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**Bernstein
and Modern
Revisionism**

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Bernstein and Modern Revisionism

"Revisionism" is on everyone's tongue. It is now such a commonplace charge among those within the communist movement that it would appear "everyone's" a revisionist: Hence, no one is a Marxist.

Yet, with all the charges and countercharges, some fundamental theoretical issues remain to be addressed. Or, rather, re-addressed, since they have been addressed before by some more capable (Marx, Engels and Lenin, among others); that is the purpose of this article.

What follows is a short analysis of what has come to be known as revisionist theory. Specifically, we shall attempt to demonstrate that revisionism is of a piece; that it is a general, unified theoretical approach that puts forward a capitalist (orthodox, unscientific) position while arguing that nothing more than a mere modification of Marxism is being proffered. To set forward the argument, we shall focus on the work of Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), the infamous theoretician of the German Social Democratic Party, who cogently put forth his views in Evolutionary Socialism (1899).

Why Bernstein? To be sure, Bernstein is attacked by all and sundry within the communist movement and is praised--as well he should be--by the intellectual representatives of capital. Bernstein's work is so transparent and has been attacked so vigorously that he seems a poor base upon which to develop a general argument--serving, almost, as a straw man.

We defend our choice on three bases. (1) Bernstein presents one of the most integrated and logically consistent of all revisionist tracts. (2) In point of fact, very few within the

communist movement have read Bernstein, and, thus, we should be exposed to his argument. (3) There is nothing fundamentally different in modern theoretical revisionist writings; it can be demonstrated that all revisionists have the same general theoretical tack.

One more word by way of general introduction: For this article we shall use the Schocken Books edition (1961) of Evolutionary Socialism. This choice allows the reader to easily verify the charges as to what Bernstein actually said, and it provides the added benefit of a glowing introduction by Sidney Hook. Hook, of course, is not a revisionist; he is an apostate. And, like all good apostates, he must demonstrate his enmity to his former "faith" by self-righteous (and loud) condemnation of that faith whenever he gets the opportunity. In his introduction, the apostate Hook warmly embraces the revisionist Bernstein: Although many cannot distinguish their friends from their enemies, the renegades have no such problem.

WHAT IS MARXISM?

To effectively critique revisionism, one must first have an objective basis upon which to develop the criticism. Lenin provides such a foundation in "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism". Succinctly, Marxism can be identified through three integrated aspects of the general theory: dialectical materialism; the labor theory of value; and class struggle. Let us briefly consider each in turn.

Dialectical materialism (or, in its application to society, historical materialism) merely states that matter--the real stuff of which nature or society is comprised--is primary and is in a constant state of change (though, of course, change is not itself constant). In the social application of this doctrine, the material foundation of society and of social change is the economic relations people enter into in order to carry out the primary social function of production.

The labor theory of value is an objective standard which follows from an initial examination of capitalism and upon which the fuller analysis of the economic organization is constructed. (For a more complete analysis, see "Labor Theory of Value", Science, Class, and Politics.) From this standard follows the theoretical analysis of exploitation under capitalism, focussing on the origins and distribution of surplus value, that portion of output produced by productive labor which is not returned to the working class. Without the labor theory of value--indeed, with any other standard--it is impossible to prove the existence of exploitation, the economic basis of injustice under capitalism, and to demonstrate the necessity of destroying this form of social organization in order for a decent society to emerge.

The theory of class struggle is the third necessary part of the general Marxist theory.¹ And this aspect of the main motive force of history under propertied arrangements (civil society) is inextricably connected with the two points outlined above. Classes are defined by their relationship to the production process, the basis of a materialist conception of history. Given the nature of the production process in such social organizations, there are fundamental antagonisms that produce the main propellants of society. Under capitalism, the basic class relationship, thus class antagonism, is that of the capitalists and workers. The heart of the conflict is the nature of the exploitation process, a process that cannot be explained unless one bases the analysis on the labor theory of value. All this, of course, leads to the Marxist position on the state as an instrument of class oppression rather than class reconciliation, the latter being a theoretical point of view which presupposes class harmony.

It can be seen, therefore, that these three parts of Marxist theory are integrated in one general whole. If any one aspect is proved invalid, the unity of the theoretical structure is ruptured and the argument collapses. This is not true for the bits and pieces that make up the

specific points of the analysis of capitalism--say, the transformation of values into prices. Any general scientific theory must be modified to accommodate changes either in knowledge as to how the parts of a system work or are fitted together or in the actual motion of the world (nature or society) itself. Thus, for example, when capitalism underwent its transformation from the competitive to the monopolistic mode, Marxism had to be adjusted accordingly. But Lenin, in doing so, did not attack or undermine the three component parts of Marxism.

Now, given the above summary, a revisionist argument must attempt to discredit these three aspects of the general theory. And it is this that separates the revisionist from the scientific modifier or even the honest but wrong-headed or befuddled critic (Luxemburg or Liebknecht the younger). Usually under the cover of adjusting Marx to satisfy changed conditions (a legitimate undertaking), the revisionist will attack the very foundations of Marxism and attempt to "modify" Marxism into a bourgeois apologia. Essentially, a revisionist tract will attack all or at least part of the three component parts of Marxism under the cover of merely revising Marx to accommodate changed conditions. Such an undertaking is illegitimate, and the revisionist uses illegitimate means to accomplish his end. What one observes in any revisionist tract are creative interpretations of "WHAT MARX REALLY SAID", reliance on the earlier works of Marx or on obscure, passing references in the later works, and, in the final analysis, rampant dishonesty.

BERNSTEIN ON MARX AND ENGELS

We begin the analysis with an extended quotation from the preface to Evolutionary Socialism:

I set myself against the notion that we have to expect shortly a collapse of the bourgeois economy, and

that social democracy should be induced by the prospect of such an imminent, great, social catastrophe to adapt its tactics to that assumption...

The adherents of this theory of a catastrophe, base it especially on the conclusions of the Communist Manifesto. This is a mistake in every respect.

The theory which the Communist Manifesto sets forth of the evolution of modern society was correct as far as it characterised the general tendencies of that evolution. But it was mistaken in several special deductions, above all in the estimate of the *time* the evolution would take. The last has been unreservedly acknowledged by Friedrich Engels, the joint author with Marx of the Manifesto, in his preface to the Class War in France. But it is evident that if social evolution takes a much greater period of time than was assumed, it must also take upon itself *forms* and lead to forms that were not foreseen and could not be foreseen then.

Social conditions have not developed to such an acute opposition of things and classes as is depicted in the Manifesto. It is not only useless, it is the greatest folly to attempt to conceal this from ourselves. The number of members of the possessing classes is to-day not smaller but larger. The enormous increase of social wealth is not accompanied by a decreasing number of large capitalists but by an increasing number of capitalists of all degrees. The middle classes change their character but they do not disappear from the social scale.

The concentration in productive industry is not being accomplished even to day in all its departments with equal thoroughness and at an equal rate. In a great many branches of production it certainly justifies the forecasts of the

socialist critic of society; but in other branches it lags even to-day behind them. The process of concentration in agriculture proceeds still more slowly...

In all advanced countries we see the privileges of the capitalist bourgeoisie yielding step by step to democratic organizations. Under the influence of this, and driven by the movement of the working classes which is daily becoming stronger, a social reaction has set in against the exploiting tendencies of capital, a counteraction which, although it still proceeds timidly and feebly, yet does exist, and is always drawing more departments of economic life under its influence...

He who holds firmly to the catastrophic theory of evolution must, with all his power, withstand and hinder the evolution described above, which, indeed, the logical defenders of that theory formerly did. But is the conquest of political power by the proletariat simply to be by a political catastrophe? Is it to be the appropriation and utilisation of the power of the State by the proletariat exclusively against the whole non-proletarian world?

He who replies in the affirmative must be reminded of two things. In 1872 Marx and Engels announced in the preface to the new edition of the Communist Manifesto that the Paris Commune had exhibited a proof that "the working classes cannot simply take possession of the ready-made State machine and set it in motion for their own aims." And in 1895 Friedrich Engels stated in detail in the preface to War of the Classes that the time of political surprises, of the "revolutions of small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious

masses" was to-day at an end, that a collision on a large scale with the military would be the means of checking the steady growth of social democracy and of even throwing it back for a time--in short, that social democracy would flourish far better by lawful than by unlawful means and by violent revolution. And he points out in conformity with this opinion that the next task of the party should be "to work for an uninterrupted increase of its votes" or to carry on a slow *propaganda of parliamentary activity*.

...if one subscribes to his (Engels') conclusions, one cannot reasonably take any offence if it is declared that for a long time yet the task of social democracy is, instead of speculating on a great economic crash, "to organise the working classes politically and develop them as a democracy and to fight for all reforms in the State which are adapted to raise the working classes and transform the State in the direction of democracy."

That is what I have said in my impugned article and what I still maintain in its full import. As far as concerns the question propounded above it is equivalent to Engel's dictum, for democracy is, at any given time, as much government by the working classes as these are capable of practising according to their intellectual ripeness and the degree of social development they have attained...

In this sense I wrote the sentence that the movement means everything for me and that what is usually called "the final aim of socialism" is nothing... (pp. XXIV-XXIX.)

In his general presentation of the principle issues in contention, Bernstein first sets himself against the so-called catastrophe theory of Marx

and Engels, which argues that capitalism is so ordered as to generate various crises resulting from its own internal contradictions. Writing in 1898 (sixteen years before the outbreak of World War I), Bernstein argues that Marx and Engels erred in their formulation, that the approach is outdated given changes within capitalist society, and that, in any case, both Marx and Engels abandoned this notion in their later, more mature works.

It follows that, if capitalism is no longer prone to catastrophic events, then the structure of capitalism has been modified so as to obviate such events. As catastrophes are the result of the internal contradictions of capitalism, then modern capitalism is no longer rent by such contradictions. Modern capitalism is, therefore, one of class harmony rather than class conflict. Thus, rather than the proletariat marching to power on the strength of a revolutionary upheaval, what will occur is the gradual, evolutionary democratising of society until all members of capitalist society share in and benefit from the social order. As this is now the situation, the older aim of socialism as the establishment of a new society, radically different from that of capitalism is "nothing", the gradual, evolutionary, democratic movement "means everything".

All this is internally consistent: And all this is directly opposed to the general theoretical position known as Marxism. We shall deal with the various points of the argument below and show how Bernstein attacks each and every component part of Marxism while claiming to be nothing more than a modern Marxist. At this point, however, we wish to demonstrate one point only: that Bernstein, in the initial defense of his position, is a conscious liar.

In the final analysis, Bernstein defends his departure from the traditional Marxist position by appeal to authority--Marx and Engels themselves. According to Bernstein, Marx and Engels abandoned their earlier revolutionary position as a result of historic events that took place in the intervening years. Thus, the more mature theoreticians support Bernstein's propositions.

To defend this claim, he cites from two sources, the 1872 preface to The Communist Manifesto and Engels preface to War of the Classes (or The Class Struggles in France).

In the new preface to The Manifesto, Marx and Engels state that "the working classes cannot simply take possession of the ready-made State machine and set it in motion for their own aims." This, of course, was the change which resulted from the lessons of the Paris Commune.

Now, what did Marx and Engels mean by the above statement? As Bernstein knew full well, given his position in the German Party, and his proximity to the leaders of that Party as well as to Engels, they did not mean that now revolution was to be abandoned, but rather that a revolutionary upheaval required the "smashing" of the capitalist state and the erection of a working class state. And this is precisely what Marx wrote (in a letter to Kugelmann) while the Commune was in existence, a position which he had previously espoused in the Eighteenth Brumaire. ("Marx to Kugelmann", April 12, 1871, in Selected Correspondence, p. 247.) In other words, Bernstein takes a single reference and twists it to make it appear that Marx and Engels themselves were revisionists. Even if one takes the sentence by itself, with no necessary context, it will be observed that it says nothing about adopting an evolutionary, Fabian program. Yet, this is what Bernstein hopes the reader will think it says.

Secondly, Bernstein presents Engels' statement in the preface to The Class Struggles in France in its truncated, vulgarized fashion, knowing full well that: 1) Engels initially acceded to a request of the German Party's executive committee to tone down his thoroughly revolutionary position and to place more emphasis on the reformist, legal work of the Party; and 2) Even this toned-down version was too much for the reformist leadership of the Party, who edited Engels' preface to eliminate all references to the necessity for revolutionary struggle. It was this bastard preface that appeared in The Class Struggles. (For the full account of this anti-socialist activity on the part of Bebel,

Liebknecht (the elder) and others, see Ilyichov, et.al., Frederick Engels, A Biography, pp 478-484.) And Bernstein, given his political proximity to these officials of the Party, knew full well that the Preface had been distorted.

But, all this is of secondary importance in the final analysis. Bernstein's major form of intellectual dishonesty is his appeal to authority. What Bernstein attempts to do is convert Marx and Engels into Bernsteinian revisionists by invoking their authority through their own (supposed) words, using selective quotations to accomplish this end.

To be sure, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with quoting the masters of the past--this is done all the time. However, any argument must stand on its own two feet independent of whatever anyone else has argued. It is distinctly possible that Marx and Engels can be quoted correctly and in context and that their position can be wrong. Bernstein's use of selective quotation (to which we shall return) and using such quotes as the last word to prove his own position, is unscientific and dishonest. If this is the way understanding develops, then science consists of two sides slinging quotes at each other.

But enough of all this. Let us proceed to Bernstein's analysis of capitalist society and of theory to show precisely where and how he develops his revisionist, anti-Marxist analysis.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF MARXIST SOCIALISM

The first two chapters of Bernstein's work are devoted to an examination of the three component parts of Marxism--and in this Bernstein is in full agreement with Lenin, at least as to what the three parts are. But what Bernstein does with the analysis of dialectical materialism, class struggle, and the labor theory of value produces a result fundamentally different from that of Marx and Engels.

The first step in Bernstein's "modification" of Marxism is to turn dialectical materialism into mechanical materialism:

To be a materialist means first of all to trace back all phenomena to the necessary movements of matter. These movements of matter are accomplished according to the materialist doctrine from beginning to end as a mechanical process, each individual process being the necessary result of preceding mechanical facts. Mechanical facts determine, in the last resort, all occurrences, even those which appear to be caused by ideas. It is, finally, always the movement of matter which determines the form of ideas and the directions of the will; and thus these also (and with them everything that happens in the world of humanity) are inevitable. The materialist is thus a Calvinist without God. If he does not believe in a predestination ordained by a divinity, yet he believes and must believe that starting from any chosen point of time all further events are, through the whole of existing matter and the directions of force in its parts, determined beforehand.

The application of materialism to the interpretation of history means then, first of all, belief in the inevitableness of all historical events and developments (pp. 6-7.)

For Bernstein, the "dialectical" materialism of Marx and Engels in this (Bernstein's) form is too "dogmatic". And indeed it is, given that this is not dialectical materialism at all. However, there is a saving grace. Alongside the dogmatic materialist approach which leaves no room for human consciousness except as an automatic reflex derived from the economic base of society, we find a milder view of human history in which ideology can assume a primary role in social change:

The dependence of men on the conditions of production appears much

more qualified in the explanation Friedrich Engels gives of historical materialism, during the lifetime of Karl Marx and in agreement with him, in his book against Duhring. There it reads that the "final causes of all social changes and political revolutions" are to be sought, not in the brains of men but "in changes of methods of production and exchange." But "final causes" includes concurrent causes of another kind--causes of the second or third degree, etc., and it is clear that the greater the series of such causes is, the more limited as to quantity and quality will be the determining power of the final causes. The fact of its action remains, but the final form of things does not depend on it alone. An issue which is the result of the working of different forces can only be reckoned upon with certainty when all the forces are exactly known and placed in the calculation according to their full value. The ignoring of a force of even a lower degree involves the greatest deviations, as every mathematician knows (p. 10.)

Now, to whatever degree other forces besides the purely economic, influence the life of society, just so much more also does the sway of what, in an objective sense, we call historic necessity change. In modern society we have to distinguish in this respect two great streams. On the one side appears an increasing insight into the laws of evolution and notably of economic evolution. With this knowledge goes hand in hand, partly as its cause, partly again as its effect, an increasing capability of directing the economic evolution. The economic natural force, like the physical, changes from the ruler of mankind to its servant according as its nature is

recognized. Society, theoretically, can be freer than ever in regard to the economic movement, and only the antagonism of interests among its elements--the power of private and group elements--hinders the full transition of freedom from theory to practice. Yet the common interest gains in power to an increasing extent as opposed to private interest, and the elementary sway of economic forces ceases according to the degree in which this is the case, and in all places where this is the case...Modern society is much richer than earlier societies in ideologies which are not determined by economics and by nature working as an economic force. Sciences, arts, a whole series of social relations are to-day much less dependent on economics than formerly, or, in order to give no room for misconception, the point of economic development attained to-day leaves the ideological, and especially the ethical, factors greater space for independent activity than was formerly the case. In consequence of this the interdependency of cause and effect between technical, economic evolution, and the evolution of other social tendencies is becoming always more indirect, and from that the necessities of the first are losing much of their power of dictating the form of the latter (pp. 14-16.)

Bernstein's argument can be readily summarized: The version of dialectical materialism usually set forth (by Bernstein--the mechanical, thus false, version) is too constrained, too dogmatic, too deterministic. Fortunately for the theory and practice of Marxism, this version was modified by Marx and Engels themselves. Essentially, while economics remain the basis of society, this does not mean that economic causes are necessarily the prime causal factors in any social movement. In fact, secondary and tertiary

forces can, given specific situations, assure primacy. In modern capitalist society, increasing knowledge of nature and of economic laws allows greater control over these laws and increasingly frees humans from the inevitability of these laws. Thus, the secondary forces, such as those of ideology, have become primary. The practical conclusion of all this is that ideology, now freed from the fetters of economic laws and motives and control, can lead society into the future. That is, ideas--say, of socialism--can dictate social change itself.

Observe first that this is precisely the same position as that put forward by the early utopian socialists: All one had to do was to put forward correct ideas of society and of social change, and, when enough people had accepted those ideas, society would change in conformity with those ideas. But the early utopians had an excuse for their position--they were writing before the advent of scientific socialism, a development made possible only by the development of capitalism itself to a certain stage of its history. (For details see Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.) Bernstein retreats to the utopian position after Marx and Engels had demonstrated its falsity. The Utopians were writing out of ignorance; Bernstein writes on the basis of knowledge--he consciously falsifies the scientific position.

The second consideration is that Bernstein's formulation is a straightforward renunciation of the Marxist position, all the while claiming to be nothing more than a modified (revised) theoretical adjustment of Marxism. It is true that both Marx and Engels argued that, while the economic organization is primary, secondary factors could assume primacy at particular times in particular circumstances. Certainly in a revolutionary situation, ideology becomes the key through which the transformation is undertaken. However, this ideology is not "free" of the economic base of society (contrary to Bernstein). Socialist ideology is first developed as a result of and in response to capitalist society. The position that the working class must lead the transformation,

smash the state, erect a new state, and create new economic relationships is necessarily the product of a scientific understanding of capitalist economic relationships and the evolution of capitalism over time.

For Bernstein, however, no dialectical relationship exists between the underlying economic structure and the ideological superstructure of society. Ideology is "free" to assume whatever form it wishes, unconstrained by capitalism itself. As ideology is free to assume different forms, and as it can lead society (without, again, ruling class constraints), then all "Marxists" have to do is demonstrate the correctness of their socialist ideology and, willy-nilly, society will follow where they lead.

Having turned dialectical materialism into its antithesis--mechanical idealism--Bernstein is now in a position to transform Marxism in its whole into a full-fledged defense of capitalism:

...the further development and elaboration of the Marxist doctrine must begin with a criticism of it (p.25; emphasis in original.)

The starting point for his criticism is the labor theory of value and the analysis of the origins of surplus value emanating from this theoretical foundation to the understanding of capitalist society. For the purpose of this article, we wish to point out only a few aspects of the labor theory of value which make Bernstein's attack necessary.

First, the labor theory of value rests on a social foundation. Value is based in production, and production is carried out by labor (physical and mental) with the aid of machines and resources produced in previous periods by labor.

Second, the theory is objective in nature. That is, while it cannot be expected that commodities will actually exchange at their labor values, if one had enough precise information concerning the actual labor expended in the production of things, different investigators would be able to reach the same conclusions

regarding the value contained in commodities and would be able to specify precisely the exchange rates necessary for an equilibrium situation to obtain.

Lastly, the labor theory of value gives rise to the theory of capitalist exploitation. As all output is the product of labor (living and "dead"), then the only basis for a capitalist's claim to a share of this output is his/her control of the means of production: The claim cannot be based on the contribution to output itself. Bernstein clearly recognizes the significance of the theory in this regard:

The starting point of the class struggle between capitalists and workers is the antagonism of interests which follows from the nature of the utilisation of the labour of the latter by the former for profit. The examination of this process of utilisation leads to the doctrine of value and of the production and appropriation of surplus value (p. 19.)

Given the significance of the labor theory, then, how does Bernstein go about revising it?

His starting point is the argument that this theory is abstract. That is, given the difficulties, adjustments, modifications, etc., in the theory necessary to arrive at the labor content in any specific commodity, the labor theory of value has no concrete application or foundation:

...as far as single commodities...comes into consideration, value loses every concrete quality and becomes a pure abstract concept (p. 29.)

Now Marx, or any labor theorist, never did argue that individual commodities could be examined to demonstrate precisely the truth of the labor theory. The point of the argument was to develop a general theory of valuation which delved below the superficial characteristics of the

exchange process to allow an analysis of the production process under capitalism and, thus, form the basis for an examination of this social system as a whole. The labor theory of value has always been understood to be a macro (aggregate) mode of analysis rather than a micro (individual) mode. (On this, see Maurice Dobb, Political Economy and Capitalism, Chs. 1-3.)

So, Bernstein starts from a truth (value is abstract) and moves directly to a falsehood (the loss of any concrete quality when considering a specific commodity). Note as well that he abandons the point of view of value as a social category when he bases his argument on a specific commodity.

Having laid this basis, he then asks, "...what becomes of surplus value under these circumstances?", claiming that under the specified circumstances (examination of a single commodity), "...surplus value would...become a mere formula--a formula which rests on an hypothesis" (pp. 29-30.) Hence, the Marxist theory of exploitation, which lays the basis for the theory of class struggle, rests solely on speculation.

Bernstein then moves the argument one step further. He contends (pp. 33-34) that social value is realized only in conjunction with the market--market price, according to Bernstein, is to be viewed as synonymous with value, a position utterly refuted (and demonstrated to be false) by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and, of course, Marx himself. (Again, see Dobb, cited above, for analysis of this question.)

Now, how does the "market" establish value. For those who have taken an orthodox economics course, the answer is clear--by the forces of supply and demand. And, since demand figures as equally prominent as supply (based on costs of production) and there can be no knowledge of "need" at any point in time, then value is purely abstract and subjective. As value is subjective and based on individual need, then the correct theory of value is that based on individual utility rather than labor.

Bernstein then reaches his conclusion:

The theory of labour value is above all misleading in this that it always appears again and again as the measure of the actual exploitation of the worker by the capitalist, and among other things, the characterisation of the rate of surplus value as the rate of exploitation reduces us to this conclusion. It is evident from the fore-going that it is false as such a measure...(p. 39.)

Observe what Bernstein has done. First, he argues that exploitation is a product of the labor theory of value, rather than having the theory explain the observed exploitation. Second, he substitutes the utility theory of value, developed by pro-capitalist economists as a weapon against the labor theory of value. This theoretical approach is: a) subjective--value is dependent on the personal attitude of the consumer to value; b) individualist--as valuation is subjective, there can be no social basis to the process; c) takes as its starting point consumption rather than production. Thus, as with dialectical materialism, Bernstein has turned the labor theory of value on its head and reached exactly the opposite conclusion that Marx reaches as his starting point for the examination of the capitalist economy.

Third, taking the point of view of a consumptionist, subjectivist, individualist theory of value as his starting point, Bernstein necessarily reaches a conclusion that dismisses the whole notion of surplus value (generated in production on the basis of labor expended) and, thus, exploitation. And exploitation, it must be remembered, is the basis for the whole theory of class struggle, the basic reason why capitalist economist-apologists developed the subjective individualist theory in the first place.

THE ATTACK ON THE THEORY OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Having laid the theoretical basis for his attack on Marxism, the "Marxist" Bernstein then goes on to attack the essence of Marxist politics, which focuses on class struggle and the necessity for communists to work within this context to lead the working class toward socialism. There are three primary elements in Bernstein's argument that lead directly to his political conclusions: the immization thesis; the polarization of classes thesis; and the Marxist theory of crises. Let us briefly examine each in turn.

Marx predicted, on the basis of the labor theory of value and the long-run operations of a capitalist economy, that the working class (and one can and should extend this to all producing classes) would be made increasingly worse off (Capital, Vol I, pp. 579-82, 610-12). Accompanying this immization would be a growing concentration of capital whereby the larger capitalists become increasingly dominant and smaller producers less viable. With this, Bernstein takes issue (pp. 40-72).

Without going into the details of the argument, what does Bernstein contend? First that the working class (in some European countries) had been seeing its economic conditions improve, not deteriorate. Does this prove his case?

The immization issue has been often debated as to "what Marx really meant". We do not intend to summarize this controversy. Rather, we limit ourselves to two points directly pertinent to Bernstein's case. Initially, changes of any sort occurring during a relatively short historical time period (Bernstein's reference is to the last two decades of the nineteenth century) prove nothing with regard to long-run historical tendencies. Marx's general prediction concerned the results a capitalist system would be driven toward as that system continued to unfold. A two-decade interval is simply an insufficient amount of time to demonstrate the validity or falsity of a general trend.

More important than this, however, is a fundamental theoretical failing on Bernstein's

point--one, by the way, that is shared by almost all the contestants in this debate. Marx's position was taken on the basis of the examination of capitalism as a system in its entirety. With the transition to imperialism or monopoly capital--a transition that Bernstein was fully aware of (more on this below)--one cannot limit one's investigation to the advanced capitalist countries. The proletariat now becomes a world class and includes that portion contained in the colonies. As well, the general argument concerning immiseration must now include the disintegration of the peasantry in those countries where the peasants, like their counterparts in Europe in the previous centuries, are being driven into the working class. When this (large) portion of the producing classes is included in the estimate of declining standard of living, there is no question that Marx was absolutely correct in his prediction, regardless of whether one considers the argument in either relative or absolute terms.

With regard to the second part of the argument--the growing concentration of capital--Bernstein argues that, rather than declining as Marx predicted, the small business (petty production) portion of the capitalist class is growing, both absolutely and relatively. Thus, rather than increasing concentration, we observe increasing "graduation" of society--a certain levelling, if you will.

Bernstein defends this contention in two ways. First, he brings forth data from agriculture which ostensibly proves that: a) the number of farmers and non-agricultural small businessmen increased in selected European countries in the previous two decades; b) the number of stockholders had increased, including a growing number of working class shareholders.

To the first point, we repeat the objection made above and merely point out that, while Bernstein may have been correct for those two decades (or any other decade), he was certainly not correct over the long haul. It is true, as Marx predicted, that capitalist society has increasingly polarized into two classes.

The second "proof" offered by Bernstein is so silly that one should not even have to discuss it--were it not for the fact that this is the same proof contained in any number of more recent arguments designed to demonstrate the same proposition of Bernstein. For example, John Kenneth Galbraith, one of the most influential of modern economists, takes up exactly the same theme in The New Industrial State. And what is the point? To "prove" that the old division between workers and capitalists has disappeared, and that workers and capitalists now have the same interests. In fact, as "everyone" is a stockholder, the older conception of capitalists as owners of the means of production is no longer tenable--this class itself has disappeared.

Essentially, the ownership of stock simply does not make one a capitalist, nor does such ownership generate a commonality of interests with capitalists. With the development of the modern corporation, a feature of the transition to monopoly capitalism, a fairly wide dispersion of stock was a technique developed to raise capital for investment programs that could not be financed out of current profits. It was apparent that the holding of a percentage of stocks (5-25%, depending of the industry) was more than sufficient to allow the real capitalists to retain effective control. (For more on this and a review of the literature on the subject, see V. Perlo, The Empire of High Finance; S. Menshikov, Millionaires and Managers.)

But what is the central theoretical point that Bernstein is attempting to push? By denying the class polarization and immiseration theses, Bernstein is attempting to discredit the whole theory of class struggle in the modern period. Basically, capitalism has been modified, so Bernstein argues, so that the old positions of Marx are no longer tenable. Rather than class polarization, we see class homogenization; rather than the working (producing) class seeing its position deteriorating, it's actually getting better off. (And not by its own actions--unionization, etc., one might add--but by the "natural forces" of capitalism.) Thus, times have changed,

and with changed times, one needs changed theory. Class struggle and its revolutionary conclusion must be modified to class harmony and collaboration:

Although the tables of statistics of income in the most advanced industrial countries may partly register the mobility, and with it the transitoriness and insecurity, of capital in modern economy, and although the incomes or fortunes registered may be to an increasing extent paper possessions which a vigorous puff of wind could indeed easily blow away; yet these rows of incomes stand in no fundamental opposition to the graduation of economic unities in industry, commerce, and agriculture. The scale of incomes and the scale of establishments show a fairly well-marked parallelism in their divisions, especially where the middle divisions are concerned. We see these decreasing nowhere, but, on the contrary, considerably increasing everywhere. What is taken away from them from above in one place they supplement from below in another, and they receive compensation from above in one place for that which falls from their ranks below. If the collapse of modern society depends on the disappearance of the middle ranks between the apex and the base of the social pyramid, if it is dependent upon the absorption of these middle classes by the extremes above and below them, then its realisation is no nearer in England, France, and Germany to-day than at any earlier time in the nineteenth century (p. 72.)

Having eliminated the class base of class struggle, Bernstein then goes on to dispense with the material base of revolution--social crisis. In the Marxist theoretical framework, class

struggle is always operating, though at various levels. Only when society undergoes a crisis situation (and when both classes are ready for change) does this ongoing struggle lead--potentially--to revolution. Now the crisis may take a number of forms: war, economic catastrophe (depression), etc. The first step in Bernstein's "modification" is to reduce all crises to one--and this form of crisis is specifically repudiated by Marx.

For Bernstein, the crisis is induced by underconsumption. It must be remembered that Bernstein substituted the utility theory of value for the labor theory. That is, he adopted the individual subjectivist point of view based in consumption. Since he takes the consumptionist point of view as his starting point, it is perfectly consistent that he carry this view into all other areas of inquiry. Thus, to argue that crisis is induced by levels of income insufficient to purchase the commodities produced in any period should be no surprise.

Our purpose here is not to undertake a complete critique of underconsumptionism. Rather, the question is how Bernstein defends his position as Marxist, and what this theory of crisis generates as to conclusions for the modern (imperialist) period. (For a detailed account of such theories, see Michael Bleaney, Underconsumption Theories.)

First, Bernstein tells us (correctly) that Marx initially rejected such an approach to economic crisis (pp. 73-4.) This rejection, however, was in the first and second volumes of Capital. By the time of the third volume (some thirteen years later), Marx had modified his position. Quoting Marx, Bernstein argues:

...Marx says about crises: "The last reason for all social crises always is the poverty and limitation of consumption of the masses as opposed to the impulse of capitalist production to develop the productive forces, as though only the absolute capacity for consumption of the community formed

their limit." That is not very different from the Rodbertus' theory of crises...(p. 75.)

Note that Bernstein erects his "modified" theory of crisis (and it becomes one possible cause only) on the basis of a textual statement from Marx--the master. Thus, Bernstein appears to be in good company.

However, the above quote is an entirely isolated instance in which Marx appears to give underconsumptionism some credibility. Moreover, it appears in the same portion of Vol. III in which Marx, carefully and fully, criticizes underconsumptionist theories. (For a full account of Marx's position, see Bleaney, op.cit., Ch. 6.)

Bernstein searched assiduously through Capital until he found a single reference that supports his "modified" position. At the same time, he makes no mention of the criticism Marx directed against the theory in the same volume and that surrounds the above--again, totally isolated--quote; it is a criticism Marx wrote, we presume, at the same time as the single pro-underconsumption reference.

To say that such a documentation lacks credibility is to be overly euphemistic. But, whenever possible, Bernstein likes to buttress his argument with a quote or two from Marx and Engels. This gives the appearance of support from on high.

Having reduced the general theory of crisis to one illegitimate type, Bernstein then gets to the point: Previously, given the anarchic nature of competitive capitalism, underconsumption crises were a regular feature of the historical motion of the social system. Now, however, we have entered a new era, one of cartels that control production, distribution, and consumption on the international level, and one which is characterized by the modern credit system--which can immediately eliminate any short-run problem caused by insufficient income through the extension of loans, thus making up the deficiency (pp. 75-94). Thus, "unless unforeseen external events bring about a general crisis...there is no urgent reason for concluding that such a crisis will come to

pass for purely economic reasons." (p. 93) Imperialism solves the capitalist problem of crisis.

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONCLUSIONS

Having "revised" Marxism in order to demonstrate that the traditional Marxist theory is inappropriate for the modern--imperialist--period, Bernstein is then in a position to put forward his political program.

We first meet an old chestnut (though it was a new argument when Bernstein was writing). Socialism, we are told, is predicated upon the development of modern technology, which centralizes the material forces of production, and upon the exercise of the political sovereignty of the working class (pp. 96-98). He then asserts that the first condition has not been satisfied, given the large number of small businessmen. Thus, it would be impossible to manage the economy.

This point is not as important as the one that follows. We merely point out that, in line with Bernstein's renunciation of dialectical materialism, he provides an incorrect, "economist" foundation to the establishment of a socialist society.

The more significant aspect of his argument concerns the working class. According to Bernstein: "[The]... 'proletariat' [is] a mixture of extraordinarily different elements, of classes which have more differences among themselves than had the 'people' of 1789..." (p. 103). Given an increase in skill and pay differentials, the working class in fragmenting into subclasses rather than becoming more homogeneous. Hence, workers as a class are not yet ready for political rule.

Observe that Bernstein does not define classes in the standard Marxist manner--identified by the underlying production relations--but manufactures his own classifications in which sociological factors (level of pay, etc.) determine one's class position. Thus, rather than

a working class comprised of those who sell their labor power for a wage or salary, we find society disintegrating into numerous classes. And note, if Bernstein were correct, the trend toward differentiation--thus greater class fragmentation--would continue ad infinitum, given increases in technology: The working class essentially disappears and, in any case, would never be ready to act as ruling class.

Thus, on these two grounds, socialism is ruled out as a matter for today's (late 1800's) agenda. But, if not socialism, what?

Bernstein advocates the formation of producer and consumer cooperatives as the principal economic task of the workers in the immediate future. That is, he represents the guild socialist point of view, a position repudiated by Marx and Engels in The Communist Manifesto and in later works, and demonstrated to be invalid given the experience of various cooperative movements, particularly in England, during the intervening period.

While advocating nothing fundamentally new, Bernstein does add a few wrinkles worth noting, reflecting as they do his general theoretical position. First, he argues that strong consumer cooperatives are absolutely necessary to offset the potential strength of the producer cooperatives--where the real power of the working class lies (according to Bernstein). There are two reasons why they are imperative: a) the various producer cooperatives are antagonistic to the community and to each other. As producers, workers have every interest in attempting to advantage themselves at the expense of the community in general. Consumers, however, all have the same interests, and, since all members of the community are consumers, the consumer cooperatives then represent the larger social interests and serve to mitigate the nascent power of the worker coops. b) One reason for the failure of producer cooperatives in the past had been the lack of markets in which to sell their commodities. The formation of consumer coops would provide such a market, allowing the producer coops to become economically viable.

Note that, in the above, Bernstein undertakes his argument from the consumptionist point of view. This is consistent with his adoption of the utility theory of value and his abandonment of the Marxist theory based on production. As well, and, again, this is consistent with his general position, Bernstein implicitly attacks the working class as being antagonistic to the interests of the community. Workers, regardless as to how they're organized, behave just like capitalists.'

The second wrinkle of note is Bernstein's argument that such cooperatives would be the ideal organization to bring farmers, craftsmen and small businessmen, in general, closer to the socialist movement without raising the threat of the expropriation of private property. Throughout this whole section, Bernstein expresses marked concern over the welfare of the petty-producers--in fact, much more so than with regard to workers, who generally appear only in reference to their hostility to other members of the community. The basis for this concern is not difficult to find. As Bernstein's general theory objectively represents a capitalist point of view, one would expect that he would be concerned with the fate of capitalists as a class. And, while it may be hard to defend the interests of monopoly businessmen--at least out loud--it is fairly respectable to come to the assistance of the small capitalists. After all, they too are put upon by the larger businessmen.

Having disposed of the economic goal of socialism and substituted a modified capitalist form of society to which the working class (along with the petty producers) should strive, Bernstein then turns his attention to politics. He begins his section on "democracy and socialism" by first attacking the trade union movement, arguing that the union struggle for increased wages is really directed against the community at large, given that monopoly capitalists can pass on such increased wages in the form of higher prices paid by everyone (pp. 135-9). He then passes to the following position regarding large-scale militant unions which dominate whole industries or branches of production:

Independently of whether the state, the community, or capitalists are employers, the trade union as an organisation of all persons occupied in certain trades can only further simultaneously the interests of its members and the general good as long as it is content to remain a partner. Beyond that it would run into danger of degenerating into a close corporation with all the worst qualities of a monopoly. It is the same as with the co-operative society. The trade union, as mistress of a whole branch of production, the ideal of various older socialists, would really be only a monopolist productive association, and as soon as it relied on its monopoly or worked upon it, it would be antagonistic to socialism and democracy, let its inner constitution be what it may. Why it is contrary to socialism needs no further explanation. Associations against the community are as little socialism as is the oligarchic government of the state. (p. 141.)

Observe Bernstein's position: Unions represent the interest of only one segment of the community. As such, to the extent that they are successful in improving their conditions they must work against other segments and cause the situation of these sections to deteriorate. Thus, unless unions are willing to accept a limited role of "partner" with these segments, they are necessarily antidemocratic. Pity the poor other segments--the capitalists (in the main).

Given his earlier repudiation of classes and class struggle, Bernstein must, to be consistent, render his argument in nonclass terms. The "community" and not the antagonistic classes within the community is the focal point of the analysis. Further, this community, while possibly comprised of potentially antagonistic elements (in particular, the workers), can be seen as a partnership in which everyone can be made to work

together.

With such a foundation, Bernstein's view of democracy should come as no surprise:

We...define democracy as an absence of class government, as the indication of a social condition where a political privilege belongs to no one class as opposed to the whole community... This negative definition has, besides, the advantage that it gives less room than the phrase "government by the people" to the idea of the oppression of the individual by the majority which is absolutely repugnant to the modern mind. To-day we find the oppression of the minority by the majority "undemocratic"... The idea of democracy includes, in the conception of the present day, a notion of justice--an equality of rights for all members of the community, and in that principle the rule of the majority, to which in every concrete case the rule of the people extends, finds its limits. The more it is adopted and governs the general consciousness, the more will democracy be equal in meaning to the highest possible degree of freedom for all. Democracy is in principle the suppression of class government, though it is not yet the suppression of classes (pp. 142-4.)

Democracy is a nonclass government, though classes continue to exist. Thus, the government in a truly democratic system is not part of the state apparatus, or some other factor must be operating in order to override the state itself (the state, then, becoming unnecessary):

In a democracy the parties, and the classes standing behind them, soon learn to know the limits of their power, and to undertake each time only as much as they can reasonably hope to carry

through under the existing circumstances.... The right to vote in a democracy makes its members virtually partners in the community, and this virtual partnership must in the end lead to real partnership.... Universal franchise is, from two sides, the alternative to a violent revolution. But universal suffrage is only a part of democracy, although a part which in time must draw the other parts after it as the magnet attracts to itself the scattered portions of iron. It certainly proceeds more slowly than many would wish, but in spite of that it is at work. And social democracy cannot further this work better than by taking its stand unreservedly on the theory of democracy--on the ground of universal suffrage with all the consequences resulting therefrom to its tactics (pp. 144-5.)

In other words, Bernstein reaches, logically and consistently, exactly the same position on democracy as the bourgeois pluralist school of thought: that, while there may be competing groups in a capitalist democracy, the actions of one can be checked by another (assuming proper organization) and the result of these actions and counteractions is a modus vivendi in which a partnership (uneasy at times, to be sure) is achieved. Further, the mechanism by which this end is attained is the vote.

No longer is bourgeois democracy a method by which the working class is ruled by the capitalists; no longer is the vote a (fraudulent) weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Now, all that the straightforward capitalist theorists have claimed for democracy is true. The Marxist principles have been revised to accommodate recent changes and the conclusion reached is exactly the same as that of the orthodox ideologists. Therefore:

Is there any sense...in maintaining the

phrase of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' at a time when in all possible places representatives of social democracy have placed themselves practically in the area of Parliamentary work, have declared for the proportional representation of the people, and for direct legislation--all of which is inconsistent with a dictatorship.

The phrase is today so antiquated that it is only to be reconciled with reality by stripping the word dictatorship of its actual meaning and attaching to it some kind of weakened interpretation (p. 146.)

And there one has it! Bernstein, while merely "revising" Marxism, has thrown over the entire theory and practical program of Marxism, all on the basis of "modifying" the three sources and component parts of Marxism. Further, he has the unmitigated gall to call on Marx and Engels as his authorities for this "pogrom". He again quotes from the new preface to The Manifesto and from the Civil War in France, again attempting to convert Marx into a parliamentary Fabian socialist. The position taken here surrounds the "withering away of the state". Bernstein asserts that Marx's new position was that the state withers away under capitalism itself. Thus, Marx agrees with Bernstein (pp. 155-7.) As well, to complete the fraud, Bernstein compares Marx favorably with Proudhon, the anarcho-syndicalist, asserting that, in the final analysis, they were both--liberals (p. 161).

Lastly, in regard to the political ramifications of the "revised" Marxism, Bernstein asserts that the task of socialists in the present is to work to gradually transform the capitalist state into one of socialism through, obviously, parliamentary tactics. In order to accomplish this end, however, it is imperative to convince the capitalists themselves that this is in their interests and that the socialist mean them no harm (pp. 163-5). Note that, with this conclusion, Bernstein returns fully to the theoretical

position of the older utopian socialist (though, again, enjoying the advantage of Marxist theory developed in the intervening period). Such a conclusion, of course, demonstrates the idealist position taken by him in his initial attack on the three sources and component parts of Marxism.

ONE MORE POINT

To demonstrate the thrust of Bernstein's pro-capitalist theoretical position, it is necessary to bring forward at least one illustration of how this theory functions in practice. Bernstein obliges us nicely.

Two of the most pressing issues of the period in which he was writing were the interconnected questions of nationalism and war, and the tasks of socialists regarding the colonial empires recently established by the capitalists. Consider the following:

But has social democracy, as the party of the working classes and of peace, an interest in the maintenance of the fighting power? From many points of view it is very tempting to answer the question in the negative, especially if one starts from the sentence in the *Communist Manifesto*: "The proletarian has no fatherland." This sentence might, in a degree, perhaps, apply to the worker of the 'forties without political rights, shut out of public life. To-day in spite of the enormous increase in the intercourse between nations it has already forfeited a great part of its truth and will always forfeit more, the more the worker, by the influence of socialism, moves from being a proletarian to a citizen. The workman who has equal rights as a voter for state and local councils, and who thereby is a fellow owner of the common property of the nation, whose children the community educates, whose health it protects, whom it secures against

injury, has a fatherland without ceasing on that account to be a citizen of the world, just as the nations draw nearer one another, without, therefore, ceasing to lead a life of their own.

The complete breaking up of nations is no beautiful dream, and in any case is not to be expected in the near future. But just as little as it is to be wished that any other of the great civilised nations should lose its independence, just as little can it be a matter of indifference to German social democracy whether the German nation, which has indeed carried out, and is carrying out, its honourable share in the civilising work of the world, should be repressed in the council of the nations. (pp. 169-70)

But if it is not reprehensible to enjoy the produce of tropical plantations, it cannot be so to cultivate such plantations ourselves. Not the whether but the how is here the decisive point. It is neither necessary that the occupation of tropical lands by Europeans should injure the natives in their enjoyment of life, nor has it hitherto usually been the case. Moreover, only a conditional right of savages to the land occupied by them can be recognized. The higher civilisation ultimately can claim a higher right. Not the conquest, but the cultivation, of the land gives the historical legal title to its use. (pp. 178-9)

Following the argument previously erected, the granting of the suffrage to workers makes them just as concerned with the interests of the nation as their "brother" capitalists who have been participating in the most recent "honorable" work of "civilizing" the world: that is, raping, plundering, pillaging in the formation of the modern colonial system, and, furthermore, using members of the working class--and killing them--to

get their fair share of the loot. As well, we learn that the "right" to the land (of Africa, Asia, etc.) is determined solely by the might of the "higher" civilization in deciding its use.

Observe that Bernstein, on the basis of the supposed harmony of interests doctrine already developed, reaches the same conclusion as those who would take the "bribe theory" to its furthest conclusion (arguing that all workers in the imperialist country actually benefit from the colonial plunder), and he takes the same racist tack as the overtly pro-capitalist ideological defenders of imperialism in the late nineteenth century (for example, John Burgess and John Fiske, the latter coining the term "Manifest Destiny" [of the Anglo Saxon race (sic!)]). (See, Science, Class and Politics, "The Bribe Theory".)

Thus, Bernstein emerges as arch-defender of the capitalist faith, even (or maybe especially) in the most criminal of social acts, the subjugation of a people by war, force and fraud for economic gain.

REVISIONISM IN THE "MODERN" PERIOD

The pro-capitalist vulgarization of Marxism began while Marx and Engels were still developing their theoretical position. The first attack on revisionism is Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program. The most essential criticism of this semi-Lassalleian program that Marx put forth was that of the conception of the state contained in the phrase "free state": "...it (the German Workers' Party) treats the state rather as an independent entity that possesses its own intellectual, moral and free basis" (Marx, Critique..., p. 17; emphasis in original.)

This non-Marxist, "non-class", non-scientific, liberal position on the state as expounded by the Workers' Party rests, of course, on the view that capitalist society is not rent by class antagonisms based on the underlying production relations. That is, it's exactly the same position as that of Bernstein.

In his critique of Duhring, Engels pointed

out the same failure. Of course, Duhring did not claim to be a Marxist, but he did claim to be a socialist who was improving on Marx (and others). For Duhring, the starting point was the rejection of materialism and the erection of a general theory, covering all aspects of society, based squarely on an idealist starting point:

So in order that no suspicion may arise that on some celestial body or other twice two may make five, Herr Duhring cannot treat thought as a human characteristic, and so he has to cut it off from the only real foundation on which we find it, namely, mankind and Nature; and with that he tumbles hopelessly into an ideology which reveals him as the epigone of the "epigone," Hegel. In passing we may note that we shall often meet Herr Duhring again on other celestial bodies.

It goes without saying that no materialistic doctrine can be founded on such an ideological basis. Later on we shall see that Herr Duhring is forced more than once to endow Nature surreptitiously with conscious activity--that is to say, therefore, with what in plain language is called: God (Engels, Anti-Duhring, p. 43.)

From this point of departure, Duhring goes on to reject all the Marxist positions (including the labor theory of value, the state as an instrument of class oppression, and so forth), and develops a "universal" theory applicable to all, and therefore, no, history and societies.

Clearly, Lenin in his Materialism and Empirio-Criticism and The State and Revolution attacked the very same theoretical foundations previously exposed by Marx and Engels. Equally clearly, Lenin's definitive works have not halted the revisionist onslaught. In fact, if anything, this onslaught has intensified in the modern post-Lenin period, and for two good reasons. First, the victory of the working class and the

establishment of the first dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union demanded that the theoretical attack on socialist theory (and, thus, practice) be stepped up. Publishers were all too happy to put out revisionist attacks in large quantity. Second, with the Menshevik victory following the death of Stalin, the whole international communist movement fell into disarray. There was no consolidated mechanism to effectively deal with the modern Bernsteinians in the post-1953 period.

To the above primary reasons, one must add the long-standing problem of liberalism within the communist movement. Without a strong, theoretically consolidated communist organization, the usual capitalist ideology to which we are all trained in a capitalist social environment will rear its ugly head and eventually gain dominance. This is precisely what destroyed the Second International, and such liberalism continues to be a major problem in the attempts to restore Marxist theory and practice to its rightful place in the current period. (On this, see "The Second International...", Science, Class, and Politics.)

Hence, we continue to find the same old tired arguments previously demonstrated to be anti-working class, pro-capitalist, and, further, fundamentally no different from those of Bernstein, trotted out for public display as the "latest advance" in Marxist theory. The list is too long to specify all but a few representative examples.

The noted U.C. Riverside "Marxist" economist Howard Sherman has attempted to meld the labor theory of value with that of the neoclassical utility theory, arguing that, and quoting the noted Monthly Review "Marxist" economist, Paul Sweezy, "Non-dogmatic Marxists (i.e., revisionists) nowadays admit that, with respect to the allocation of scarce resources, the neoclassical economists 'have developed a price theory which is more useful in this sphere than anything to be found in Marx or his followers'" (Sherman, "The Marxist Theory of Value", p. 360.)

Roger Garaudy, former member of the Politburo of the French Communist Party, attempts to

reconcile Marxism and Christianity. In his chapter entitled (interestingly enough, given Lenin's remarks in What Is To Be Done), "From Dogmatism to Twentieth-Century Thought", Garaudy argues that true dialectical thinking requires a pluralist (i.e., eclectic) mode of thought which, in essence, means combining materialism and idealism (Garaudy, Marxism, pp. 38-75). Then, calling on the Christian Church(es) to really practice Christianity (and we always thought they did: butchering the heathen, stealing land, oppressing the meek, and so on), he concludes:

Our great hope remains, common to millions of Christians in the world and millions of communists: the building up of a future without losing anything of the heritage of human values that Christianity has been contributing for the last two thousand years (pp. 162-3; emphasis added.)

Well, we'll accept the works of Bach, to be sure. But will we accept anything? Including the fact that the whole purpose of religion is to facilitate exploitation? A strange Marxist, this fellow.

Yet, what Garaudy and others present is the essence of the revisionist position: The rejection of the materialist general theory and its replacement by idealism, usually through the tactic (trick) of purporting to reconcile materialism and idealism, science and religion, truth and fraud. And, of course, any time such an impossible reconciliation is attempted, one or the other contradictory elements must be dropped. It is obvious what that must be. And, in the practical application of this attempted reconciliation, what we observe is the "reconciliation" of antagonistic classes--the rejection of class struggle based on the underlying relations of production and the embracing of capitalism. In other words, we observe the repudiation of the three component parts of Marxism.

CONCLUSION

Although much of revisionist ideology is developed by intellectuals, in particular those connected with academe (the safe or house "Marxists"), such theoretical developments will filter into the ranks of the communist movement itself, given that communists cannot insulate themselves from the world around them. As we are all trained to hold a capitalist point of view, then all pro-capitalist theory will have its effect. Revisionism, however, since it parades as Marxism, is much the greatest danger in this regard. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to read and critically study the "great" revisionists, examine how they argue their cases, and learn to recognize "new" revisionist arguments. This ability to correctly criticize revisionist theory can only be done correctly with a firm grasp of Marxism-Leninism already in hand, and this means careful study of the classics.

FOOTNOTES

¹ In The State and Revolution, Lenin amended this aspect of Marxism to include the "... (extension) of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Lenin, State and Revolution, p. 33.)

² Here Bernstein commits a technical error in equating need with demand. As this is not to the main point of the argument, we shall not elaborate. For more information on this question, ask any competent bourgeois economist.

³ In a sense, Bernstein was on the mark here. Though he does not argue that the basis of the producing organization is the factory (in fact, he firmly rejects this position), it is nevertheless true that his notion of producer cooperatives is essentially the same as the plan advocated by the syndicalists and carried out under Yugoslavian "socialism". Given "self-administration", the nearest type of organization consistent with Bernstein's proposals, we do observe the growth of a capitalist ideology within the working class that is promoted by the narrow, individualist, interests surrounding the attempt to increase the benefits accruing to the workers who "control" a plant. On this, see Enver Hoxha, Yugoslav "Self-Administration".

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