an unfavorable combination of circumstances carries away, one after the other, several talented people who might have given it expression. But the premature death of such talented people can prevent the artistic expression of this trend only if it is too shallow to produce new talent. However, the depth of any given trend in literature and art is determined by its importance for the class or stratum whose tastes it expresses, and by the social role played by that class or stratum; here too, in the last analysis, everything depends upon the course of social development and on the relation of social forces.

VIII

Thus, the personal qualities of leading people determine the individual features of historical events; and the accidental element, in the sense that we have indicated, always plays some role in the course of these events, the trend of which is determined, in the last analysis, by so-called general causes, i.e., actually by the development of productive forces and the mutual relations between men in the social-economic process of production. Casual phenomena and the personal qualities of celebrated people are ever so much more noticeable than deeplying general causes. The 18th century pondered but little over these general causes, and claimed that history was explained by the conscious actions and "passions" of historical personages. The philosophers of that century asserted that his-

tory might have taken an entirely different course as a result of the most insignificant causes; for example, if some "atom" had started playing pranks in some ruler's head (an idea expressed more than once in *Système de la Nature*).³

The adherents of the new trend in the science of history began to argue that history could not have taken any other course than the one it has taken, notwithstanding all "atoms." Striving to emphasize the effect of general causes as much as possible, they ignored the personal qualities of historical personages. According to their argument, historical events would not have been affected in the least by the substitution of some persons for others, more or less capable.* But if we make such an assumption, we must admit that the *personal element is of no significance whatever in history*, and that everything can be reduced to the operation of general causes, to the general laws of historical progress. This would be going to an extreme which leaves no room for the particle of truth contained in the opposite opinion. It is precisely for this reason that the opposite opinion retained some right to existence. The collision between these two views assumed the form of an antinomy, the first part of which was general laws, and the second part the activities of individuals. From the point of view of the second part the antinomy, history was simply a chain of accidents; from the point of view of the first part it seemed that even the individual features of historical events were determined by the operation of general causes. But if the individual features of events are determined by the influence of general causes and do not depend upon the personal qualities of historical personages, it follows that these features are *determined by general causes* and cannot be changed, no matter how much these personages may change. Thus, the theory assumes a *fatalistic* character.

This did not escape the attention of its opponents. Sainte-Beuve compared Mignet's conception of history with that of

*According to their argument, i.e., when they began to discuss the tendency of historical events to conform to laws. When, however some of them simply described these phenomena, they sometimes ascribed even exaggerated significance to the personal element. What interests us now, however, are not their descriptions, but their arguments.

Bossuet. Bossuet thought that the force which causes historical events to take place comes from above, that events serve to express the divine will. Mignet sought for this force in the human passions, which are displayed in historical events as inexorably and immutably as the forces of nature. But both regarded history as a chain of phenomena which could not have been different, no matter what the circumstances; both were fatalists; in this respect, the philosopher was not far removed from the priest (*le philosophe se rapproche du prêtre*).

This reproach was justified as long as the doctrine that social phenomena conformed to certain laws reduced the influence of the personal qualities of prominent historical individuals to a cipher. And the impression made by this reproach was all the more strong for the reason that the historians of the new school, like the historians and philosophers of the 18th century, regarded *human nature* as a higher instance, from which all the *general causes* of historical movement sprang, and to which they were subordinated. As the French Revolution had shown that historical events are not determined by the *conscious* actions of men alone, Mignet and Guizot, and the other historians of the same trend, put in the forefront the effect of *passions*, which often rebelled against all control by the mind.

But if passions are the final and most general cause of historical events, then why is Sainte-Beuve wrong in asserting that the outcome of the French Revolution might have been the opposite of what we know it was if there had been individuals capable of imbuing the French people with passions opposite to those which had excited them? Mignet would have said: because other passions could not have excited the French people at that time owing to the very qualities of human nature. In a certain sense this would have been true. But this truth would have had a strongly fatalistic tinge, for it would have been on a par with the thesis that the history of mankind, in all its details, is predetermined by the *general* qualities of human nature. Fatalism would have appeared here as the result of the disappearance of the *individual in the general*. Incidentally, it is always the result of such a disappearance. It is said: "If all social phenomena are inevitable, then our activities cannot have any

significance." This is a correct idea wrongly formulated. We ought to say: If everything occurs as a result of the *general*, then the *individual*, including my efforts, is of no significance. *This* deduction is correct; but it is incorrectly employed. It is meaningless when applied to the modern materialist conception of history, in which there is room also for the *individual*. But it was justified when applied to the views of the French historians in the period of the Restoration.

At the present time, human nature can no longer be regarded as the final and most general cause of historical progress: if it is constant, it cannot explain the extremely changeable course of history; if it is changeable, obviously its changes are themselves determined by historical progress. At the present time we must regard the development of productive forces as the final and most general cause of the historical progress of mankind, and it is these productive forces that determine the consecutive changes in the social relations of men. Parallel with this *general* cause there are *particular* causes, i.e., *the historical situation* in which the development of the productive forces of a given nation proceeds and which, in the last analysis, is itself created by the development of these forces among other nations, i.e., the same general cause.

Finally, the influence of the *particular* causes is supplemented by the operation of *individual* causes, i.e., the personal qualities of public men and other "accidents," thanks to which events finally assume their *individual features*. Individual causes cannot bring about fundamental changes in the operation of *general and particular* causes which, moreover, determine the trend and limits of the influence of individual causes. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that history would have had different features had the individual causes which had influenced it been replaced by other causes of the same order.

Monod and Lamprecht still adhere to the human nature point of view. Lamprecht categorically, and more than once, has declared that in his opinion social mentality is the fundamental cause of historical phenomena. This is a great mistake, and as a result of this mistake the desire, very laudable in itself, to take into account the sum total of social life may lead only

to vapid eclecticism or, among the most consistent, to Kablitz's arguments concerning the relative significance of the mind and the senses.

But let us return to our subject. A great man is great not because his personal qualities give individual features to great historical events, but because he possesses qualities which make him most capable of serving the great social needs of his time, needs which arose as a result of general and particular causes. In his well-known book on heroes and hero-worship, Carlyle, calls great men *beginners*. This is a very apt description. A great man is a beginner precisely because he sees *farther* than others and desires things *more strongly* than others. He solves the scientific problems brought up by the preceding process of intellectual development of society; he points to the new social needs created by the preceding development of social relationships; he takes the initiative in satisfying these needs. He is a hero. But he is a hero not in the sense that he can stop or change the natural course of things, but in the sense that his activities are the conscious and free expression of this inevitable and unconscious course. Herein lies all his significance; herein lies his whole power. But this significance is colossal, and the power is terrible.

Bismarck said that we cannot make history and must wait while it is being made. But who makes history? It is made by the *social man*, who is its *sole "factor."* The social man creates his own, social, relationships. But if in a given period he creates given relationships and not others, there must be some cause for it, of course; it is determined by the state of his productive forces. No great man can foist on society relations which *no longer* conform to the state of these forces, or which *do not yet* conform to them. In this sense, indeed, he cannot make history, and in this sense he would advance the hands of his clock in vain; he would not hasten the passage of time, nor turn it back. Here Lamprecht is quite right: even at the height of his power Bismarck could not cause Germany to revert to natural economy.

Social-relationships have their inherent logic: as long as people live in given mutual relationships they will feel, think and act in a given way, and no other. Attempts on the part of

public men to combat this logic also would be fruitless; the natural course of things (this logic of social relationships) would reduce all his effort to nought. But if I know in what direction social relations are changing owing to given changes in the social-economic process of production, I also know in what direction social mentality is changing; consequently, I am able to influence it. Influencing social mentality means influencing historical events. Hence, in a certain sense, I *can make history*, and there is no need for me to wait while "it is being made."

Monod believes that really important events and individuals in history are important only as signs and symbols of the development of institutions and economic conditions. This is a correct although very inexactlly expressed idea; but precisely because this idea is correct it is wrong to oppose the activities of great men to "the *slow progress*" of the conditions and institutions mentioned. The more or less slow changes in "economic conditions" periodically confront society with the necessity of more or less rapidly changing its institutions. This change never takes place "by itself"; it always needs the intervention of *men*, who thus are confronted with great social problems. And it is those men who do more than others to facilitate the solution of these problems who are called great men. But solving a problem does not mean being only a "symbol" and a "sign" of the fact that it has been solved.

We think Monod opposed the one to the other mainly because he was carried away by the pleasant catchword "*slow*." Many modern evolutionists are very fond of this catchword. *Psychologically*, this passion is comprehensible; *inevitably* it arises in the respectable milieu of moderation and punctiliousness. . . . But *logically* it does not bear examination, as Hegel proved.

And it is not only for "beginners," not only for "great" men that a broad field of activity is open. It is open for all those who have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to love their neighbors. The concept *great* is a relative concept. In the ethical sense every man is great who, to use the Biblical phrase, "lays down his life for his friend."

THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS IN THE REVOLUTION

**The correct Marxist understanding
and application of factors in the socialist
revolution and socialist construction.
The connection between the laws of history
and revolutionary initiative.
The role of the vanguard party in the
revolutionary movement.**

by FOTO ÇAMI

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ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF REVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND PRACTICE IS THE CORRECT DIALECTICAL-MATERIALIST UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF THE ROLE OF THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE factors in the revolution and socialist construction.

This problem is very complex. It includes the relationship between matter and the ideal, between social being and social consciousness, the base and the superstructure, the economy and politics, theory and practice, the spontaneous movement and conscious and organized activity, etc.

Absolutizing one or the other side, in theory, leads either to vulgar materialism, to economism and the advocating of spontaneity or to idealism, subjectivism and voluntarism; while in politics it leads either to opportunism, reformism and revisionism or to adventurism, dogmatism and sectarianism. Viewed from this angle, this is a cardinal problem of vital importance for the victory of the revolution and socialism, a demarcation line dividing the materialists from the idealists, the Marxist-Leninists from the opportunists of every hue.

mode of production, which is the decisive force determining the entire physiognomy and development of society, including the birth and development of social ideas and theories. Engels wrote, "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise the main principle vis-à-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights". (F. Engels, Letter to J. Bloch, September 21-22, 1890).

In the last years of his life Engels, in a series of letters, returned to this problem and strove to stress the active role of the subjective factor, of various ideas, parties and institutions, of the superstructure in general, criticizing vulgar materialism and economism. He pointed out, "The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure... also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form". (F. Engels, Letter to J. Bloch, September 21-22, 1890).

But the evil against which Engels rose could not be averted. Opportunism, which was based precisely on vulgar materialism and economism, seized the second International. The theory of the "productive forces" and Bernstein's infamous slogan of "the movement everything, the aim nothing" became the basis of all the opportunist theories of the revisionists of that time which caused great damage to the working class revolutionary movement. What could not be done by Marx and Engels in their time, was done in the new historical conditions by Lenin. Imperialism, Lenin pointed out, is the "epoch when, according to the general admission of the Marxists, the objective conditions have already ripened for the destruction of capitalism..." (Complete works, vol. 26, p. 119; Russian edit.). Under these circumstances special importance was assumed by the role of the subjective factor which was elaborated by Lenin in an allround manner. In his work "What is to be done" and in many other works he scientifically argued the necessity and importance of the theory and party of the working class, forcefully stressing the thesis that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement

and that the role of vanguard can be played only by a party which is guided by the vanguard theory. Lenin elaborated the role of the subjective factor in fierce struggle against the ideological opponents of Marxism, who saw the development of society as a peaceful and spontaneous-evolutionary process which occurred without the intervention of man; who said that socialism would be established gradually, by itself as an inevitable result of economic development, without the class struggle, without the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, without the leadership of the Marxist party. The historic merit of the exposure and destruction of the opportunism of the traitorous second International belongs to Lenin. For the first time in the history of Marxist thought Lenin discovered the ideological roots of opportunism, which reside precisely in advocating economism and spontaneity in the revolutionary movement of the working class. Lenin also waged a resolute struggle against the subjectivism and voluntarism of the Narodnik-petty bourgeois, anarcho-syndicalist ideologists, Trotskyists and "left" opportunists who in fact negated the role and importance of the objective conditions and based everything on the will and consciousness of man.

In the present-day conditions the role of the objective and subjective factors has again emerged as a great and current problem. In that in theory and practice there are great distortions that harm the revolutionary movement. "Today", comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out at the 6th Congress of the PLA, there has been a revival of the various theories which preach spontaneity in the revolutionary movement, which hold the role of the conscious factor in contempt, which negate the role of theory and of the party of the proletariat.

The modern revisionists, led by the Soviet revisionists, just as their predecessors - the opportunists of the second International, have in fact slipped into the theory of the productive forces, into economism and reformism. They seek to prove that present-day capitalism is being integrated into socialism, that the working class can embark on the road of socialism even within the framework of the bourgeois order, that the transition to socialism can be made by means of reforms, through a peaceful road and through

Lenin dev'd the dial. rel. betw subj. + obj factors

Marx and the historic merit of Lenin

Discovering the materialistic understanding of history Marx for the first time also correctly solved the relationship between matter and consciousness, the objective and subjective factors in the development of human society. With this great discovery he dealt a lethal blow not only to idealism in social life, but also to vulgar materialism. "The weapon of criticism", he wrote, "certainly cannot replace criticism by means of weapons, material force must be overthrown by the same means of material force; but theory too, becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." (Marx and Engels, Works, vol. 1, p. 406, Russian edit.).

Marx and Engels lived at a time when the tasks laid down by the development of the labour movement and the elaboration of its ideology dictated the necessity, in the first place, of rejecting idealism, of arguing the fundamental materialist thesis that it is the conditions of the material life of society, it is the

evolution, that the struggle for socialism can also be led by non-proletarian classes and parties, that socialism can also be built on the basis of other «socialist» ideologies which are not Marxist-Leninist ideologies, etc.

Some other ideologists from among the ranks of the «New Left» in Latin America and in Western Europe go even further. They rise against the necessity of introducing socialist consciousness into the working class and the labouring masses; they say that the vanguard role can also be played by an «active minority» which emerge as a ferment of revolution, that consciousness and organization are spontaneously acquired in the process of the struggle, they are opposed to the necessity of the Marxist party, to its leading role and to its being built on the Leninist principles. In order to justify these anti-Marxist positions, their partisans are striving to prove that Lenin distorted the Marxist concept of the relationship between socialist consciousness and the spontaneous movement, between the party and the masses; that he in no way complemented Marx's doctrine about the party, but created a theory of his own, which is allegedly not found in the works of Marx, but is in opposition to them. In the final analysis, Lenin's doctrine, they say, may be correct and necessary for the backward countries, but it is entirely unsuited to the present-day conditions of the advanced capitalist countries where the distance between the vanguard and the class has been and is being greatly shortened and where the class is in a position to acquire socialist consciousness by itself.

All this confusion places the necessity of intensive struggle to defend the Marxist-Leninist principles from the distortions of the various revisionists and opportunists on the agenda even today. As comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out at the 6th Congress of the PLA, «The situation is such that the practical movement of the masses has advanced and continues to advance, while the subjective factor, consciousness, organization and their direction, in many countries has remained behind, and does not meet the tasks of the times». This is related, above all, to the out and out betrayal by the modern revisionists, which disorientated the ranks of the revolution ideologically and politically, and left the working class and the labouring masses

in many countries unarmed, without a revolutionary leadership. This vacuum is being filled and will continue to be filled with the creation and strengthening of the new Marxist-Leninist parties, which have the historic task of liberating the masses from opportunism and reformism and of leading them in the revolution.

Historic laws and revolutionary initiative

Analyzing the present situation in the world, comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out at the 6th Congress of the PLA that not only is this situation developing in favour of the revolution, but also, that revolution is becoming the general aspiration of the peoples, that the road of the development of present-day human society is opened and determined by revolution.

This conclusion derives from the scientific analysis of the present-day reality in the world, from the very contradictions of the capitalist and imperialist system, which irrevocably lead the working class and the labouring masses towards the revolution as the sole road to eliminate oppression and exploitation, to transform the world on the new socialist and communist basis. Capitalism creates all the material premises and the social force capable of carrying out the proletarian revolution, but without the role of the conscious factor there can be no radical transformation. «Capitalism itself», Lenin pointed out, «creates its own grave-digger, itself creates the elements of a new system, yet, at the same time, without a «leap» these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs and do not affect the rule of capital» (V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, vol. 16 «Differences in the European Labour Movement», p. 348).

The reformists and modern revisionists, with their anti-Marxist «theories», are striving to prove that present-day capitalism can be transformed into socialism by a peaceful road, by means of reforms, by extending bourgeois democracy and its institutions, by gradually occupying important economic and political positions in order to later seize the whole power and ensure the tran-

sition to socialism. The philosophical basis of these theories is economic vulgar materialism which denies or underestimates the role of the subjective factor in history, the role of the class struggle and of the Marxist-Leninist party, which confuses the objective with the spontaneous, while from the methodological viewpoint they are a negation of dialectics and its replacement with simple evolution. The political essence of these theories is the fight against the Marxist-Leninist theory of the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the preaching of the integration of capitalism into socialism. In order to make their reformist theories more convincing the Soviet and other revisionists badly distort even the notion of the revolutionary situation as the essential objective condition for the victory of the revolutionary situation is not created as a result of the sharpening of the social economic and political contradictions to the critical point, and it is not accompanied by the impetuous outburst of popular hatred. The working class, they say, can gradually extend the place d'armes of its offensive against the power of the monopolies by gradually removing them from key economic and political positions. In these circumstances, according to them, the revolutionary situation can assume the form of a chain of partial crises, reciprocally connected, extended in time and comparatively independent, where each of them leads to the occupation of specific positions, and taken together, they give us the revolution.

Thus, the modern revisionists see the revolution as a simple evolutionary process, as the totality of reforms. According to them, the demarcation line between the revolution and reforms has disappeared. In the present-day conditions, they say, democratic transformations and «structural» reforms are becoming stages on the road towards socialism, forms of the approach towards and transition to socialism.

While the modern revisionists, as right opportunists, hold to the issues of the day, to small economic demands, to the reforms and aims of the bourgeoisie and for their sake sacrifice the ultimate aim, deny the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, some «left» elements deny the necessity of the «back work», of the struggle for the econo-

mic, social and political demands of the working people, of legal work and of work in the organizations of the masses, they ignore the stages of the revolution, oppose various alliances, they are partisans of the immediate revolution, of the struggle for the seizure of state power and the establishment of socialism at one stroke.

It is clear that one of the most characteristic features of the opportunists of all hues is the ignoring of the distinctions between evolution and revolution, between reforms and the qualitative leap, between the struggle for democracy and independence and the struggle for socialism, between the struggle for immediate day to day demands and the struggle for the fundamental objectives. The establishment of a correct relationship between these two aspects of the revolutionary process as well as distinguishing the marxist-leninists from the reformists and modern revisionists also distinguishes them from the left opportunists. The ideological roots of these two currents reside precisely in the unilateral treatment of the revolutionary process. In Lenin's words, they "constantly exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another "lesson" of this development... But real life, real history include these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity" (Lenin, Complete works, vol. 16, p. 349, "Differences in the European Labour Movement").

A characteristic of the present-day revisionists, just as of all the right opportunists, is the philosophy of spontaneity, passivity, of observation that overestimates the objective conditions and waits with folded arms until all the factors of the revolution are ripe. These not only fail to show any concern for preparing, the subjective conditions, but, with their betrayal they have caused great ideological and political confusion. Even when revolutionary situations arise they do their utmost to curb the revolutionary movement of the masses, they prevent them from dealing the decisive blow to the ruling classes. Under the pretext of the lack of "objective conditions" and of the danger of adventurism, they act as servants of the bourgeoisie and are opposed to any revolutionary initiative and activity of the masses which

brings the revolution closer and speeds it up.

On this question, too, the Marxist-Leninists fight in two directions as well as fighting against the modern revisionists they also fight against the viewpoints of those representatives of "left" trends who are characterized by the overstimulation and the absolutization of the role of "subjective activity" in the transformation of reality and by the negation of the role of the objective conditions, of the real possibilities of the situation. These "left" trends see the will of the revolutionaries for action, their determination to throw themselves in to struggle irrespective of the conditions and situation, as the only determining factor.

According to them, even if a revolutionary situation does not exist it can and must be artificially created by the "vigorous actions" of a militant group consisting of several armed, brave and resolute men. In fact this is a kind of theory of heroes, which denies the role of the masses of the people as the creators of history. A revolutionary is a man of action, he does not wait with folded arms for the "great day" of the revolution, but continually works for its preparation. The direction and forms of his activity must always respond to the objective conditions, to the actual situation. No transformation whatsoever which is not ripe both in objective reality and in the consciousness of the masses can be carried out. The tasks laid down can be solved successfully only when they meet the requirements of the historical development of each country and the level of the consciousness and organization of the masses. Otherwise, the revolutionary vanguard breaks from the masses and falls into adventurism.

Revolutions, the 6th Congress of the PLA stressed, are ripened by the situation itself while their triumph or defeat depends on the situation of the subjective factor. But this factor cannot be represented by only one group of men, however conscious and determined they may be concerning the revolution, indeed not even by the party alone. For this it is indispensable for the majority of the workers to understand the necessity for a turning point and to be prepared to throw themselves en masse into revolutionary actions, for the communist party to have ensured great support from the working class and the

labouring masses, for the other sections of the working people, even when they do not give the party direct support for its entire line, to support it in certain sectors of the struggle.

"The subjective factor, comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out at the 6th Congress, is not prepared only through the actions of a "locus" of guerillas, nor only through agitation and propaganda. For this, as Lenin and life itself teach us, it is indispensable for the masses to become convinced through their own practical experience".

Revolutionary movement and the party

The preaching of spontaneity, as the ideology of opportunism in the labour movement, is spearheaded, in the first place, against the necessity of the Marxist-Leninist theory and party. The modern revisionists are spreading the illusion that in capitalism especially in the developed industrial countries, socialist consciousness springs from the spontaneous movement itself, that the push towards socialism comes spontaneously from the development of the productive forces and from the change of the ratio of forces in the world to the detriment of imperialism, that in these conditions all sorts of parties and organizations, from the liberal-bourgeois and social-democratic parties to the national liberation fronts and the trade unions in the service of the bourgeoisie, can become the bearers of the ideals of socialism and the leaders of the socialist transformation of society.

In fact, some representatives of the "leftist" forces irrespective of their subjective aims and objectives, also stand on a position of advocating spontaneity. They negate the necessity of theory, scientific consciousness, they rise against Lenin's thesis that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement, they deny the role of the vanguard armed with the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, they oppose the necessity of working out clear political programmes, scientific strategy and tactics. According to them the important thing is to start and carry out the revolution; while the question of who leads it: the Marxist-Leninist party or other po-

litical forces, is of no importance. The revolutions, they say, are led by revolutionaries whether they adhere to the party or not, there are no mathematical equations equating the vanguard with the Marxist-Leninist party, the guerrilla is the party in embryo, the people's army will be the nucleus of the party and not vice versa, etc., etc. In the practice of our days too, life confirms great Lenin's conclusion that the roots, the ideological sources of opportunism, both right and left, reside in advocating spontaneity in the revolutionary movement.

In his report delivered at the 6th Congress of the PLA, comrade Enver Hoxha pointed out that «it has already been historically proved that without its party, the working class, no matter what the conditions in which it lives and acts, does not become conscious by itself. That which transforms the working class from a class «in itself» into a class «for itself» is the party». Of course, a certain level of revolutionary, socialist consciousness does emerge from the objective conditions themselves or from the revolutionary struggle itself, but this is only a very low level; it is, as Lenin has called it, a trade-union consciousness. The high level of socialist conscience is not formed spontaneously, but by the Marxist-Leninist science and this is first mastered by the most advanced part of the class, which organizes itself into the proletarian party and then educates the entire class with it, clarifying the revolutionary aims and objectives, indicating the correct road for their attainment and leading it in its historic struggle.

The party is not only indispensable for introducing socialist consciousness into the working class and the labouring masses, for enlightening the various detachments of the spontaneous movement of the masses and for coordinating their actions, but to it belongs the leading role in the revolutionary movement, it is the theoretical, political and practical leading staff of the revolution in all its fields - political, ideological, economic and military. To deny the leading role of the party means to leave the working class unarmed before the bourgeoisie and reaction. History has provided no example whatsoever to show that the proletarian revolution can win and socialism be built without the communist party of the working class, without its leading role, let alone in opposition to the com-

munists. It can happen that, where the communist parties are weak or have slipped into revisionist and reformism, the lead of the revolution is taken by other political forces, but in this case we have to do with democratic or national liberation revolutions, which can be transformed into socialist proletarian revolutions only if the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party place themselves at their head.

To play its educative, organizing, mobilizing and guiding role the party cannot be just any sort of party. The role of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class can be played only by that party which is guided by the vanguard theory of the proletariat and which is built on the basis of the organizational principles of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin has the historic merit not only of having shown the proletariat that for its triumph it is indispensable for it to reinforce its unity of ideas on the basis of the Marxist ideology, with the «material unity of organization which makes compact the millions of working people in the army of the working class» (*Complete works, vol. 8 p. 404*), but also of having elaborated the organizational foundations of the building of the revolutionary party of the working class. In words, the Khrushchovite type revisionists uphold the Leninist norms and principles of party building, but in deeds, they have violated them, they have deprived them of their revolutionary content, they have bastardized them and caused them to degenerate into revisionist norms and they use them for their counter-revolutionary aims. Under the anti-Marxist slogans of «the party of the entire people» and the «mass party» they have liquidated the class character of the proletarian party, they have opened the doors to every opportunist, career-seeker and bourgeois intellectual; they have wiped out the distinction between the party and the working class and the masses.

The revisionist parties, as parties of social reform within the capitalist order, are organized in such a way that they are suited only to legal existence and activity within bourgeois legality. Just as Kautsky and company, the present-day revisionists, too, cannot imagine the party other than as a legal party. Even those few revisionist parties which in some countries, for historical reasons, are still

illegal, are seeking in every way to be part of bourgeois legality and to make common cause with the bourgeoisie.

In contradiction to these practices, Lenin stressed that only that working class party is worthy of its name which, when the necessity arises, is capable of passing into a state of illegality of combining legal work with illegal activity. With out complementing legal organization and activity with the creation of illegal bases, with illegal organization and activity, true revolutionary work cannot be done, the working class and the labouring masses cannot be prepared for the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Liberalism and legalism are the two most important organizational sources of revisionist degeneration and two fundamental features of the revisionist parties. They derive from the revisionist line, strategy and tactics of the «peaceful road». Departure from the ideological principles of Marxism-Leninism cannot fail to lead also to departure from the organizational principles of the building of the Marxist-Leninist party. Life has confirmed that the parties which slip into liberalism and legalism either degenerate into bourgeois parties of the social-democrat type, as is the case with the present-day revisionist parties, or suffer terrible disillusionment which costs the revolutionary movement dearly, as was the case of the communist party of Indonesia.

Some of the present-day revisionists in Italy, France and elsewhere go even further. They seek to prove that the Leninist norms and principles of party building have lost their value in our day; that they can still have value only for the backward countries, while for the developed capitalist and socialist countries they must be replaced with new norms and principles. They openly say that it is a question «not of some partial corrections of the Leninist model of the party, but of a radical change of the model itself», that «the problem must be totally re-examined and a new system of organizational principles must be determined».

They particularly attack the fundamental principle of party building - democratic centralism, which they see as the source of all evils, of bureaucracy and the degeneration of the party. They stand for a disintegrated party, without discipline

and unity of thought and action, for the complete freedom of factions and opposite lines, they conceive of the party as an inn with two doors, as a talking shop and they consider this as the climax of democracy.

Centralism and democracy are two principles forming a single unity. On their basis are formed and tempered the unity of thought and action of the party which can play its leading role in the entire revolutionary activity. Centralism without democracy is transformed into a bureaucratic centralism which places the leadership above and in opposition to the party and the class, whereas democracy without centralism is transformed into dissolution, anarchy and confusion. The evil does not reside in the principle of democratic centralism itself, but in counterposing centralism and democracy. In life, contradictions emerge between these two aspects, but the whole point is to know how to overcome them, and to implement the principle of democratic centralism in compliance with the conditions in which the party acts, illegal, legal or semi-legal, in capitalism or socialism, with the stages of the development of the revolution and of the party

itself. The forms of realizing and combining centralism and democracy change, and they cannot fail to change, but the principle of democratic centralism always remains a basic and inviolable principle of the building of the revolutionary party of the working class.

Today, when the revisionist parties have departed once and for all from the position of Marxism-Leninism in all fields - ideological and political, economic and military, cultural and organisational, the Marxist-Leninist parties are the bearers of the proletarian ideology, of the revolution and socialism. Although still young in many countries, they are genuine revolutionary parties which have set themselves the aim of realizing the historic mission of the working class. Pursuing a correct strategy and tactics, closely linking themselves with the broad masses of the people and strengthening and tempering the unity of the thought and action of their ranks in struggle against any right or left opportunist influence, they will assuredly fulfill the present-day historic demand - the creation of the subjective factor indispensable for the revolutionary transformation of objective reality.



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