

Notes on Bochnelli's Memorandum

1. Definition

This is most unsatisfactory & should be queried. The correct definition starts with a distinction between (a) the Society, or ideal of it, known as "Communism"; and (b) the theory and practice followed by people who are Communists, and who aspire to the establishment of a Communist Society.

The former is the classless, socialised Society, in which the State, the "organisation of force" for the enforcement of rules, no longer exists. It has "withered away". Communism, in this sense, no longer exists.

The history of the word in the second sense can be briefly described.

- (1) It was freely used in the beginning of the 19th C. to describe Socialists of a certain type, viz. those who accepted the doctrine of Marx and Engels. Cf. Communist Manifesto
- (2) With the rise of Labour, socialist parties (broadly, after the extension of the franchise in the 1880's) they called themselves Socialists (cf. the Socialist International) or Social Democrats. This was

the title adopted by the Russian working class party to which Lenin and Trotsky belonged. It embraced both wings of the Labour movement: the "reformist" or parliamentary school, and the "revolutionary" school: Mensheviks and Bolsheviks respectively. Both however claimed to be adherents of Marxism.

(3) The split in the Socialist International widened in the First World War, and became an open break after the Russian Revolution. The Russian Social Democrats under Lenin's leadership changed their name to the "Communist Party", and this title was adopted by socialist parties in other countries which identified themselves with the Russian CP and the Revolution.

(4) Since this time, "Communism" means the theory of social change expounded by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and their adherents.

Nevertheless, it is conceivable that a "Communist" may be a person who accepts as valid the ideal of a Communist society in the first sense, but ~~does not~~ rejects the methods and theories advocated by Communist Parties. The anarchists of the 19th Century fall in this category, and,

In some respects, do the followers of Trotsky.

Bochnsky is wrong in saying that "Communism" "means any system in which collectivization prevails", and for the following reasons:

(a) The term "collectivization" is vague, and needs closer description. It may include:

(i) "primitive communism", which is the phrase applied by Engels to earlier, tribal or kinship types of economic co-operation;

(ii) "State capitalism", i.e. the control and ownership of resources and production by a capitalist state, which Marx and Engels thought would precede the socialism;

(iii) "Socialism", the organization of a classless society under the direction of the workers' state;

(iv) Communism, the highest phase of socialism, in which the principle, "to each according to his needs" will have been realized.

As has been explained, it is only this last type of society that can properly be called "Communism".

It seems important that we should get B. to agree that all Socialists are not "Communists", and that the advocacy of every kind of "collectivization" is not "Communism".

2. B.'s statement that the "method of action prescribed by ~~it~~ [the doctrine] can be executed only by the Communist organization" needs qualification.

What is the "method of action"?

If there were only one, the deduction would follow. But the acknowledgment, by avowed Communists, that the transition to Socialism may, in certain cases, be peaceful, ~~and~~ and through the parliamentary system, throws the question of "organization" wide open.

Crisply stated, Lenin's formula for a "party of a new type" was designed for a particular kind of society, or set of "historical conditions", and need not be universally applicable. This issue has, admittedly, not been debated by the Marxist authorities, but ^{the conclusion} seems to follow from the premise. I might point out that

Marx and Engels did not envisage the
organisation of a separate "Communist Party"
(see Communist Manifesto)

It is not, I suggest, necessary to
put ~~it~~ this to B. We may well be
satisfied with his proposition, if he will
agree that:

- (a) the "method of action prescribed" consists
essentially of the "revolutionary
overthrow of the bourgeois state"; and
~~and~~ (b) the "Communist organization"
is the one contemplated in his description
and citations on pp. 18-20, 22 (Gomulka),
33, 40-1.

Neither proposition corresponds to the ~~facts~~ ~~and~~
and structure of the Congresses. In particular,
I suggest that B. be taken through the
constitutions of the A.N.C., the many proposed
organisational changes, and the difficulties
experienced in the ~~relations~~ relations
between the central committee, provincial
committees and branches, resulting from
provincial and parochial differences.

3. B.'s rule for the interpretation of "Communist Statements" (p. 3) needs clarification. As I read it as follows:

When an avowed Communist (or at any rate a person identified as a Communist) makes a "statement" (i.e. the kind of statement that is relevant to Communist doctrine), it is an assumption unless that it is in accordance with "the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism", i.e. the person making the statement intends it to be in such accordance because, being a Communist, he could not conceivably say anything in conflict with the doctrine. The assumption can be rebutted only by proving "from the text itself" that there is a conflict between statement and doctrine. I presume the "text" referred to is the writing of an acknowledged Marxist authority, and that "the statement", but in any event, the rebuttal must be by way of comparison.

If this is so in the case of statements by known Communists,

the proposition must be applied even more strictly to statements of persons not so known.

I suggest that we should get B. to agree to this conclusion. It is one way of dealing with Murray's dubious ~~to~~ "test" of "Aesopism", and can be used to limit the Crown ~~is~~ when identifying documents and speeches.

4. The definition of ~~Dialectical Materialism~~ (p.4) may contain a poor translation. The usual formula in English is

I do not like B's outline of dialectical materialism, eg. ~~of~~

(a) his interpretation of it as a kind of "holism" ("the absolute priority of the whole");

(b) the contention that, according to D.M., "the mind is just a copy, a 'photograph' of matter (an assertion that Marxists attack as 'vulgar' or 'mechanical' materialism)";

(c) his claim that the philosophy

"denies that anything can be achieved by peaceful evolution".

But I don't think that such differences of opinion are significant. We ~~do~~ do not have to "expound" the correct version, or defend it, but to demonstrate that we did not teach dialectical materialism.

B. is likely to assert, if the point is put, that Communists must think along these lines, and yet might not label their thinking as "dialectical". The question then would arise: do the documents disclose a conscious "dialecticism" of a Marxist kind? In fact, it is extraordinarily hard to demonstrate such a process by reference to factual and concrete, as distinct from abstract and philosophical, discussion.

It is, of course, for the Brown to show that we have expounded D.M. Perhaps it is enough to

get B. to agree that the philosophy is an essential ingredient of Marxist thought, and that the absence of traces of it in the documents is important evidence of a non-Marxist bias.

5. Unlike in the case of "D.M.", a strong strain of Historical Materialism may be found. stated explicitly, in some of the documents. (I have in mind especially the "Lecture Notes" series) For this reason, the question whether B's version may be correct, if the issue should arise, the following assertions in his memorandum may have to be challenged:

- (a) Just as "consciousness is a 'copy' of matter, so ~~the~~ social institutions are a "copy" of the material conditions".
- (b) the "revolution" by which the superstructure is brought into line with the material basis, ~~to~~ must be by "violent means"
- (c) the "contradiction" lies in the existence of two classes (whereas, according

to Marx, it arises from the contrast between "socialized production" and "individual ownership of the means of production".

Leaving aside for later discussion the question of "violence", I feel that a more fruitful approach may be to get B. to agree that "historical materialism" is widely subscribed to by non-Marxists, often in the form of "economic determinism". Material may have to be collected to support this assertion.

Marx himself never used the phrase "historical materialism" (it was invented by Engels), but spoke only of the "materialist basis" of his approach to the study of society. By this he meant the primary conditions of existence: "men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history'". But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is, therefore, the production of material

life itself" (German Ideology)

~~The emphasis on economic structure~~
 Writers before Marx had emphasized the role of economic relations as a determinant of social structure. (E.g. Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1776)
 His original contribution was to distinguish the "ideological Superstructure" and trace its relation to the mode of production and its associated pattern of social relations.

"This conception of history, therefore, rests on the exposition of the real process of production, starting out from the simple material production of life it explains all the different theoretical productions and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc., and traces their origin and growth . . ." (Ibid)

It is not an overstatement to say that the whole of modern sociology and historiography ~~has~~ ^{has} been deeply influenced by Marx's historical sociology. Among the many

non-Marxist writers who have adopted and applied, in whole or in part, Marx's theoretical and methodological ~~app~~ approach to the study of society are the Frenchmen ^{Georges} Sorel and E. Durkheim, the Germans Rudolf Stammler and Max Weber, the Italians Labriola and Croce, the Americans ^{and} G. H. Mead, Thorstein Veblen. All those mentioned wrote ~~in the~~ towards the end of the last century and the early part of the present one. Among contemporary writers so influenced ~~are~~ are Karl Mannheim, ^{Georges} Lukacs, J. Schumpeter, Harold Laski, and Wright Mills.

There is an abundance of evidence to show that not everyone who ~~accepts~~ ^{applies} the notions of social evolution or economic determinism are, for that reason alone, Communists, or even Marxists.

6. B. has given an oversimplified version of Marx's economic theory. For instance, he does not draw the vital distinction between "labour" and "labour power", ^(or "price" and "value") his version therefore resembles the theory of pre-Marxist writers like Adam Smith and David Ricardo, more than of Marx. Since the same confusion occurs in the first of the "Lecture Notes", it may be thought necessary to have it corrected. I doubt, however, if much will be gained by drawing distinctions that, to the uninitiated, must seem obscure and even pedantic.

B. asserts correctly that Communist objections to capitalism are "partly moral, partly economic". Marx never distinguished clearly between the two. It might be rewarding to compare the characteristic ~~not~~ Marxist criticisms on moral grounds, with the kind of protest made by the Congress para/ Movement. I suspect that the latter, even when couched in terms of "exploitation", or the "oppression of the poor", will be found to have as their main theme the hardships suffered by dominated the Non-European under the colour bar or, more generally, segregation.

This characteristic lefts the Congress material right out of the category of "Marxist writings", and identifies it as part of the ~~ideology~~ ideology of "Colonial nationalism", which has close affinities with contemporary liberal thought, and religious-humanitarian trends. Note, e.g., the identity traced by ^{Abinikaver} Nationalists between the "Hussanians", "Liberals", and "Communists" who criticize S.A. race policies.

7. B.'s vision of the "class struggle" is ~~also~~ grossly over-simplified, ~~Marxists~~ to the point of distortion. No Marxist has asserted that members of one class are "completely alienated" from the other class (p. 11). There is, at most, a constant tendency towards such a breach; but Marxist literature abounds in references to factors and conditions that disunite workers, and produce alliances between some of ~~them~~ them and sections of the bourgeoisie: nationalism, religion, tradition, competition.

The development of the class structure, according to Marxists, is an historical process. ~~that goes through many stages.~~ The Communist Manifesto says: "The proletariat goes through various stages

of development," and describes some of them:

- (a) first individual workers, then those of an entire factory, then the operatives of a trade in one locality, struggle against the "individual bourgeois who exploits them".
- (b) If they unite, they do so under the banner of the bourgeoisie, and fight, not their enemies "but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie"
- (c) As capitalism grows, "the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between the two classes".
- (d) This process "is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves"; but is facilitated by "collisions between the classes of the old society": bourgeoisie against the aristocracy; among sections of the bourgeoisie; against a foreign bourgeoisie. "In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena"

(e) "Entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat," ~~or~~ while, when the class conflict "reaches the decisive hour", a "small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class".

The further point may be made that a major portion of Lenin's political strategy consisted of advocating, often against strong opposition from other members of his party, alliances with one or other group of the ruling class: liberals, democrats, the petty bourgeoisie. The same approach gave rise to the ~~the~~ "People's Front" and "United Front" of the 1930's, and is a marked feature of Communist Party policy in Western Europe today.

It is, however, a moot point whether B. should be corrected on this score. His description is so markedly in contrast with Congress policy that it would be difficult to identify in the latter traces of the "class struggle" according to B.

A more fruitful approach may be that of stressing the difference between South Africa's social structure and the "normal" type of class society that B. has in mind. The difference lies on many of the issues facing us, and might therefore be given some attention. (Although I have ^{already} dealt with in my memorandum on ~~of~~ the growth of the Congress Movement)

It is of the essence of the "class society" that a measure of social mobility is assumed. Individuals move up and down the scale. The degree of mobility varies as between different societies, and it is broadly correct to say that it varies directly with the amount of democracy experienced.

In the "closed" society of the S. A. type, mobility is severely restricted as between status groups (these corresponding to "races") by all kinds of taboos; endogamy, occupational barriers, spatial separation, privileged education and the like. (It may be a good thing to take B. through the most important ones, and get him to agree that this is not a "class society" of the usual type)

In a nutshell, S.A. displays a peculiar combination of advanced economic (productive) techniques and an archaic ("feudalistic" is the word) social ~~relations~~ relations (or, in Marxist terminology "Superstructure") One would expect to find, under these conditions, considerable modifications of the class conflict, and they do, in fact, occur: an alliance between middle class, workers and peasants of the inferior groups against the "autocracy" or, better still, oligarchy.

Marxists do, of course, recognize this situation, and so do many other observers. But if we can get B. to acknowledge the facts, and an analysis such as I am making on the basis of these facts, we shall go a long way to getting an admission from him that protests and struggles "Campaigns" against this order of things might not, need not, be "Communist". After all, he can hardly deny that the French Revolution took place before the days of Marx-Engels-Lenin!

My impression is that Congress spokesmen, including the most blood-curdling, rarely present the "conflict" as one between "Capitalists" and "Workers". They may attack "White domination", the "Boer", or "Imperialism", but these are symbols of the racial oppressor, not class conflict. It is unlikely, therefore, that the documents will reveal many traces of the theory of that "socialism" is "inevitable", which B. regards as part of the doctrine of class struggle (p. 11)

8. Most people would agree, I suppose, that the Marxist theory of Imperialism has had a great impact on the colonial world - just as the liberal nationalist movements of Europe 100 years ago in the last century shaped the thoughts of Indians, Chinese and others engaged in a conflict with alien rulers.

B. is not likely to dispute this, nor would he deny that a great many South Americans, Indonesians, Arabs & etc who denounce "imperialism" in Marxist language do not regard themselves as Communists. The use of the word "imperialism" is not a hall-mark of Communism.

Examples of "anti-imperialist" language by the Nkrumahs and Nassetens would be useful in driving home the point that our present world is the scene of inter-racial as well as inter-class conflict, and that some notions are common to both.

9. B. has made some lead mistakes in his outline of the Marxist theory of the State.

I question the following assertions:

- (a) "each bourgeois state is, to a Communist, a police state";
- (b) "Marx thought that the Proletariat should destroy the State";
- (c) Lenin thought that the proletariat should take over the State and use it to crush the bourgeoisie.

I have cited a number of texts on these points in my commentary on the Freedom Charter.

B.'s version, if anything, strengthens my conclusion that the Charter is not a "Communist" programme.

Here again, it may be wiser, not to challenge his interpretation, but to emphasize the contrast between it and the attitude of the Congress Movement.

10. In the ~~sections~~ sections headed "The Suppression of the State" and "The Leap into the Realm of Freedom", B. seems to be discussing the nature of "Communism" in its final stage and not, as he undertook to do in his opening paragraph, as "the ideology and organization" arising from Lenin's work.

His version of Marx and Engels's views on the subject is crude and superficial, even allowing for the cursory treatment he gives it. But does it matter? We do not have to expound or defend Communism, but to demonstrate that the Congress Movement was not Communist. In this instance, too, there is nothing to show, as far as I am aware, that members of the Movement ~~were~~ were engaged in teaching people the nature of a future Communist Society.

H. B. evidently assumes that "revolution," in Communist writings, is always and necessarily synonymous with "force and violence."

11 B.'s statement that a "violent revolution" is considered in Communist theory ~~to~~ as ~~a~~ necessary for the abolition of capitalism is supported by two quotations from Lenin, and refuted in part by his quotation from Stalin and the resolution of the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. His "examples" are not cases in point:

- (a) the Soviet Union's war against Finland did not have the establishment of Communism as its aim;
- (b) ~~the~~ her intervention in Hungary was to crush a rebellion against ~~the~~^a government which was carrying out a socialist programme

B.'s error in this matter arises from his assumption that Communists always mean by "revolution" the use of force and violence. It is clear that they ~~may~~ do associate violence with revolution in particular cases; but this is not an absolute rule, as B.'s own references show. Communists adopt an ~~a~~ empirical approach to the question, as I have argued in my notes on the Freedom Charter.

x) Cf. Archbishop de Blank's State ment in London: "S. A. was grappling with two revolutions - one industrial and the other social" (Cope Times, 10/7/1958)

For a sound appreciation of ^{the} Marxist theory, we must start with the nature of social change. No one could deny that social forms have undergone changes, or that some of these changes have been effected ~~by~~ through revolution. Marx was, primarily, a student of social change and the only one who has made ~~an~~ a major scholarly contribution to the analysis of revolution as an instrument of change

He regards revolution, in one sense, as part of the dialectic: "the transition from quantity into quality". Changes take place slowly, almost imperceptibly, until the point of transition is reached and the thing undergoes a sudden, obvious, and "violent" change. Bud into flower, water into steam, solids into gas, are the kind of examples given to illustrate the ~~process~~ process. In social phenomena, the "industrial revolution" is a comparable illustration. The word "revolution" occurs

in a similar sense in the following passage:

For the creation on a mass scale of the Communist consciousness, as well as for the success of the cause itself, it is

necessary for men themselves to be changed on a large scale, and this change can only occur in a practical movement, in a revolution.

Revolution is necessary not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because only in a revolution can the class which overthrows it rid itself of the accumulated rubbish of the past and become capable of reconstructing society - (German Ideology)

One cannot assume that revolution is equated with violence in this passage. The question whether it does, is left open, as in Marx's discussion of revolution in his criticism of Hegelian philosophy:

It is not a radical revolution, universal & human emancipation, which is a Utopian dream for Germany, but rather a partial, merely political revolution which leaves the pillars of the building standing. What is the basis of a partial, merely political revolution? Simply this: a fraction of civil society emancipates itself and achieves a dominant position, a certain class undertakes, from its particular situation, a general emancipation of society.

Marxists agree that the change from ^{capital-}socialism to socialism is a revolutionary change — a radical transformation, ~~at~~ the end involves a breaking down of the old State machine. But, as Marx, Engels and Stalin have said in turn, this may occur without ~~civil~~ civil war in favourable circumstances.

If civil war does take place, it is because the ruling class violates its own rules and resorts to force to prevent change. Spain ^{and} Germany are the contemporary examples cited.

Really civil war is not the Communist method of choice, and B. really admits as much.

11. The significance of B.'s description of the "Party" has already been discussed, but something needs to be said about his reference to "people" in Communist terminology (p. 19). I doubt if he would be able to substantiate his statement that "in practice the "people" becomes nearly always identified with those who stay with the Party". (This is probably a bad translation: from the context one gathers that "support" or "follow" would be preferable). Elsewhere (p. 29) he points out

that Communist Parties, even when in power, make up a small minority of the population. It seems unlikely that Party spokesmen in the Soviet Union or China, when referring to "the people" would have in mind only Party members. In fact, there is a great amount of discussion in Lenin's and Stalin's writings of the relations between Party and "the people", the latter obviously meaning the workers and peasants who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population.

It is common for a party, and more so for a government, to identify itself with the "country", "nation", or "people". So does the B.A. government claim to speak for the "Volk". One assumes that the heads of Socialist States follow the same usage.

When, therefore, Congress spokesmen talk of the "people", they should in no way be taken to have adopted a characteristically "Communist" terminology. It might be useful to go through the important documents, to discover if what "people" stands for. In all probability, it will be found to include ~~the~~ Non-European of all classes, in opposition to the Whites. And white workers

Do Congressmen regard White workers as part of the "people"?

12. There is such a marked contrast between B.'s account of Communist "Methods" and the activities of Congress, that it may be rewarding to illustrate ~~the difference by~~ get his views on the Congress approach. Suthuli's statements should be especially useful for this purpose. I think it can be shown that Congress took much care, to after the end of the Defiance Campaign, to avoid keep within the law, while at the same time maintaining its "extra-parliamentary" pressure. B. does not use the phrase, but he could hardly deny that this kind of action may well be legal. He is presumably not unaware of the peculiar difficulties with which a disenfranchised people must contend in attempting to defend or ~~salvage~~ raise their status.

13. Neither the phrase nor the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is likely to occur in the documents. This

Being so, it doesn't really matter if B's interpretation is correct. What we should do is to draw his attention to the differences and indeed conflict between the "dictatorship" and the kind of state envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

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