

contradictory claims regarding freedom and necessity in the same work. An alternative approach to the determinism debate is the one adopted in *Alienation* which underscores the elastic meaning of 'cause' and 'determine', but this doesn't bring out adequately the reasons for such variations. If Marx's materialist conception of history, then, deals with the determining role in history of the mode of production, neither mode of production nor history, nor the sense in which the one is said to determine the other can be correctly interpreted without the aid (explicitly here or implicitly as in the works of Lukacs, Sartre, Marcuse, Lefebvre, Kosik and a few others) of the philosophy of internal relations. While I am under no illusion of having explained the materialist conception of history in this brief space, I have tried to suggest what an explanation based on the philosophy of internal relations would look like.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the fact that only a few of those who criticized my presentation of Marxism within a framework of internal relations seem to share my deep concern with the problems posed by Marx's unusual use of language. Without ever denying the assembled evidence or offering definitions of their own, most critics simply assume that the distinctions which I am said to miss or underplay can be clearly and directed stated: 'Marx believed the mode of production is primary', 'For him, the base determines the superstructure', and so on. But it was the problem of finding different and apparently contradictory statements of the same distinction, and of feeling deeply the kind of dilemma voiced by Pareto at the start of this book, that precipitated my own inquiry into Marx's epistemology. Marx's words are like bats: one can see in them both birds and mice. Unless the seriousness of this problem is admitted, the solution which is offered in *Alienation* will seem at the least unnecessary (as it has to some) and probably false and destructive (as it has to others). Perhaps no one who disagrees with Chapter I of my book, where this problem is first set out, should read any further. In the meantime, it is incumbent upon critics who recognize the difficulties of understanding Marx's language, but reject the philosophy of internal relations, to offer - as none yet have done - another explanation for the same disquieting practices.

- 1 The main reviews of *Alienation* that criticize the philosophy of internal relations are found in *Social Theory and Practice* (Spring 1973), *Contemporary Sociology* (Spring 1973), *Soviet Studies* (July 1972), *Radical Philosophy* (Spring 1974), and *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (March 1974). Though similar objections have appeared elsewhere, these are the major reviews to which I am responding in this essay. Readers interested in following the discussion through some of the more favorable reactions should also see *New York Review of Books* (March 9, 1972), *Science and Society* (Summer 1972), *American Political Science Review* (Fall 1972) and *Political Studies* (June 1972).
- 2 Marx, *Die Moralisierende Kritik und der Kritisierende Moral*, *Werke IV*, p339.
- 3 This schema for setting apart different views on totality was first suggested by Karel Kosik in *La Dialectique du Concret*, trans. from German by Roger Dangeville (Paris, 1970), p35. There are important differences, however, in what Kosik and I understand of the second and third notions of totality presented here.
- 4 1844 *Manuscripts*, Moscow, 1959, p15
- 5 For a fuller exposition of the different moments in Marx's method, see my article 'Marxism and Political Science: Prolegomenon to a Debate on Marx's Method' in *Politics and Society* (Summer 1973)

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF PHILOSOPHY

The Association of Teachers of Philosophy formed in 1974 to provide a forum for philosophy teachers to explore new ideas and discuss common problems, will be holding its conference and Annual General Meeting in the North of England some time around Easter (at the time of going to press the place and time have not been finalised). For further particulars write to: Peter Caldwell, Secretary of the ATP, Bolton Institute of Technology, Deane Street, Bolton.

The Politics of Aggression

Leonard Williams

A comparative study of the social behaviour of apes and men will not in itself disclose the motivations of human action. For this reason any form of behavioural comparison that is unrelated to the specific and historical character of human needs will be regarded by traditional Marxists as suspect from the start. A great deal of new knowledge from the field of primate ethology has in fact a significant value for revolutionary study. If this were understood by protagonists of the left they would be able to assess its value for strengthening socialist thought in almost every area of cultural, social and historical study. Instead they have given the academic intellectuals and pop writers of the establishment a free hand, with the result that much of this new knowledge -

particularly the concept of phylogenetic aggression - has been distorted in dramatic fictions such as 'the behavioural sink', 'the territorial imperative', 'inbuilt violence', 'the struggle for dominance', 'the status-seeking primate', and so on.

Immediately a phylogenetic continuity is established between the non-human and the human primate, valid concepts such as 'the hominization process' are inevitable. The trouble begins when the dialectics of historical change and the politics of human action are ignored in the anti-historical concepts of evolutionism and ecological determinism. A proper assessment and synthesis of new ethological knowledge, as well as a systematic exposure of the silent politics which motivate the

distortions of this knowledge, has not yet come from the left. Meanwhile, the distortions of new knowledge from field studies in the monkey and the ape continues. Student revolutionaries are classified as the victims of an affluent society that provides no outlet for the inherited violence of the ape. Marxists are seen as paranoid revolutionaries, and women's liberation as a threat by transexuals and nymphomaniacs to the so called natural laws of monogamy, male dominance and female submission.

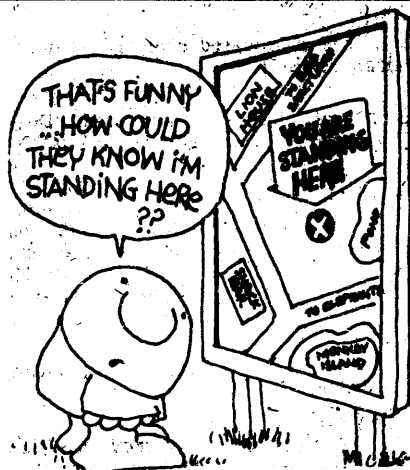
The new forms of established behaviourism will not be discredited with slogans and polemics on the theme of Social Darwinism. The fact is that aggressive competition in animal societies does not operate on the principle of dog eats dog; it is ruled by co-operation, through social codes and controls which ensure health, stability and survival. Self-assertion in the wild primate group is not the destructive competition that has become the motivating force of Western civilization. Nature's theme of 'survival of the fittest' does not mean survival of the most corrupt. With these distinctions in mind, new insight into the dynamics of primate evolution becomes an essential part of new knowledge that is creative and revolutionary in relation to the needs of our own time.

The prevailing storm of academic confusion on the whole question of comparative ethological study is rooted in a conflict between historical synthesis and causal analysis, between workers of the left and the official voice of establishment science, with the result that the ethological concept of aggression is pushed now this way and now that, distorted, misunderstood and interpreted according to the political motivations of the investigator. Firstly, there are two main forms of natural aggression in wild primate societies: interspecific aggression that is directed against external intruders, and intraspecific aggression that occurs internally among members of the group. We now know that aggression is regulated by inhibitory controls which are equally compulsive, and that these controls break down with overcrowding, leading to brutality and pathological violence. In Sugiyama's field study of the forest langurs in India, we learn that extreme population density led to social chaos and violence. Natural dominance hierarchies disintegrated and dominant males from rival groups fought each other without any assistance from their own group. In the mating season male gangs drove off the dominant males in other groups and fought among themselves for sexual supremacy.

Such a spectacle of violence in the breakdown of a social order is ready-made material for the dramatic fictions of fascist ethology. Confusion runs riot when violence is allied with a pathological need for stimulation, when violence and aggression are juxtaposed ad lib in the attempt to explain the dynamics of positive action in relation to stress, and when individual freedom is said to depend on a necessary element of disorder in a social system. The principle of freedom consists in the recognition of necessity, not the urge for chaos or an appetite for the 'behavioural sink'. The 'attraction of violence' is a false concept for the self-assertive behaviour of juveniles, whether monkeys or humans, who must resist the social code to some extent to learn its disciplines, reach maturity and find their place in a social hierarchy based on responsibility. It is also a false concept for explaining the necessary action taken by minority groups against a society that is itself disordered. Such positive action has been interpreted as 'a reaction against boredom by sub-groups who are driven by a

paranoid urge for stimulation'.

The significant and unique factor in the human industrial environment, for which there is no parallel in the monkey group, is not the frustration of a neophilic urge for stimulation, but the social isolation of the individual, the lack of physical and cultural contact with the group, a condition which becomes a double-evil in a densely populated environment. This dialectic



of 'crowded isolation' and cultural alienation represents a break from any positive and direct relationship with a creative culture based on mutual production. In this anti-life environment of a self-destructive technology dedicated to unlimited growth, the double-evil of 'crowded isolation' gives rise to a pathological violence and a degenerate apathy. A valid analogy for the pathology of this human dilemma (on which the capitalist mode of production depends for its own survival) cannot be found in any wild primate group, not even where diminishing space and population density has led to the violence of intraspecific killing. So when establishment behaviourism warns us that we must pay full attention to the 'significance of space', the 'territorial imperative' and the 'human zoo' analogy, we are being told what we have known for a long time - that man like all primates is fundamentally a social animal dependent for his survival on a healthy group-structure, that he is (as I will try to show later) both innately aggressive and innately gentle, and that aggression reaches alarming proportions in conditions of extreme stress in the over-populated cities. What we are not told is that the controllers of our electronic culture have nurtured a corruption of the natural aggression drive of the human primate, and that unless the dominant capitalist nations curb the destructive impulse for more power and more 'affluence', we shall destroy the biosphere of our planet. In physical terms we have an energy crisis. In moral terms we have a greed crisis. As Illich has said, contemporary society is ruled by 'the ideology of unlimited progress'.

It follows that any comparative study on the function of aggression in primate societies is suspect when it is divorced from the politics of aggression. (For socialists even so called 'scientific objective knowledge free of ideological motivation' is suspect when it ignores the politics of socialist liberation). Marxist ethologists therefore must distinguish between healthy and unhealthy aggression, and recognise the distinct forms of phylogenetic aggression which characterise men of widely different cultures. For example, the Dani tribes in New Guinea engage in a ritualised form of war with other tribes. Few casualties occur in the course of several en-

gagements over a whole year, and most of these are accidental. This highly ritualised form of ceremonial war is not motivated by a lust for ownership, dominance and power. Its social significance is comparable with the competitive aggression that is released and ritualised in the Olympic games. The psycho-dynamics of these forms of culturalised aggression are not comparable with the aggression of US imperialism against the Viet Cong. Nor is the latter comparable with the intraspecific violence that occurs in rat colonies under controlled conditions. The violence observed by Calhoun in his study of rats was inevitable in a laboratory environment, where the dynamics of growth and life that require the challenge of a natural environment cannot function. The laboratory rats preferred the excitement of fighting and killing each other in the 'behavioural sink' of the middle pen, rather than stagnate in the end pens that offered no incentive for living other than nesting material and food. Clearly a proper assessment of the different forms of aggression is unlikely to come from academic behaviourism, especially when a corrupted aggression has become the motivating force of the very society it serves.

There are two distinct forms of establishment behaviourism, the one overtly fascist and the other 'liberal' or 'humanistic'. Where fascist behaviourism recognises and exploits the valid concept of an innate aggression, academic behaviourism denies the spontaneity of phylogenetic aggression altogether. Aggression is explained either as a reaction to stress, or it is analysed in terms of an abstract interaction between an animal and its ecology. Another and more sophisticated dramatisation of the 'aggressive psyche at war with itself' is found in Koestler's concept of a 'built-in schizophysiology', and his plea for a magic pill that will exorcise 'the ghost in the machine'. To unravel all these vagaries we must go a little deeper into the machinery of the aggression-appeasement impulse. In this way we shall remove some of the confusion which arises when the word violence is used to express a pathological form of aggression, and when the ethological concept of aggression is either denied or posed as the enemy of peace.

In order to live, reproduce and stabilize the social code, all primate societies must draw upon their instinctual power to both aggress and appease. The lagothrix monkey Jojo, who is the leader in my own monkey colony, prefers peace, but he is ready to act aggressively to protect the group from external danger, or to enforce the necessary disciplines within the group for maintaining its health and stability. This is demonstrated not only in the more obvious displays of dominance, but throughout the social behaviour of the group. In this context, a submissive or appeasement gesture by a sub-adult during a disciplinary dispute is nearly always accepted by Jojo as a sign of submission. Even quarrels among the dominant males are usually resolved by appeasement and not by aggression. The aggression drive is clearly all one with the inhibitory impulse to submit or appease.

When aggression and appeasement are abstracted and posed as hawk and dove, we are expected to take the dove as the harbinger of peace and goodwill, and the hawk as a predatory aggressor, overlooking that the hawk can just as easily be taken as a symbol of enterprise and health, contrasted with the dove as a symbol of apathy. In fact, the functional dynamics of aggression and appeasement form a dialectic polarity; they presuppose each other. Appeasement acts positively for peace, and if peace degenerates aggression acts posit-

ively with the object of restoring health. The polarity can be examined in the context of sickness and health, but not by splitting the complex in two and treating one side only as the destructive element in relation to the other. When either side gains a malignant ascendancy over the other, the polarity as such is no longer a healthy representative of the aggression-appeasement impulse, but a pathological imbalance of its internal dynamics. Such an imbalance or disorder affects aggression and appeasement alike. In their place we have the double evil of a destructive aggression and a degenerate apathy, a pathological syndrome that plays a vital part in the dehumanization of our consumer society.

It follows that aggression per se is neither sick or destructive; it is simply the use of physical force to achieve a given end. Bad men and good men are equally endowed with aggression. They are distinguished not by their use of aggression, but by how they aggress, by the values and motivations behind their specific acts of aggression. Violence therefore must also be qualified before it can be posed as a pathological form of aggression. Unqualified violence in fact is simply a higher power of aggression. Nothing is gained by equating it with rage or fury, since history (and not the dictionary) has already demonstrated that a cool violence can be just as effective and destructive as hot violence.

Another exponent of zoological behaviourism tells us that the primary social urge of both man and baboon is to climb the social ladder. In his book *The Human Zoo* Desmond Morris explains that a squabbling baboon community would be an inefficient one, that a degree of control by the dominant males has to be retained, that subordinates are potential rivals and must be appeased or they will gang up on the leader if they are too strongly suppressed. This interpretation stands firm until precedence is given to the 'aggressive status-seeking role' of the male baboon, a precedence in which fraternising and protective behaviour by the dominant males is over-interpreted as a form of placation, appeasement and expedience for maintaining power.

Observations in our lagothrix colony have shown that the dominant males are extremely affectionate to all juveniles as well as to the females and infants. Only when the young males take too many liberties are they likely to be disciplined by the adults. On one occasion I witnessed a most remarkable demonstration of an innate sense of social responsibility in the behaviour of the leader male Jojo. It occurred when the colony was given access to a tree area that had been added to their territory. On that day we had expected all the monkeys in the group to go running across the ropes to the trees. Instead only Jojo went, and he went alone. We have since referred to the incident as 'the day Jojo tested the trees'. When he sped across the ropes to the first tree, he paused on a high branch and peered in all directions. There was no swinging, leaping or running. A swinging action was used only when he hung by the tail to test the lower branches with his hands. Dead wood and old branches were broken off and dropped to the ground. Gradually his passage through the trees expressed a definite pattern. Alternative routes were examined with caution until, stage by stage, he learned the whole tree area. For two days a small group of beech trees was investigated in this way, and not one monkey in the colony was allowed to share in the exercise. Whenever the young males tried to join him they were chased back to the tree platform and down the ropes to the enclosures and the indoor houses. A

female named Jessy (who has since had four babies in the colony) was an adolescent at the time, and it was she who made the first and most successful attempt to reach the trees without interception. She cascaded through the branches with gay abandon, swinging and leaping, fortunately without mishap even though a lot of dead wood cracked under her weight. Jojo was enraged. He rushed across with mighty leaps and chased her back to the tree platform. When he finally caught her he seized her by the shoulders and gave her a severe shaking. Not until the third day of tree-testing was the colony as a whole allowed the freedom of the new tree area.

This incident shows the role of aggressive discipline functioning as a sense of social responsibility. A detailed account of a wide range of protective behaviour has already been given by myself and other workers in the field of primate studies. Here I am concerned to emphasize that self-assertiveness in wild primates is motivated by an inbuilt drive for authoritative and responsible action, not by a struggle for dominance pursued for its own sake. When self-assertiveness does take over chaos reigns, as happened in Sugiyama's field study of the forest langurs in India. But in this situation we are no longer examining the functional machinery of natural dominance, but a pathological dominance invoked by conditions of extreme stress.

When the so-called 'struggle for dominance' in nature is placed in its proper context, we see the danger of comparing it with the 'status drive' of the human male in the 'human zoo'. The analogy over-interprets dominance-aggression and sexual rivalry among wild primates, and fails to recognise that mutual tolerance prevails among the dominant males in chimpanzee and gorilla groups - even when the females are in oestrus (see Schaller, Goodall and Kortlandt).

The behavioural plot thickens when the stress experienced by our 'human leaders' is compared with the status tension suffered by the baboon 'despot' in the over-crowded conditions of the zoo. A true parallel will identify the human controllers who virtually own and exploit our 'human zoo' with the super-status zoo proprietors who play their part in alienating baboons from their natural culture and putting them in prisons called zoos. Like the zoo proprietors of the animal zoo, the dominant controllers in the human zoo live 'outside', enjoying a relatively remote and extra-specific affluence at 'the top'. The baboon despot in the animal zoo however suffers the same stress as the oppressed animals he dominates. In common with his tyrannised subjects he too is the slave of the zoo proprietor. In short, the pathological violence that breaks loose in zoo collections is not simply the result of the unnatural stresses of zoo conditions, nor is it driven by an innate appetite for the violence and attraction of the behavioural sink. In its most real, political and moral context - it is the result of an act of violence by super-status people who put baboons in zoos and transform them into commodities for human consumption. A true analogy is found in the stress conditions imposed on the people of Harlem by the dominant whites, or by the zoo conditions imposed on the decultured Bantus by Apartheid. The Bantu have also been converted into commodities for the cultural edification of white tourists who are taken on conducted tours through the Bantu concentration camps.

The exponents of the human zoo analogy acknowledge the destructive features of the human zoo, but they did not see any real danger of disintegration into social chaos. They argue that very few

of our 'super tribesmen' succumb to ulcers or aberrant behaviour, and that this is testimony to the enormous tenacity and ingenuity of our species. We share their optimism to some extent, but for quite different reasons. Firstly, all of us in the white nations are over-consumers in a technological society that is faced by the prospects of total collapse. Secondly, all is not lost while minorities in that society are alert to the profound nature of the crisis, and who are formulating and acting upon the political and scientific means for averting chaos and moving on to a liberated society.

Regardless of the distortions and vagaries from establishment science, the limitations of the ethological concept of aggression for comparative social studies remain clear to see. No true parallel exists in wild primate groups that corresponds with the positive action of liberating groups in human society. When evolution was faced by a similar problem (in a process called paedomorphosis) a species became extinct and a new beginning was made! But once we span the bridge from the instinctual dialectic of evolution to the conscious dialectic of history, we find that it is precisely the historical consciousness and historical action of enlightened minorities and individuals that is called upon to speak out, protest and aggress against the system of a dead morality and create a new one.

Historical Typology

We are often told that we live in an age of scientific maturity and that the age of all-embracing syntheses of historical change ended with the great doctrines of Comte, Marx, Durkheim and Weber. Meanwhile the accumulation of a vast amount of new knowledge, from the field of social anthropology and phylogenetic evolution in particular, is widening the gulf between historical synthesis and empirical research almost to a point of no return. Our contemporary sociologists - who are well insulated against the fervour of speculative insight - are now obliged to at least flirt with the possibility of constructing a 'general theory of social behaviour'. We can be sure that the vagaries of apolitical social study are more likely to obstruct the truth than express it, as students of the Left well understand. Clearly the answer to the need for historical analysis and synthesis is the task of an expanding historical and dialectic philosophy that is continuous with the thought and spirit of Marx.

The central dialectic law of development and growth is unity in continuity through opposition, but that unity in continuity can live only in its distinct moments or degrees. These degrees and specifics in themselves express their own internal contradiction and movement in the interests of their own survival; they are not negated in the abstract context of thesis-antithesis-synthesis. (Engels - over-stimulated by dialectic - even made a barley seed negate the parent plant. I suppose it does in a way, but one has to be drunk in order to enjoy the enlightenment). Animal species do of course become extinct in their failure to compete with the pressures of natural selection, but the continuity of the species is preserved in the evolution of one genus or species to another. That is why the concept of a given genus can only approximate the class of species or sub-species it is supposed to represent.

The discovery of new types may alter the structure as well as the demarcation-lines of a given genus, such that new divisions and groupings with-

in the genus become classifications in their own right. For example, a fossil primate named *Oriopithecus* has been classed as a man-like swamp ape in the order of hominoids, but many anthropologists are not satisfied with this classification. Whatever *Oriopithecus* was, hominid or hominid, the problem is no longer one of establishing a 'missing link', but to determine the placing of an increasing number and variety of primate species into new as well as existing orders of the hominoids and hominids. Anthropologists have already divided hominids into *Homo Erectus* and *Homo Sapiens*.

The problem of constructing concepts to represent types and stages in social history is a familiar one for anthropologists. English anthropologists show little interest in the relationship between genesis and structure of human societies. Soviet anthropologists however hold fast to a general history of mankind, and they continue to relate the discovery of new social types to historical epochs and history as a whole. The traditional Marxist typology of primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism has now given way to a more flexible and expanding classification, brought about by the need to synthesize a vast amount of new material on social structures from the field of social anthropology.

Soviet anthropology no longer represents Marx's historical theory as being based entirely on class relations and the mode of production - on what has been called 'economic determinism'. To clarify this the anthropologist Danilova writes: 'Marx showed that the dominant forms of social relations in primitive societies are natural ones of kinship, and in pre-capitalist class societies they are political ones of domination and subjection.'¹ This is not (as Ernest Gellner suggests) a valiant attempt on the part of Danilova to protect Marxist typology. Marx was well aware that the social systems of early tribal cultures were based on kinship and not class relations: 'The social organisations under which men of a definite country live are conditioned by two kinds of production; by the stage of development of labour, and by the family - by the production of human beings themselves.'²

Much of the new knowledge we now possess on the hunter-gatherer cultures actually strengthens rather than invalidates Marxist typology, particularly Marx's improvised concept of 'primitive communism'. The historical significance of this new knowledge is ignored by the French anthropologist Balandier; no doubt because it is embarrassing for his own kind of anthropological reductionism.



ALTHAR HAS A FRIGHTENING TALE TO TELL: "... AS THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN INNOCENT READING, WE MUST SAY OF WHAT READING WE ARE GUILTY....."

Balandier's conclusions are that all hierarchic systems are based on inequality and domination, and that the conflicts arising from this are the main agents of historical development. He warns us that the rejection of hierarchic systems structured on domination and sexual segregation runs counter to a more natural life! Balandier's evidence for these conclusions is taken from pre-colonial African societies, many of which were (and still are) linked by terrorist societies which maintain a privileged elite and a proletariat of women, children and slaves. An attempt to strengthen the historical significance of his argument for domination and inequality is also made by referring to its roots in wild primate societies, in much the same way as Morris and Ardrey employ ape analogies to explain the alleged 'inbuilt violence' of man.

The anthropological reductionism of Balandier is carried out with a total disregard for the work of American social anthropologists in the field of the hunter-gatherer cultures, and also with an appalling ignorance of primate ethology. Sahlins and others have already shown that there is no political and economic exploitation among the Ituri pygmies, Kalahari Bushmen, Eskimos and the Australian aborigines. Their social systems are based on kinship, and counsel is given by elders who avoid prominence and possessions. The acceptance of the authority of the Plains Indian chief by his followers is entirely the result of his ability, generosity and compassion. Leaders in the Melanesian village present the best food to others and leave the remainder for themselves.⁴

If Balandier were using anthropological material to support the case that hierarchic despotism, greed and violence have achieved a malignant dominance in our technological society of Unlimited Growth, we could easily agree with him. He is however more concerned to leave us with the conclusion that the most natural social systems for man are based on inequality, male domination, age status and sexual segregation! Such a corruption of anthropological knowledge is likely to pass unnoticed in the *Times Literary Supplement*, but it is equally unlikely to contribute to a creative typology that is rooted in a dialectical conception of historical growth.

It is clear that the prevailing confusion on the function of hierarchy is the error of equating despotic hierarchies with healthy hierarchies. Self-healing 'therapy communities' remain self-defeated because they have rejected hierarchy itself. They could as well try to dispense with organisation and discipline. This confusion is rooted in the failure to recognise that a group ethic and responsible leadership is essential for the health of all human societies. As Waddington has said: 'Man by nature is an ethicising animal'. It follows that the freedom of the human individual is all at one with the nurturing of his social maturity from child to adult, and that this maturity cannot develop without the guidance as well as the disciplines of a group ethic. It is true that man by nature is also self-assertive, and that the self-assertive adolescent may feel discipline and restraint as an external authority that robs him of his freedom. But without authority and restraint of any kind the juvenile would never become socialised, and without self-assertion he could not learn the folly of opposing the ethic of mutual aid and social responsibility. A group ethic itself depends on the self-assertion of individuals who have already made it - and of organised revolutionary minorities who change it! A whole cannot hold itself together except by the self-motivation of its parts. These parts,

whether they are considered as individuals or sub-groups, spontaneously create a hierarchic structure. All primate communities are hierarchic structures, otherwise they would not be communities. For this reason I believe that a hierarchy of responsible leadership, cadres and teachers will continue to function in the development and stabilizing of a grass-roots democratic communism in China (providing the USSR and the Western States do not intervene and trigger off another nuclear war).

The internal life of individual species and societies is shaped by their own needs in relation to their own ecology and time, but the expression of those needs is also determined by the dialectic of universal elements which are common to them all. For example, the permanence and universality of hierarchy in all organisations of life must be re-stated again and again, not simply to echo the universality of an abstract hierarchy, but to relate the unique and historical character of changing forms of hierarchy to the essential function of hierarchy itself. (With equal effect the concepts of morality, liberty, love and many other universals may be substituted for the word hierarchy in the context I have just given). In this way we are all the more prepared for recognising and distinguishing liberty from tyranny, the

natural from the unnatural, the healthy from the pathological, and the true from the false.

The alternative to an expanding historical classification is to regard all societies - from prehistoric to modern man - as a random series of specific cultures and histories, each pursuing its own path regardless of the dialectic procedures of primate evolution and a general history of mankind. Distinct histories and social types cannot of course be fitted tidily into systems and epochs which follow each other in chronological sequence. Systems, transitions, stages (and stages within stages) arise synchronously and diachronously, preceding and following each other in their own time and space as well as in the time-space complex of an expanding world history. The proper use of historical classification in this context will strengthen the continuity of pre-history with history, and may eventually lead to the construction of a psychogenesis of man.

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- 1 Danilova, L.V., *Pre-Capitalist Societies*, Nauka Publishing, Moscow, 1968
 - 2 Marx-Engels *Selected Works* Vol.2, Lawrence Wishart, London, 1953
 - 3 Balandier, G., *Anthropologie de Politique*, Allen Lane, London, 1970
 - 4 Sahlins, Marshall, *Stone Age Economics*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1972
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The Theory of Ideology:

Some Comments on Mepham

Joe McCarney

John Mepham's paper 'The Theory of Ideology in Capital'¹ is an important contribution to the debate over Marx's theory of ideology. It would not be too much to say that it raises that debate to a new level, at which the real difficulties of the subject can be seen. It achieves this largely through the manner in which so many persuasive errors and half-truths are identified and rejected. The views Mepham castigates are commonplace in the literature, and the treatment of them is a substantial, if negative, achievement. In the light of it the inadequacy of his positive thesis has almost a tragic quality. This is enhanced by the way it incurs a fate he has acutely described in the case of other writers on the subject, that of coming to embody, not the theory of ideology, but merely another 'ideology of ideology'. Moreover, the version it offers is particularly disappointing, at least to anyone who looked to 'radical philosophy' for intellectual support of the forces of radical change in British society.

A convenient way to start this discussion is by noting a curious discrepancy in Mepham's paper. The first paragraph speaks of a need for 'a theory of the conditions for the production of knowledge and of effective practice and, also a theory of the production of mystification' (p12). A little later he remarks that he is thinking of the problem of ideology 'in relation to the general questions "What are the conditions for the production of knowledge and what are the conditions for the production of various systems of mystificatory belief?"' (p13). With these remarks the scene is apparently being set, but the expected performance never takes place. In the last sentence of the paper we are told that:

... just what Marx's theory of the conditions for the production of mystification can teach us about the conditions for the production of knowledge, and for the production of a non-mystifying social reality are not questions which I have attempted to answer in this paper.

(p19)

The effect of all this is to leave the reader with the sense of a specific expectation that has been aroused but not fulfilled, the expectation that the discussion will be relevant to questions about the conditions for the production of knowledge and of revolutionary practice. This is not said here in order to make a debating point. It is rather than when taken together the remarks quoted suggest that something has gone seriously wrong with Mepham's programme. Moreover, they offer a clue as to how one might try to understand what has happened. This is that the note of incongruity may be intelligible in the light of certain general features of his position. The failure to say anything about the conditions of knowledge and of effective practice may not be a merely accidental omission that could be repaired by extending the original lines of argument. The suggestion is that Mepham cannot give a satisfactory account of these matters: the stance he adopts excludes in principle any such possibility.

Perhaps the most striking feature of his treatment of ideology is the kind of inflation which the notion undergoes. Signs of this begin to appear early in the paper. After the passage quoted above which speaks of a concern with general questions about the conditions of knowledge and of systems of mystificatory belief, he continues: *These questions have been raised not only in relation to ideology but also, for example, in relation to the history of science and to the problem of myth in anthropology. As one aspect (but only one; there are many others) of such enquiries, progress has been achieved I think by the rediscovery, paradoxical as it may seem, of the cognitive basis of some systems of mystificatory belief.* (p13)

1 RP2, Summer 1972. All references are to this source.