

THE UNTENABILITY OF GLASNOST WITHOUT TCHSTNOST

by P. R. Masani

Dr. P. R. Masani is University Professor in the Mathematics Department at the University of Pittsburgh. A participant in the North American Marxist-Christian Dialogue, his publications in this area include: "The Common Ground of Marxism and Religion", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 16 (1979); "Humanization as De-alienation" (keynote address at the Second North American Marxist-Christian Dialogue, 1980); *Alternatives*, VII (1981); "The Thermodynamic and Phylogenetic Foundations of Human Wickedness", *Zygon*, Vol. 20 (1985); "The Illusion That Materialism Promotes Science", *C.A.R.E.E. Christian-Marxist Encounter Newsletter*, No. 28 (1986). He was Fulbright-Hays Senior Scholar at the State University of Tbilisi, Summer 1977, Gastprofessor at the Karl-Marx University in Leipzig, Summer 1986, and has made several visits to Poland, Romania and Hungary.

Abstract

Efforts underway to restructure Soviet society are of global importance. An attitude of openness (glasnost), while imperative to the initiation of such effort, is impotent in determining the direction in which such effort must head. This determination has to rest on honesty (tchestnost) in the assessment of past and present conditions, and in the selection of a course of action, mindful of the backlash of human perversity (Ã,Â§1). A major concern must be the maintenance of moral order in the Communist Party (Ã,Â§2), another must be the honest portrayal of history (Ã,Â§3). On the economic front, both the enhancement and the equitable distribution of surplus value require attention (Ã,Â§4). The core objective of the policy on education and the arts has to be the de-alienation of labor (Ã,Â§5).

It is asserted that the accomplishment of such reconstruction (perestroika) will hinge on the ability of Soviet Marxists to see religion, "the laudanum of the poor", not as the enemy, but as an important asset, alongside science, in the liberation struggle (Ã,Â§6). What has failed in East Europe is not Marxism, but rather its petrified, bureaucratic distortion.

1. Why Tchestnost?

The head of this emancipation is philosophy; its heart is the proletariat. Philosophy cannot be actualized without the transcendence of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be transcended without the actualization of philosophy. K. Marx [8, p. 264]

The close nexus, perceived by Marx, between human philosophical urges and revolutionary attempts to improve the conditions of human life is a part of the unity of theory and practice, the foundation of all science, all good religion and moral action. It points to the need for basing current efforts to uplift Soviet society on sound

philosophical principles. An attitude of openness (glasnost) is vital to the initiation of activity. But only an exercise of the critical faculty can reveal which activity is wise and which foolish. Objective analysis must delimit openness, so that what results from action is social justice, integration and freedom, and not new forms of exploitation, divisiveness and psychic dissipation, wearing the mantle of freedom. The first watchword of any genuine reconstruction (perestroika) must be honesty (tchestnost). It alone can direct the energies that glasnost releases. The current Soviet situation, marked by fissiparous and dissipative tendencies amid economic stagnation, suggests that this simple principle is being ignored.

A prime object of critical scrutiny must be the very concept of freedom of the French Enlightenment, based on the rights of man. As Marx pointed out in his essay on "The Jewish Question" [6], these "rights of man" are rights of egoistic man, not of the species-being.

... none of the so-called rights of man goes beyond the egoistic man, the man withdrawn into himself, his private interest and his private choice, and separated from the community as a member of civil society. Far from viewing man here in his species-being, his species-life itself (i.e. society) rather appears to be an external framework for the individual, limiting his original independence. The only bond between men is natural necessity, need and private interest, the maintenance of their property and egoistic persons. [6, pp. 236, 237]

The disparity between egoistic individual and species-being constitutes human self-alienation (a concept ignored in the French Enlightenment), and characterizes the human predicament from both the Marxian and the religious standpoints. Hence, the foremost truth that must govern all perestroika is that of self-alienation in the human species. The emphasis must be on species-life, and only secondarily on individual rights. Freedom must be conceived as the recognition of necessity, not as the availability of several options open to the ego. The ego is gullible; all that glitters is not gold. It is the truth that sets us free.

2. Moral Order in the Communist Party; Paramountcy of the Purge.

Party struggle lends a party strength and vitality, the greatest proof of the weakness of a party is its diffuseness and the blunting of strongly defined boundaries, a party strengthens itself by purging itself. F. Lassale (excerpt from a letter to K. Marx, quoted by Lenin at the outset of his Tract [4])

The institution of the purge in the life of the Communist Party is in response to the challenge of internal evil. As Engels has written:

According to Hegel, evil is the form in which the motive force of historical development presents itself. This, indeed, contains the twofold significance that while, on the one hand, each new advance necessarily appears as a sacrilege against things hallowed, as a rebellion against conditions which, however old and moribund, have still been sanctified

by custom; on the other hand, it is precisely the wicked passions of man - greed and lust for power - which, since the emergence of class antagonisms, serve as levers of historical development But it does not occur to Feuerbach to investigate the historical role of moral evil. [2, p. 37]

Let us address this problem of moral evil.

First, Engels's assertion: "... it is precisely the wicked passions of man ... which ... serve as levers of historical development", is incorrect as it stands. The "passions" or rather visions of the prophet Mahomed, Oliver Cromwell, Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln - not to mention Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung - also served to develop history, but these "passions" were far from being "wicked", and had nothing to do with "greed and lust of power". Thus, what needs investigation are the historical roles of moral evil as well as of moral good, for historical development ensues from the interaction of both. However, moral evil has so far been an important constituent in the shaping of human history, and there is no evidence that it will cease to extract a heavy toll in developments to come. Indeed, revolutionary movements are among the devil's favorite stomping grounds (witness Cambodia), and offhand a petrified socialism is no less likely than the petrified forms of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam that have appeared in the past. "No profound and mighty popular movement has ever occurred without dirty scum rising to the top", wrote Lenin [9, p. 30]. The "top" of the vanguard party of the socialist revolution is not beyond the reach of the unscrupulous. The reality that communists are not immune to confusion and that even the best are corruptible, is the basis of the recurring necessity for the purge, and of the importance assigned to it by Lassale and Lenin.

The leaders of perestroika, however, are silent on the issue of the purge as an effective vehicle to restore moral order in the Communist Party today. They attribute the retrogression of the Soviet socialist revolution to confusions in policy in the early 1920s, and seem to relegate to moral evil only the events of the 1930s and 1940s: the Stalin purges¹ and other crimes. But to so localize the role of moral evil in the Soviet retrogression to a small space-time span, is to deny the devil his just due.

True that the repression of the 1930s came from the usurpation of the party apparatus by a power-driven faction headed by Stalin, and was not in answer to any substantial counter-revolutionary insurgency. But was this faction the only culprit? Why did the vanguard party comprising "the most self-sacrificing and dedicated workers" let its apparatus be snatched by unscrupulous opportunists? What led communists with long records of service to succumb to unprincipled opportunism, and to the betrayal of their comrades? Why were the members of the world communist movement, a few exceptions apart, so gullible as to swallow the lie that the purges were in the people's interest? An important factor was the loss of the brave and the good in the civil war. But another was a worldwide moral breakdown in the revolutionary movement. World over, with few exceptions, communist leaders either succumbed to the temptation of siding with the usurpers, or were atrophied by one or more of the evils of ignorance, confusion, gullibility and cowardice. In either case, their failure was moral.

Seen from a long-range perspective, however, the disaster that occurred was not abnormal. It was just one of many similar disasters going back to the dawn of history - a social re-expression of age-old human frailties. Local conditions inside and outside Russia from the 1920s to the 1940s merely activated and directed these permanent frailties into specific channels. Thus, a diffuse policy of glasnost, oblivious to the problem of evil, will not undo the retrogression of the Soviet socialist revolution. This will demand from the leaders of perestroika a full awareness of the enduring presence of moral evil in the life of the Communist Party, and of the challenge that this poses.

The problem of how to maintain moral order within the Communist Party is still the thorniest question facing Marxism. The ideas on the purge advanced by Marx, Lassale, Plekhanov and Lenin barely scratch the surface. A colossal amount of bold thought will be required to address this issue, which should be high up on the agenda of perestroika.

3. Tchestnost in the Portrayal of History

Since the middle 1930s the official Soviet version of history has promulgated distortions of the truth, if not outright falsehoods. Today, more than ever, the decensorship and widespread dissemination of great historical writing is a necessity. Indeed, in line with tchestnost, this must become a most important undertaking in glasnost. (It is gratifying to report that the reproduction of some of these works is already underway in the Soviet Union.)

Among the writings that call for immediate and widespread exposure are the following. On world history:

1. Sir Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, 10 volumes, (1934-1960) [14].

On twentieth-century Russian history:

2. V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*, (1902) [4].

3. L. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, 3 volumes, (1932) [15].

4. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, (1940) [5].

5. N. Bukharin, writings in the early 1920s, quoted in A. Nove, *Political Economy and Soviet Socialism*, (1979) [11].

6. Khristian Rakovski, writings in the 1920s, quoted by A. Nove, *op. cit.*, [11].

7. J. Stalin, "Foundations of Leninism", (1924) [13].

8. L. Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, (1937) [16].

9. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, (1968) [1].

On human rights:

10. K. Marx, "On the Jewish Question", (1844) [6].

11. A. Solzhenitsyn, "The Exhausted West" - an address to Harvard University, (1976) [12].

These works are relevant to perestroika in different ways. No. 1 is important especially from the standpoint of incorporating the Marxian view of history, in which class structure and the succession of economic systems is predominant, and in which the primary focus is on European civilization, into a long-time and more global conception in which individual civilizations are treated as units and their succession becomes the object of inquiry.

No. 2 should serve as an antidote to the taming of Lenin that is in vogue, and as a timely reminder that the workers' emancipation comes from a "revolutionary consciousness" that supercedes their "trade union consciousness". Perestroika will fail if the "trade union" demands of the Soviet worker (good wages, housing, food and amenities) are treated as ends in themselves, and not as means to the acquirement of revolutionary consciousness. Nos. 3-6 and 8 are of much importance, for their authors, though torn in factional disputes, had the foresight to see and to keep in mind what was coming, and the courage to articulate this without bitterness. Moreover, their pioneering evaluations, made in the foxhole so-to-speak, have a freshness and cogency absent in the stale postmortems penned today. No. 9 helps in rebutting the naive tendency to "blame it on Stalin", ignoring the economic and political conditions that prevailed during the early phases of his secretaryship and which facilitated his climb to power. Not the least of these conditions was the intellectual death toll resulting from capitalist-backed civil strife. (Turning Stalin, and now Brezhnev, into a nonperson is about the shallowest form perestroika can take.) No. 10 is useful as a scholarly review of the Stalin terror, despite its over-stress on individual personality and its neglect of the socio-economic roots of human conduct.

The great importance of No. 10 has been explained in §1. As for No. 11, if we can ignore some of Solzhenitsyn's dubious evaluations (e.g. his categorization of the American intervention in Vietnam as a moral venture) and ignore his uncritical acceptance of the official stereotyped version of Marxism as being the authentic, his address is a trenchant re-expression of the Marxian position on human rights. His assertions about the moral decadence of the capitalist West are accurate, and revelatory of the demoralization that results when, under the cloak of "individual rights" and "market forces", the concept of freedom is eroded into meaning the legalized license to blend self-aggrandizement with the misery of the other.

4. Economic Perestroika, and the Necessity for Religion

Marx's division of the laborer's workday into two parts: one during which he creates value equal to that needed for his and his family's subsistence, and the other during which he creates the remainder or surplus, injects into the labor process the well-known biological dichotomy between ontogeny, the development of the animal, and phylogeny, the development of the species. All advancement of humankind, i.e. all civilization, comes from the constructive channeling of the surplus value created by laborers. Human exploitation, broadly speaking, is the misuse or abortion of surplus value. Only the human species has the option to so misuse or abort, this "freedom" being a major constituent of human wickedness.

Very often in human history the misuse of surplus value has come about from the control of the productive enterprise being in the hands of irresponsible vested interests. (Haiti offers a live example.) But history also offers numerous examples where surplus value has been thwarted, i.e. where the preconditions for its creation are denied to the workers. Such abortion also of course stunts the growth of productive forces and retards human welfare. In the Soviet Union both forms of exploitation are present. We turn first to the misuse of available surplus value.

An obvious form of misuse of surplus value is by its conversion into foreign currency, which then is spent in unproductive ways, e.g. for franchise on frivolities such as Pepsi-Cola, pizzerias, blue jeans and capitalist pop art, instead of on more urgent necessities such as orange juice, refrigeration machinery and copying equipment. The schemes now in the offing to import items like shoes and clothing, also entail the misuse of surplus value via hard currency, for such imports retard the growth of productive forces inside the country, and keep the ruble weak. The substandardization of Soviet production in such items stems from bureaucratization and not from inabilities of the Soviet work force that cannot be remedied by better training and by use of better machinery. (Such machinery and/or leadership is what should be imported, if necessary.) Complaints about shoes should be met by State encouragement to start shoe-manufacturing cooperatives. (More on this later.)

The misuse of surplus value via foreign exchange also occurs in the arena of publication. This began when the Soviet Union signed the International Copyright Convention in 1971. This step, contrary to Marxian principles of labor, has had a devastating effect on intellectual life throughout the world. It has led to a sharp rise in the cost of worthy publications, and has forced libraries the world over to restrict acquisitions. Apart from furthering red tape and bureaucracy in the copyrighting, transfer and acquisition phases, it has resulted in many important books being out of print, and in lowering the quality of material available to the reading public.

A more retrograde misuse of surplus value via foreign exchange is the Soviet policy on cultural import. While their university libraries are starved of foreign scientific and cultural publications, hard currency is wasted on the import of puerility, masquerading as art, and for the payment of royalties to the recording companies of crooning tycoons and rich "stars" of capitalist art. This imported material and its indigenous imitations are sold over the counter, played (recorded or live) in airplanes, hotels, restaurants and dance

halls, and blared on Soviet radio. Thus, formative Soviet minds are hammered with decadent sound, their latent critical faculties are blunted, and the growth of their artistic sensibilities stunted.

The exploitative nature of this import is shown by the rise of the star cult in the Soviet Union. In capitalist countries, a prime potion for lulling youth into self-complacency is "entertainment" by the performing "stars". The stars are showmen whose "art" extols the worship of one's own moods and whims, and glorifies the spurious. An idolatry in which the millionaire star is partly deified has sprung up, and when the star "performs", his or her "disciples" do likewise by headless convulsive contortions and grunts of their own in a kind of narcotized dance. To spend hard currency in ways that promote such cults is a clear misuse of the surplus value of the Soviet worker. Its negative impact is already evident from recent drops in the levels of school and university education, stemming from the time misspent by Soviet youth on the fads and gimmicks of capitalist pseudo-culture. Moreover, the star cult promotes a slavish "I've gotta be me" mentality that erodes the work-ethic. The continuation of such "investment" will not only lower the productivity of Soviet labor and doom economic perestroika, but may well engulf Soviet society with cacophonous and narcotic addiction and venereal disease, and thereby inflict new forms of misery on the Soviet people.

More significant, however, than the exploitation resulting from such misuse of surplus value, is the exploitation that results from its abortion. Nearly all the classic forms of annulment are present:

- (a) Enforcement of rules that complicate simple tasks, and so cut into the time and energy left for honest work;
- (b) Subjection of producers to an inefficient production system involving substandard tools, bottlenecks, friction and other waste;
- (c) Inadequate training of producers and/or their enrollment in work to which they are unsuited;
- (d) Forced involvement of the workers in socially useless work;
- (e) Suppression of producer initiative by denial of access to the means of production;
- (f) Promotion of ideologies antithetical to the work-ethic.

Let us skip the specifics of such practices and turn to the remedies.

A form of perestroika, immediately implementable with little cost, would be to liberate the citizen's time. For instance, all restaurants can become self-serving, all libraries can grant their users direct access to book stacks, and all markets can stay open from morning to night, and allow customers to pick and choose. Likewise, time can be saved by de-

emphasis on public transportation in favor of affordable individual transport, e.g. on bicycles and motor scooters.

More complex is ending the abrogation of surplus value inherent in a centralized planning that denies the entrepreneur access to the means of production, and thereby kills initiative; cf. (e) above. The founders of socialism did not foresee a chronic ailment from which it would suffer, viz. the spread of bureaucracy into the economic process. By virtue of its time-robbery, perversion of labor, and generally vitiating effect, bureaucracy is one of the most exploitative institutions devised by man - a fact that Marxists have tended to ignore. Rigid socialism is untenable in view of its easy bureaucratization. Welcome, therefore, are current soviet attempts to incorporate within a broad socialist framework, a subsystem of free enterprise which gives individuals with initiative access to the means of production. An obvious way to encourage this is by awarding State loans to entrepreneurial cooperatives. Such cooperatives should not be confined to service industries such as laundries and restaurants. The manufacture of basic consumer items such as shoes, clothing and furniture, as well as innovative ventures on the frontiers of technology, such as electronics, machine intelligence and genetic engineering, should also come within the purview of cooperatives. Correspondingly those engaged in the production of costly frivolity, e.g. fancy apparel for the well-off, should be shut down.

The cooperatives will backfire if they turn into avenues for the investment of ill-gotten gains. A preliminary devaluation of the currency may be necessary to ensure that the cooperatives are run by entrepreneurs and not crooks.

A thorny question with regard to such cooperative ventures concerns the distribution of their profits. Here some words of Lord Keynes, written in the 1920s, are germane:

... it seems clearer every day that the moral problem of our age is concerned with the love of money, with the habitual appeal to the money motive in nine-tenths of the activities of life, with the universal striving after individual economic security as the prime object of endeavor, with the social approbation of money as the measure of constructive success, and with the social appeal to the hoarding instinct as the foundation of the necessary provision for the family and for the future. The decaying religions around us, have less and less interest for most people unless it be as an agreeable form of magical ceremonial or of social observance, have lost their moral significance just because-unlike some of their earlier versions-they do not touch in the least degree on these essential matters. A revolution in our ways of thinking and feeling about money may become the growing purpose of contemporary embodiments of the ideal. Perhaps, therefore, Russian Communism does represent the first confused stirrings of a great religion. [3, pp. 134-135 (emphasis added)]

The leaders of perestroika would do well to heed these important words on the debasing impact of monetary greed. It would be a tragedy of the first magnitude if the heirs of the Bolsheviks, instead of stirring a great religion, were to recreate, under the guise of glasnost and perestroika, an exploitative system in which wealth corrupts the human

spirit. To this writer it seems obvious that all distribution must abide by the well-known socialist formula:

From each according to his ability;

To each according to his work.²

Obviously, workers in useful cooperatives that perform better than state-run industries, are working harder and more effectively, and deserve greater rewards. As long as these rewards are not excessive, the cooperatives should retain control over surplus value, and re-invest it in further production. But symptoms of monetary greed, such as attempts to drum up sales of a dubious product by repetition of sex-slanted irrelevant blurbs, should be crushed.

Can a large sector of semi-autonomous cooperatives be integrated into a socialist economy with an overall economic plan? How is pricing to be fixed? On these difficult questions some ideas of the cybernetician Norbert Wiener, based on his deep study of self-organizing systems, are worth exploring. Wiener had in mind an economic setup vaguely resembling the power station of an electric grid, in which "the total generating system acts as if it possessed a virtual governor, more accurate than the governors of the individual generators ... " [17, p. 201]. That is, the economy should consist of a number of semi-autonomous units (some of which may be work motivated rather than profit motivated, or publicly owned) coupled to a central agency which continually corrects, or even intervenes more directly, to reduce the volatility of the market, and so approximates a homeostasis conducive to steady economic growth. Thus, going by Wiener's ideas, the cooperatives and state enterprises would compete in the free market, which unlike the capitalist market, however, would be homeostatic by virtue of its coupling to and control by a central intelligence. These very preliminary ideas call of course for considerable further study and research in order to yield a viable *modus operandi*.³

But no matter how internally well structured the economic system, it will not function if the workers are apathetic. Here the ideas of Karl Marx on labor alienation [7] are germane. The thought has been expressed succinctly in non-Hegelian terms by Professor Lewis Mumford:

Whatever tools and muscle power were freely used, at the command of the workers themselves, their labors were varied, rhythmic, and often deeply satisfying, in the way that any purposeful ritual is satisfying. Increase of skill brought immediate subjective satisfaction, and this sense of mastery was confirmed by the created product. The main reward of the craftsman's working day was not wages but the work itself, performed in a social setting. [10]

Karl Kautsky, in his studies of Christianity, has pointed out that the finest products turned out in the Middle Ages came from artisans in communist guilds, most of them run by religious orders that practiced communism. The Shakers in the nineteenth-century United

States offer a more recent example. These are among the best examples of unalienated labor in recorded history.

From any long-range standpoint, the termination of alienated labor has to be the objective of a viable perestroika. This brings us to the factor (f) on ideologies and the work-ethic. The ideology that gives the strongest support to the work-ethic is the religious - the view that the world is good, but that man is fallen and that to redeem himself must emulate the creative aspect of God by the fabrication of useful and beautiful objects. Work and worship merge, and the labor is totally unalienated. This religious attitude does not push the de-alienation of labor into the distant future, but sees the spread of semi-autonomous communist units here and now as eventually leading to communism, i.e. to "an association in which the free development of each will mean the free development of all".

The religious attitude also places an arresting hand on attempts to reduce or eliminate the humane element in socialism - the moral hallmark that differentiates it from capitalism:

Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. (Matthew 25:41, 45)

The subsidization of bread, milk and other staples in the diet of the poorer people, and the subsidization of their shelter and health care must remain, and indeed improve, under perestroika.

To this writer it seems obvious that the only ideology that can bring to fruition a free enterprising socialist economy is one that inculcates a religious attitude towards the world at large, and towards human labor in particular.

5. Where Honest Glasnost Calls for Censorship. Art and Education.

The advent of cybernetics has made evident the fact that all communication involves two components, message and noise. A noise component, great or small, that blurs the message, is inevitable in the light of the stochastic nature of the cosmos. Successful communication hinges on the ability (i) to distinguish message from noise, and (ii) to filter out as much noise as the laws of nature allow.

The crackling or "atmospherics" that blurs a musical broadcast over the short-wave is a typical example of noise. But in human communication there is a more pernicious form of noise: the sender may be a confused individual and may emit a confusing message; worse still, the message may be sent in order to deceive rather than to inform, and may be false. Thus what may appear as "message" to the receiver, may in fact be noise in disguise. Indeed, the practice of such deceptive communication is an accepted part of human contests, e.g. of war and diplomacy. The activities of (i) inquiry, (ii) contest, are disparate. It is important to recognize that where there is a hidden contest, uninterrupted communication can become a vehicle of exploitation.

To contribute to reconstruction, glasnost has to mean the freedom to inquire, not the license to confuse or distract or demoralize or deceive. This delimitation is important in the fields of art and education, where frivolity often wears the mantle of authenticity, and where a slavish urge for novelty prevails. (In the scientific fields, research is guided by a long-standing methodology, and humbug is easier to spot.) Socialist policy in art must center on the de-alienation of labor. It must strive to end the separation of artisan from artist, and of practical art, i.e. manufacture, from fine art. Its objective must be to encourage the embodiment of aesthetic ideals in all manufacture.

The first task must be to raise the workers' spiritual, scientific and artistic understanding, alongside with the conditions and standards of work. The latent aesthetic yearnings of the proletariat must be mobilized. Folk art must be encouraged, but not brands of popular art that are mercenarily contrived or pander to the ego. Uplifting art is the art that transcends spatio-temporal limitations, brings out the best in each epoch, and focusses on the "species being" and not the "egoistic man", cf. Marx [8, p. 217]. Thus for the spiritual resurgence of the proletariat, all channels of communication (church, school, university, concert hall, gallery, stage, radio, television and print) must be put to maximal use for the authentic reproduction of the masterpieces of art, including folk art, of all ages and all lands from the dawn of civilization. Their frequent exposure to the masses, free of charge, must be ensured.

On the other hand, disintegrating, narcissistic and vulgar art (the glorification of trivia, mediocrity and perversion) by pandering to the weaker elements in the human psyche tightens the noose that binds the proletariat. Such clearly exploitative art has to be stopped. Just as a piece of scientific research has to conform to certain standards of truth in order to merit publication in a journal, so a piece of art must meet minimal standards of grace and species-orientation to qualify for public exposition. Linguistic and cultural debasement is no less devastating in its long-term effects than ecological debasement. A policy of enlightened censorship is thus imperative, it being the cultural equivalent of the banning of environmental pollution.

A back door through which mediocrity and linguistic abuse can creep into Soviet life, is the medium of commercial advertising. In the United States this medium, by the ad nauseam repetition of moronic expressions such as "Pepsi generation" and of sex-symbolic blurbs, is a prime promoter of bad taste, banality and dissipation. These so-called "advertisements" are splashed in newspapers and magazines, and over billboards, radio and television. Under socialist free enterprise sensible advertisement is necessary, but communication channels must be prevented from the cultural misuse of the surplus value of the laborers.

It is essential that under the aegis of glasnost, Soviet educationists not fall for the "freedom" and other fads in American education that have let banality and frivolity pass off as knowledge, and brought public education to the brink of disaster. The enforcement of discipline, the wearing of uniforms, military drill and military service must be retained, and students made to participate in social service, e.g. cleaning the classrooms and toilets and serving meals. The historical perspective, belittled in American education, is vital.

Education has to emphasize the relevance of the past, and the causal element in culture: the fact that no innovation could not have materialized had not some other innovations preceded it. In artistic expression, knowledge of the masterpieces should be stressed. There is no need for Soviet educationists to look outside the Soviet Union, but if look out they must, then a look to the east might be more useful than a look to the west.

6. The Need for a Theological Section in the USSR Academy of Sciences

Role of the Churches

Over the years Marxism has acquired certain attitudes that do not stand up to critical scrutiny.

1. There is pussyfooting on the problem of evil. In the face of historical evidence to be contrary, it is held that evil is the product of certain social conditions and will wither away under others, and that progress is inevitable.
2. There is the denial of the vital importance of the transcendental and the ideal in the life of man, despite the well-known propaedeutic role that mathematics (the science concerned exclusively with the transcendent and the ideal) has played in the physical sciences and in all engineering.
3. There is the confusion of mythology with superstition that overlooks the mythic foundations of both scientific and artistic creativity, attested to by Einstein and others.
4. There is a dismissal of worship, despite evidence that some of the most creative intellects have been worshipers, and that in general worshipers are more dedicated workers than the others.
5. There is opposition to the teachings of creative philosophical minds such as Plato, Berkeley and Kant, in neglect of their vital contributions to the scientific methodology, because they happen to be on the wrong "idealistic" side of an imaginary fence.

Soviet society cannot afford to ignore the issues involved, such as the place of transcendental ideas, the nature of God, the nature of evil, the role of the myth, and the nature of worship, for they profoundly affect contemporary life.

The last seventy years have exposed the illusion that human wickedness began with the rise of private property and will end with its abolition. The roots of evil are considerably deeper as St. Augustine pointed out. The time has thus come to re-read the words of Marx:

Religion is the sob of the oppressed creature,
the heart of a heartless world,

the spirit of conditions utterly unspiritual.

It is the laudanum of the poor. (cf. [8])

No longer can they be turned into the trite slogan, "Religion is the opium of the people". Experience demands that the words be given a broader interpretation: to wit, what is poor is the human species as a whole, and religion serves not only as its general laudanum or painkiller, but also as its source of endless hope.⁴

Accordingly, religion, instead of being denigrated, must be placed alongside the other prosthetic mechanisms devised by man to overcome human limitations, such as the telescope and microscope which enhance the sight, and the electronic computer that augments the intellect. More appropriately, religion is the species equivalent of an electronic arm for a maimed individual: it is a prosthetic limb for humankind, the sinful species. With religion so conceived, theology in its broad sense is seen to be the study of human practice from an adequately transcendental perspective that takes into account man's particular predicament in the universe. This science is still in its infancy, due in large measure to its divorce from the other sciences since the Renaissance. A fertile place to end this divorce and give it a new thrust is the Soviet Union.

To deal with these broad issues, and to give perestroika a right moral philosophical and scientific tone, there is need for a strong theological section in the USSR Academy of Sciences. In this the Russian Orthodox and other Churches, or rather their liberation-theological segments, must play a leading role.⁵ Theologians should aspire once again to become the leaders of science. The theological section must reflect from a long-time perspective the solutions proposed to the difficult questions that confront and will confront perestroika; the maintenance of moral order in the Communist Party, the decentralization of the control of surplus value, the annihilation of bureaucracy, the protection of Soviet democracy from charismatic demagoguery, and the prevention of ecological, cultural and linguistic pollution.

The theological section must also undo the isolation that Marxism has suffered from the rest of the philosophia perennis, brought on in large measure by the dogmatic stance of earlier Marxists. Marxism must see itself as a leader in man's philosophical quest, as the well-anchored but revolutionary arm of the perennial struggle to actualize philosophy, i.e. to liberate the proletariat.

Endnotes

1. The Stalin "purges" were of course a travesty of the idea of the party purge as conceived by Lassalle and Lenin. They involved the use of a corrupt secret police, and fabrication of charges of espionage, and the illegal imposition of imprisonment, torture and death; cf. Conquest [1]. The death toll, in the millions, included the finest and bravest.

2. What has failed in the Soviet Union is not this formula, but its travesty: From each according to the residual "ability" that survives the bureaucratic slaughter of his initiative; to each according to his inevitably halfhearted and substandard "work".

3. It is not clear to the writer if current econometric thought in the Soviet Union is oriented in this direction.

4. To say this is not to deny the perniciousness of corrupted religions, often enforced by the Churches. Marxists should realize, however, that the condemnation of such "pie-in-the-sky religion" began with the prophets and sages long before Marx, Engels and Lenin. And as the events in Cambodia have shown, corrupted Marxism too can be pernicious.

5. The liberation theory is rooted in pre-Constantine Christianity. It precedes the splits in the Church, and all parts of the Church, as indeed all religions can embrace it.

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